

What's Hot in DAB!



The World DAB Forum Newsletter N.18 - December 2002

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WorldDAB General Assembly

The WorldDAB General Assembly was held in Copenhagen October 10 - 11, hosted this year by Danmarks Radio. The following are highlights of just some of the issues raised at the Assembly, for a full report and the event proceedings WorldDAB members can go to http://www.worlddab.org/events/events_frame.htm

Leif Lonsmann, Managing Director, Danmarks Radio

Mr. Lonsmann outlined the current situation and strategy for DAB Digital Radio in Denmark where research has identified that, consumers wanted control of when they listened to their favourite stations in addition to new channels. Choice and convenience are the key to driving DAB Digital Radio sales.

Danmarks Radio's strategy, therefore, does not involve producing lots of new stations, but rather packaging the existing content into easy-to-choose programmes. Another element in Danmarks Radio's plan is to enable 100% coverage of the country by March 2003. This is on track with the network currently standing at 70%.

Quentin Howard, Chief Executive, Digital One

Mr. Howard presented the UK DAB experience, looking at how to move from a market ready broadcast condition to a mass market DAB product launch. Key to Digital One's strategy was a partner marketing approach to create relationships between suppliers, manufacturers and retailers - something never before addressed by broadcasters.

The importance of research in the mass market was emphasised and, as a result, Digital One identified the prime need to simultaneously reduce prices and expand the product range. They produced a £99 radio last Christmas that sold out in minutes, and, were involved in the development of new chip technology which helped generate positive competition among silicon manufacturers.

Mr. Howard told the Assembly that by 2003, 120,000 radios will have been sold in the UK, there is a new £99 radio on sales, and seven new models have entered the market. He said the entry price point needs to be reduced further and new services and product development still need to be seen.

Miguel Gonzalez Sancho Bodero, European Commission

The commissioner gave a presentation that focused on digital switchover, primarily for TV. His study considered the benefits and costs of analogue TV switch-off and looked at how this related to digital radio.

An independent study commissioned by the EC, the BIPE project, analysed three phases on the migration to digital TV. These were "pay" (first adopters of new technology), "free" (spontaneous adoption of free digital TV) and "forced" (forced conversion of remaining customers through policy.) Mr. Gonzalez noted, with regard to digital radio, that the first "pay" phase was now under way and that there was confidence for phase two.

Lim Hock Chuan, SBA

Mr Lim Hock Chuan reported on a six fold growth in Asia DAB over the past year, adding members from Australia, Brunei, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore. This, he said, demonstrates an ongoing interest in DAB from the Asia Pacific region. Already new services are on air in Australia, Brunei, China, Hong Kong, India, Korea and Taiwan.

- Singapore: Seven DAB services and 20 PAD/NPAD services. The Digital Broadcasting Development Fund is funding eight projects, including a mobile infotainment system and multimedia applications.

- Taiwan: Four trial services and much involvement from Taiwanese manufacturers, including Gyrosignal, TMC, Elansat, E-Lead and Mediatek.

- South Korea: Korean Broadcasting Systems began DAB services early this year and the Ministry of Information and Communications aims to officially begin digital radio service in 2003.

- China: Two trial networks in operation and is seen as a potentially huge market
- India: Plans to launch DAB services in Delhi by the end of 2002.
- Australia: has begun Band III trials and is running a consumer focused trial in Sydney.
- Brunei: continues to run trial transmissions.
- Malaysia: the spectrum for transmission was allocated in January 2002.

Helwin Lesch, Bayerischer Rundfunk

Mr. Lesch focused on the advanced data services available via DAB in Germany. The key benefit of DAB is its one-to-many potential that allows distribution of the same content to a number of receivers whilst maintaining complete control of the distribution path.

Several data projects were highlighted in Mr. Lesch's presentation including UMIS (Universal Mobile Information Services), a flexible platform for business, tourism and dining information; and an audio service with the possibility of personal user profiles. Dynamic Passenger Information System is a business-to-business transport system for use at bus stops updating passengers on bus arrivals and schedule changes. It is hoped to move this system directly onto buses to take advantage of DAB's mobile reception.

In Bavaria, there are plans in 2003 to display news, regional sports, travel schedules, flight information etc. on city trains and the underground. The ultimate goal in Germany is to have a national broadcast platform for essential nationwide data broadcasting.

Jenny Abramsky, BBC

Ms. Abramsky updated the Assembly on DAB digital radio progress at the BBC, where four new digital only national stations are on air, with the fifth launching in December. She said BBC plans to extend coverage to 85% by early 2004 were underway, and emphasised the continuing strong cooperation between the BBC and commercial stations through the DRDB.

With Christmas being a crucial time for digital radio sales in the UK, Ms. Abramsky said she was enormously encouraged by new receivers expected on the market and the range of receivers from different companies available on

the high street from popular retailers.

She encouraged countries to speak with one voice to receiver manufacturers to show them the global market potential that exists, noting that the BBC intended to encourage this market potential.

Duff Roman, DRRI Canada

Mr. Roman came to the Assembly with a positive story of DAB in Canada. 10 million potential listeners, 57 stations licensed with 14 more expected by the end of 2002, plus a further 15 million people covered in corridors between cities. In Canada, 250 stores are stocking a full range of receivers.

An AdBank on Canadian radio will allow the DRRI to run a sustained advertising campaign throughout 2003 expected to reach 40-50% of the target market on a weekly basis and with a media value of C\$2.5 million. He called for more lower priced in-car receivers and for the united support of the WorldDAB community to lobby the automobile industry in Europe and the Far East.

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World News

CANADA

A new promotional radio campaign in support of DAB launched on all key radio stations in Canada on December 4 (see above). Designed to heighten consumer awareness and drive traffic to RadioShack stores and the DAB website, the campaign airs in both English and French.

A comprehensive survey undertaken by DRRI will determine consumer response to DAB in Canada. The research seeks to determine buying preferences (home or in-car), the relevance of a critical price point of C\$500, and what features are of importance. DAB has also been included in a national study with a sample size of 40,000, the results of which will prove invaluable for marketing DAB.

DAB enjoyed a high profile presence at the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Conference held in Vancouver on Oct 20-22. Mainstream press coverage was substantial, and by the final day, there was little doubt left that DAB is the future of radio in Canada.

For further information, please contact David Bray at Hennessy & Bray Communications, <mailto:davidbray@sympatico.ca> , or visit <http://www.digitalradio.ca>

SWEDEN

The Swedish Parliamentary Committee assigned by the Government to map and analyse digital distribution of radio in Sweden has begun the second stage of its work looking at the future possibilities for digital radio and results will be presented in May 2003. The Committee visited London in November and were given a full overview of the situation in UK. In addition, a DAB workshop organised by the Swedish DAB Forum took place on 6th November, where the Parliamentary Committee were informed about radio companies plans for DAB.

FINLAND

It has been announced that the national and regional digital radio multiplexes in Finland will now be operated by Digita. Telemast Nordic has also been granted a licence to operate a local multiplex in the Helsinki region. Both companies will start early in 2003. Commercial licenses for services have yet to be granted. Coverage in Finland stands at 40% of the country with the Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE, broadcasting digitally.

For more information, please contact Pentti Kemppainen at <mailto:pentti.kemppainen@yle.fi> , or Annika Nyberg <mailto:annika.nyberg@yle.fi>

GERMANY

Blaupunkt has teamed up with several broadcasting networks in Germany to deliver training courses to sales personnel across central urban areas. Following successful training initiatives earlier this year, further seminars will take place in northern Germany at the beginning of 2003.

For further information, please visit <http://www.blaupunkt.de> or contact Carsten Guertler <mailto:carsten.guertler@de.bosch.com>

Radio advertising campaigns were launched in Baden-Wurttemberg and in Rheinland-Pfalz in November. The ads tell listeners about DAB Digital Radio retail outlets, and drives them to the Digitalradio Sudwest website for more information <http://www.digitalradio-sudwest.de>

Following the successful radio campaign that was conducted earlier this year, the BDR (Bayern Digital Radio) will commission a total of 2,600 radio commercials for DAB Digital Radio to be aired on 20 radio stations across Bavaria. The ads will promote DAB and the new content available, and will direct listeners to the website <http://www.digitalradio.de> for more information. A special feature on the site is the dealership directory, which offers the customer an ideal guide to Digital Radio in retail outlets with almost 800 entries.

To listen to the radio commercials and obtain further information, please visit: <http://www.bayerndigitalradio.de>

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Best Practices From the UK

A new radio advertising campaign for Christmas in the UK finds top recording artists talking about their latest musical works in a series of 60 second, documentary style interviews. With the premise that only DAB Digital Radio can do justice to the works of music's best, the promotion concludes: "When so much goes into making the music, shouldn't you get the most out of it? DAB Digital Radio".

The Digital Radio Development Bureau has launched a new national consumer help line for people to phone for information about stations, products and retailers.

And a new consumer website, <http://www.digitalradionow.com> launched in December. For the first time, visitors can key in a postcode and bring up a complete list of all the radio stations available to them, both BBC and commercial.

The DRDB is giving away a Ford Puma car and monthly cash prizes to retail staff who can enter a prize draw each time they sell a DAB radio. Nearly 500 independent retailers have signed up to the scheme, as well as many multiple chains.

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Manufacturers' News

PURE DOES IT AGAIN

PURE Digital's multi-award winning tuner, the DRX-701ES, has done it again. Already the winner of the What Hi-Fi Sound and Vision Product of the Year award, and the Hi-Fi Choice Product of the Year award, the tuner has just been awarded Stereo Tuner Product of the Year by Hi-Fi News magazine. For more information, please visit the PURE Digital website at <http://www.pure-digital.com/Reviews/Index.asp>

THE WOODSTOCK DAB 52

Following glowing reviews in the trade press, Blaupunkt can now safely say that the Woodstock DAB 52 is one of the best selling car radios with a CD drive in the price range of 400 Euros and above. The Society for Consumption, Market and Sales Research has reported that the Woodstock DAB 52 has reached second place since its market introduction in April, and even climbed to first place in June/July.

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Further News

Nordic Wireless, a venture capital firm in Sweden have a publishing platform for creating/scheduling and airing digital content, which is ready for use for DAB production and transmission.

For further information, please contact Mr Peter Blom at Nordic Wireless: Tel +46 8 555 29800, Mob +46 709 45 0100

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