

What's Hot in DAB!



The World DAB Forum Newsletter N.8 - January 2002

Welcome to the 8th edition of the World DAB Forum Email Newsletter. As this is the first newsletter of 2002, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year from the Project Office!

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

Contents

- [Australia Begins New Consumer Focused Trials](#)
- [Paris Prepares for New Services](#)
- [Sweden Switches Emphasis to Programming](#)
- [£99 Digital Radios Sell Out Within One Hour](#)
- [Taiwan Launches Fourth National Multiplex](#)

AUSTRALIA BEGINS NEW CONSUMER FOCUSED TRIALS

Early in December last year, the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) gave its approval to the commercial radio industry's application for temporary access to band III VHF spectrum in Sydney. Trials can now begin to test consumer response to a range of digital content and to assess comparative spectrum efficiency of L-Band and VHF.

A consortium of commercial broadcasters and the public broadcaster ABC is now planning a series of high profile, consumer focused digital radio trials in Sydney beginning early this year.

Joan Warner, CEO of FARB (Federation of Australian Broadcasters) the commercial radio industry's trade body, says "we will establish a number of consumer panels, with a large number of receivers, we hope to have several hundred in the country by mid-year. We are planning to test some exciting digital programming with consumer panels over the next 12 months". These plans could include rewind radio, traffic flows in real time, sports information or music details provided via a data display screen, and the capacity to download songs.

FARB and ABC tests are designed to establish what Australians think about the new values added by the possibilities of DAB digital radio. "Before spending money on national tests, we plan to learn what consumers want", says Joan Warner, "and perhaps to be able to give a detailed position paper to the Federal Government before it opens spectrum for alternative use."

The ABA Board's decision to issue a temporary licence to access VHF for the period of the trials demonstrates a commitment to ensure Australians have

access to the latest media innovations throughout the world.

For the full press release in English, please click here:

<http://www.worlddab.org/pressreleases/australia-dec.pdf>

[TOP](#)

PARIS PREPARES FOR NEW SERVICES

The 10 million citizens of Paris could soon be enjoying as many as 50 digital radio stations as the French regulatory body, CSA, awards nine multiplexes, each broadcasting around six radio stations, to a collection of public and commercial broadcasters.

Since 1997, digital radio in Paris has been limited to three multiplexes. In September 2000, the CSA announced it would replace these three multiplexes with nine new ones and offered a call for tender to DAB broadcasters in the capital.

The nine multiplexes went to commercial operators TDF, RTL, Lagardere, Numericast, Towercast, VDL, and Second Generation, with two being awarded to public broadcaster Radio France.

Details of exactly what services will appear on each multiplex are eagerly awaited, but whatever the outcome, radio listening choice and content in Paris and the surrounding area will be greatly increased, thus creating an attractive radio market.

The success of the Paris experiment could determine the future development of DAB digital radio across the rest of France.

[TOP](#)

SWEDEN SWITCHES EMPHASIS TO PROGRAMMING

Digital radio in Sweden is switching its focus from coverage to content. Government funding for public broadcaster Swedish Radio's digital output has been cut and the company has agreed with transmitter provider, Teracom, to switch off its transmitter network for a one year period in all but four of Sweden's major cities. Instead, the Swedish Broadcasting Company will concentrate funds on developing innovative and exciting programme content.

While this may appear a negative development at first glance, in fact it could ultimately prove a positive influence for DAB digital radio in Sweden. Legislation allowing commercial radio companies to broadcast on DAB is still pending and while the public sector has been on the air for some time, there are still no receivers on the market in Sweden. Thus, while the transmitter network has previously covered 85 per cent of the country, that population has been unable to easily purchase a digital radio and has enjoyed only a limited choice of listening.

The Government has also initiated a commission to analyse the future of digital radio in Sweden, with a final report expected by the beginning of 2003.

It is hoped that once legislation allows commercial broadcasters into the arena and receivers are readily available in Sweden, the increased resources now going into programme content will have produced an exciting listening

experience to capture public imagination.

The new status quo will see coverage of national public channels reduced to 40 per cent which will include the cities and surrounding areas of Lulea, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo. Within those restrictions, programme content and choice will become much more attractive to listeners.

Jan Danielsson, President of Teracom, says: "The basic recipe for success is quite simple. Listeners will demand DAB when it can offer a range of programmes that provide them with something more than what's available on today's analogue FM channels." Danielsson wants to see a mix of public and commercial channels offering a wide range of radio and Internet services via the DAB network as soon as possible in Sweden.

Swedish Radio is already looking at possible new services for its revised network and has announced it will double resources for new channels in 2003.

Read the Swedish Press Release in English by clicking here:

<http://www.worlddab.org/pressreleases/swedenjan02.pdf>

TOP

£99 DIGITAL RADIOS SELL OUT WITHIN ONE HOUR

At the end of last year, a strange thing happened in a few select spots around the UK. People took a day off work, made their way through darkened streets to closed, empty shops where they stood for hours in the freezing cold. One man camped overnight to be first in the queue. Five hundred came to shops in Glasgow, Coventry, Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, St Albans and London.

These and the 6,000 more who registered to buy on a special website, or entered competitions in the press and on local radio, were waiting for a special DAB digital radio going on sale at £99.

The promotion originated with an idea from Digital One and manufacturer VideoLogic. It involved making just 300 subsidised, portable digital radios and putting them on sale at eight locations around the country with a little on air and print support. It won the support of digital radio broadcasters and was implemented by the Digital Radio Development Bureau. The aim was to prove that if a manufacturer made a low cost digital radio, consumers would buy it.

And it worked! Within one hour, all 300 radios were sold out across the country.

If enough product had been available, the DRDB estimates up to £1million worth of DAB digital radios could have been sold in one week! It's a clear, strong message to manufacturers – in Europe and Japan – that DAB digital radio has the potential to be a big seller!

Visit the [DRDB](#) or [Digital One](#) web sites for further information.

TOP

TAIWAN LAUNCHES FOURTH NATIONAL MULTIPLEX

Following a period of test broadcasts, Taiwan's PC Radio – a consortium of commercial FM broadcasters – has launched its national multiplex. PC Radio is broadcasting five services, including a Public University educational channel called PC-University, providing e-learning content .

This is the fourth national DAB multiplex to launch in Taiwan. Others already on air are BCC (Broadcasting Corporation of China), CBS and UFO. Details of regional multiplex licences are expected to be announced soon.

Word from Taipei is that digital radio may receive a further boost from a Buddhist sect with more than three million members which is seeking to broadcast 24 hours a day on DAB. Analogue radio in Taiwan has almost reached saturation point with around 200 stations and the same number of pirate channels competing for listeners.

Please contact [Ms Pearlynn Pek](#) from the [World DAB Forum Asia DAB Committee](#) for more information about the situation in Asia.

ENDS