

What's Hot in DAB!

The World DAB Forum Newsletter N.3 -August 2001

Welcome to the 3rd edition of the World DAB Forum Email Newsletter. This edition of the newsletter is somewhat special as we begin a third new section dedicated to "Technical Topics", which will give a regular monthly roundup of technical news.

In addition, this edition leads us into the forthcoming IFA 2001 event (<http://www.ifa-berlin.com>), one of the most important international exhibitions in Europe, which is taking place from 24th August to 2nd September 2001.

Please accept our apologies for the delay in resolving the technical problems caused by the large mailing list. We hope this will be corrected in time for the next edition.

The WorldDAB Project Office
<http://www.worlddab.org>

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News from South Africa

As South Africa prepares to embrace DAB Digital Radio, a two-day workshop, organised by the South African Digital Broadcasting Association, was held in Johannesburg in July to debate the various issues facing the country's broadcasters and regulators.

Encompassing both digital radio and digital television, the conference attracted more than 60 delegates from across South Africa. Providing an international perspective were WorldDAB's Julie Ackerman, Digital One's Jeff Astle, DigiTag and DVB, UK's Gordon Drury, plus from Sweden, Teracom's Jesper Josbrant and from Holland, Digicast's Ruud Vader.

The team was able to share its accumulated knowledge on such issues as policy,

regulation, technology, and commercial and marketing strategies, which other countries around the world have identified as core to the successful implementation of digital broadcasting.

The workshop attracted a wide range of attendees including senior representatives of the South African government, the regulator, the public broadcaster, local consumer electronics manufacturers, and signal distributors, as well as both commercial and private broadcasters.

Debate was comprehensive and lively, with much interaction and audience participation, including several question and answer sessions with live telephone input from Lindsay Cornell from the BBC, and Dave Dimambro of Crown Castle International UK.

Following the two-day workshop, a closed meeting was held with the Digital Broadcasting Advisory Body. Set up by the South African Minister of Communications to advise the government on digital broadcasting, the DBAB is expected to make recommendations in March 2002 on systems and standard, as well as policy and regulatory frameworks for digital broadcasting in South Africa. The response to both the workshop and the closed session were very positive with the National Association of Broadcasters South Africa calling it "a coup for South African broadcasters". And one member of the DBAB said "I wish we could do these workshops every year just to keep up to date with the digital developments and interact with experts. It was great."

Further information can be found on the SADIBA web site at:

<http://www.sadiba.za>

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Digital Radio Takes Step Forward in Taiwan

It's been a busy summer for digital radio in Taiwan with events reflecting a rapidly growing DAB digital radio market.

In June, the Digital Broadcasting Conference in Taipei attracted more than 120 participants from around the world, with speakers from all points on the DAB supply chain. Chip and hardware manufacturers joined multiplex operators and content developers to share knowledge and insights into the international DAB roll out.

August 1 saw the formal launch of the Broadcasting Corporation of China's national multiplex. With an established 50 percent audience and 30 percent advertising share, the ex-public broadcaster, now also a commercial player, will actively promote DAB by ordering products for supply in the domestic market, and investing in marketing activity to accelerate consumer take-up.

This is a significant development for digital radio in Taiwan and should serve to kick-start the home market. Given Taiwan's importance as one of the world's electronics manufacturing centres, BCC's initiatives should help to create a ripple effect for manufacturing and distribution around the world. Indeed, manufacturer TMC demonstrated a tuner at the conference that is specifically designed to debut in coincidence with BCC's multiplex launch in August.

Analogue radio in Taiwan has almost reached saturation point with around 200 stations already on air, and the same number of pirate stations competing for listeners. However, unlike most other countries, listening in Taiwan is predominantly an in-car feature, so, initially at least, the car market could be more important domestically than elsewhere in the world.

Along with the BCC, Taiwan also enjoys service from three other DAB multiplexes, all currently in the testing phase and, taken with the BCC, providing around 23 stations to the island nation.

PC Radio, one of the June conference hosts, is a consortium of commercial FM broadcasters. With four transmitter sites in major conurbations along the West coast, and covering around 40 percent of Taiwan's population, PC Radio is developing new educational and distance learning data applications as well as simulcasting its existing FM services. And two other leading commercial broadcasters in Taiwan, UFO and VOT (Voice of Taipei) are also simulcasting

their analogue stations on a test basis.

All in all, an increased commitment to DAB digital radio in Taiwan cannot but have a positive effect on the international market.

Further information can be found on the PCRadio website at:

<http://www.pc-radio.com.tw/>

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Third Multiplex Goes On-air in Spain

August sees the launch of Spain's third national multiplex, FU-E, with a mix of six commercial and public services. Public broadcaster Radio Nacional de España presents Radio-1, Radio Clásica, Radio-3, and Radio 5 Todo Noticias.

Commercial stations come from service providers Consorcio Comeradisa and Grupo Godó. Coverage of the FU-E multiplex alone will be 20% population at launch, rising to 50% by December and 80% by 2004.

More information on the DAB situation in Spain can be found at

<http://www.rtve.es/dab/index.html>

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WorldDAB at IFA 2001

- What's Happening at IFA

WorldDAB will have a significant presence at IFA this year with a slot on the Science and Technology Forum and, possibly, the Medienanstalt Berlin-Brandenburg Forum. In addition, WorldDAB has a dedicated room in the IIC for the six days (August 25 - 31) where meetings with receiver manufacturers, both in-home and in-car, will take place throughout the event.

On display in the WorldDAB room this year will be the Clarion DAH 913 (bootbox with head unit), the Pioneer DEH P90DAB (1 DIN receiver), the new VideoLogic DRX 602ES (see below), the Arcam DIVA DT-81 tuner, and the Psion WaveFinder.

Also debuting at IFA will be prototypes of new products from VideoLogic, including a kitchen radio and a midi unit.

The WorldDAB Project Office plans to distribute information packs at IFA to include country updates (in German and English), coverage maps (the world and Germany), a list of available receivers, product pricing information and the WorldDAB brochure.

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- WorldDAB and IMDR hold a joint press conference

On Sunday, 26 August 2001, WorldDAB and IMDR (Initiative Marketing Digital Radio) will hold a press conference in the Deutsche Genossenschaftsbank in Berlin where journalists can learn more about the exciting developments in Digital Radio.

Top experts will review press reaction, the recent print campaign, highlights at IFA and future marketing initiatives. Information will be available on the current situation within the receiver market, plans from programme providers and also ideas for trade and commerce.

WorldDAB and IMDR have placed the press conference at the Genossenschaftsbank, an unusual setting away from the usual run of events, so that developments in Digital Radio can be uniquely highlighted. And it wouldn't be Digital Radio without the "secondary service" of even more information of an interesting nature on the fringe of this event.

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- World DAB sponsors a media award

Under the slogan "Digital Radio Opens Up New Artistic Horizons", IMDR (Initiative Marketing Digital Radio) has launched a competition with the support of Deutsche Telekom.

The media award is endowed with prize money totalling DM 35,000 and is aimed

at art colleges, film and television colleges, media schools, media designers and creators, composers and sound and music studios. By inviting artistic contributions, the competition aims to achieve an increased interest for Digital Radio among a public which is open to developments in arts and technology, and to break down prejudices and reservations.

A further goal is to encourage a predominantly young public to face the challenge of the new technology, to take up the opportunities and advantages associated with it and to integrate these increasingly into their lives.

Under the patronage of Klaus Wowereit, Governing Mayor of Berlin, and Adrienne Goehler, Berlin's Senator for Science and Culture, the award will be presented on 26 August 2001 on the fringe of IFA in Berlin. The presentation will be held at the Deutsche Genossenschaftsbank so that the media award too has found a special setting in which Digital Radio is the centre of attention. A remarkable evening is in store for the 300 and more guests invited from business, culture and politics.

World DAB is delighted to provide support - especially for IMDR, Digital Radio and the participants - through its sponsoring commitment.

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Panasonic Prototype Writes Radio History in Germany

Panasonic's commitment to digital radio is demonstrated at IFA this year with a presentation that promises to be a technology highlight, and a real eye-opener for the entire radio industry. Based on the Technics ST-GT1000, Panasonic's new VAP-1 prototype will demonstrate timeshift radio, broadcast website, slide show, download music onto hard disk and SD-memory card, pre-recorded news files and advanced usage of DLS. It's an impressive presentation which leaves the audience saying "wow!".

In another digital radio initiative Panasonic, together with commercial broadcaster Spreeradio 105.5, will launch at IFA a unique DAB audio-visual data broadcasting project. Supported by Deutsche Telekom, IRT in Munich and various Panasonic R & D organisations in the UK and Germany, the project aims: "to establish a neutral and open minded forum for everybody to join to expand the scope and capabilities of DAB data applications" says Lothar Kerestedjian, Business Development & Marketing Manager for DAB, DVB and Multimedia at Panasonic Marketing Europe GmbH.

Also from Panasonic, expect to see prototypes of the VAP-2 DAB, an ultra small, low cost, low power tuner, and a GD35 mobile phone with DAB tuner.

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Digital One Auction

In July, Digital One, operator of the UK's national commercial digital multiplex, launched a website auction of a range of digital radio products including in-home tuners from Sony, VideoLogic and Technics, the Psion WaveFinder, and in-car units from Grundig and JVC. The response has been very encouraging with traffic to the site increasing by 185 percent.

For one week at the end of July, there were a total of 24 products on the block at the same time. That's the biggest digital radio auction ever and interest and bidding were high.

Several issues have emerged from this exercise which Digital One regards as key to the future marketing of digital radio. The interest generated by the auction, and the prices people are willing to pay for product indicate that while consumers are ready to buy, they are often held back by the low profile digital radio is given in the High Street. They have to work hard to find and buy a digital radio. Make the process easy and fun and those barriers quickly disappear.

Digital One's online auction continues on

<http://www.ukdigitalradio.co.uk>

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New Digital Radio Solution Shatters Cost Barriers

Texas Instruments Incorporated and RadioScape Ltd this month announced the delivery of their new DAB Digital Radio design to enable easy-to-build next-generation radios at a retail price point of under £100. The latest development in low-power, low-cost chip sets follows announcements of similar designs planned by Digital One/IMG and Panasonic.

Click here for the full story:

<http://www.ti.com/sc/docs/news/2001/01119.htm>

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Product News from Videologic

The new VideoLogic DRX-602ES rolls out to Europe, Canada and beyond after August this year. The tuner supports Band 3 and L-Band, and has native language support for English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, Portuguese, Finnish, Danish and Norwegian.

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Technical Topics

EPG Trials Go On-Air

Trials for an EPG (Electronic Programme Guide) for DAB Digital Radio begin in August and encompass broadcasts from both the BBC and commercial radio. The EPG group within the WorldDAB DAB/Mobile task force has been working hard over the past few months to develop a specification and to get the trials underway. EPG information is defined using XML and covers service information, programme information and group information. It is designed to be used by a whole range of DAB Digital Radio receivers from Hi-Fi to PC based decoders. BBC, NTL, Radioscape, PSDE and Unique Interactive have all been involved in writing the EPG specification and facilitating trials.

Contact: (tristan.ferne@rd.bbc.co.uk)

TMC-Alert C Broadcasts During IFA

German public broadcaster the ARD has been working with research institute IRT to develop a TMC Alert C service for digital radio. At IFA this year, manufacturers can test their receivers against TMC capabilities. ARD hopes to make TMC Alert C a regular service component within its digital radio services and to this end is preparing the technical infrastructure for delivery to network providers. ARD expects receiver and car manufacturers to offer smart DAB/TMC Alert C products soon.

For details on the technical implementation, please contact Heinrich Twietmeyer (twietmeyer@irt.de). For further information on ARD traffic information activities and strategies, please contact ARD spokesman Ruediger Malfeld.

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