

The digital radio report

”Digitization of the radio medium”

This is a summary of key points from the digital radio report issued by the Norwegian Government on Feb 4th 2011.

Digitalradio Norway (DRN) is owned by the three major radio broadcasters in Norway, P4, SBS radio and NRK (public). The purpose of DRN is to promote a smooth transition from analogue to digital broadcast. DRN has also applied for operator status in two DAB networks.

Part 1: Extracts from the presentation by the Department of Culture

Background

- 119 municipalities in Norway have only 3-5 FM radio channels. Digital broadcast will provide all Norwegian listeners with a wider channel selection.
- Double distribution on FM and DAB/DAB+ is very expensive
- The FM-network will need an upgrade in the near future
- Digital in-car reception will work better than FM
- The radio industry will be able to remain competitive by going digital
- The authorities will safeguard the interests of the listeners by setting demands when providing a plan to shut down FM

Main points

- Targeted FM shut-down: January 2017
- Conditions for shutting down FM: (*will be measured Jan. 2015, DRN comment*)
 - o NRK’s digital radio channels must have a population coverage similar to NRK P1 (*Virtually every Norwegian has P1 today, DRN comment*)
 - o Commercial DAB channels must have a population coverage of 90%
- Additional conditions to shut down FM in 2017
 - o Minimum 50% of the radio listeners must by 2015 listen to a digital platform every day (*this means coverage, not market share, and is therefore not comparable to for example the UK-measurements. DRN comment*)
 - o By 2015 there must be technically satisfactory adaptor solutions for in-car use, at a reasonable price
 - o If additional conditions are not met by Jan. 2015, FM will be shut down in 2019

Other points

- Small local radios can continue on FM after 2017. Exactly which ones will be decided in 2015.
- The two FM-licences due to expire in 2014 (P4 and Radio Norge) are proposed to be extended from 2014 to 2017

Part 2: Additional information by Digitalradio Norway

Choice of transmission technology

- Each radio channel will decide for itself whether to transmit DAB or DAB+. The department of Culture expects to result in a gradual transition from DAB to DAB+.
- The use of DRM and DRM+ are mentioned as possible options for local radio and marginal coverage in the NRK-multiplex. A conclusion on this is to be presented by 2013.

Content on air. Network expansion.

- The operator of each multiplex can decide which channels are allowed into each multiplex. The requirement for media diversity is considered to be met through the fact that both the NRK-multiplex and the existing national multiplex will be finalized (*"PI-coverage" and 90% coverage respectively, DRN comment*).
- The second national multiplex is to be tendered as soon as possible.

Information to the public

- The broadcasters, the electronics trade and the media authorities are expected to contribute with information to the public.
- Consumers should have simple access to information via telephone, on the internet and in stores. Groups of people with special needs in terms of information should have access to this.