

WorldDAB Automotive conference - STRONGER TOGETHER

- **The position of DAB+ in the car has never been stronger**
- **Broadcasters need to collaborate and compete with the new tech platforms**
- **Radio industry urged to collaborate through their industry bodies to keep broadcast radio prominent in the car dash**

24 June 2021: A record-breaking number of delegates attended the WorldDAB Automotive conference on 23 June, making this event truly the hub for all conversations on digital radio in the car. Over 500 delegates from over 70 countries registered to attend this live event, unique in bringing together the broadcast and automotive sectors to collaborate on securing the future of digital radio in the car.

In an opening keynote, Martin Koch, VW Group's Head of Entertainment & Car Functions affirmed that radio in the car is important not just for listeners and broadcasters, but also to car manufacturers, saying that they see their customers' demand for broadcast radio in the car is as high as ever, with radio still taking the major share of ear in the car. However, he warned that with larger screens now a reality on the car dash, and with more and more entertainment options fighting for the attention of drivers and passengers, radio needs to provide more than audio to attract and retain audiences.

A recurring theme at the conference was the need for broadcasters to both collaborate and compete with the tech platforms Apple Car Play or Android Automotive. Strategy Analytics' Roger Lanctot reported that the car has evolved to become a platform, with Google being both a partner and a competitor - enabling and supporting content, but with others crowding in.

Radio industry leaders Joan Warner from CRA Australia, Antonio Arcidiacono from EBU and Caroline Beasley from the US were unanimous in their message: broadcasters need to work together through their industry bodies to optimise the in-car radio experience to ensure that radio remains prominent and easily discoverable in the car.

WorldDAB President, Patrick Hannon outlined three key areas for the work of WorldDAB: ensuring that DAB+ is a basic feature in all cars, already in 80% of new cars as at end 2020; creating a good in-car experience through the work of the WorldDAB UX Guidelines and metadata campaign; and improving DAB+'s place in platforms such as Android Automotive which was very much a key theme of the conference.

Android Automotive's Guru Nagarajan confirmed that Google is aware of the need for collaboration with radio broadcasters to create the right ecosystem for broadcast radio within Android Automotive, and he too echoed the need for broadcasters to speak with one voice to ensure the best radio services for all users and listeners.

Other key themes from the conference:

- Aleksandra Gojkovic presented new research by the BBC revealing the complex ecosystem of needs and mediating factors driving the audio choices in-car listeners make such as availability and discoverability, with audio choices tending to be fast, instinctive, and gravitating towards the path of least resistance.
- The importance of WorldDAB's UX (user experience) Guidelines was emphasised by Radioplayer's Laurence Harrison and Caroline Graze. They told how a "perfect" hybrid radio (FM, DAB+, IP) needs to meet the WorldDAB UX guidelines, leading to a simple, user-centric approach to user interface design that hides the technical sophistication of the radio.
- Nick Piggott, Project Director of RadioDNS presented the WorldDAB/RadioDNS' Features Research first look, he revealed the high level of engagement all auto brands questioned have for DAB digital radio and radio in general, with most car receivers showing visual information provided by radio stations.
- On personalisation and localisation, broadcasters were encouraged to provide the right experience, not just to enable an excellent listener experience for the passenger, but also to create monetisation business models. Francis Goffin from RTBF spoke about how broadcasters in Belgium are doing this today while Christopher Ambrozic from TiVo gave an overview of how a system developed over many years for TV is being adapted to radio.

Notes

1. **WorldDAB** is the global industry association responsible for defining and promoting DAB digital radio. Our 1300+ experts cover 100 member organisations and 33 countries, and include public and commercial broadcasters, regulators, network providers and manufacturers of receivers, chips, professional equipment and automobiles.

The WorldDAB Automotive Working Group (AWG) works with automotive manufacturers and broadcasters to enable the growth of digital radio and position DAB+ at the heart of radio's hybrid future in automobiles. The AWG focuses on the user experience, antenna/receiver performance, TPEG and after-market products.

2. **WorldDAB's latest research shows that** DAB+ is now in over 80% of new cars in key European markets, driven by the impact of the European Electronic Communications Code which came into force end 2020, as well as the expansion of DAB+ in key markets such as Germany, France and Switzerland where preparations are ongoing to switch off FM in 2022-2023. The infographic for this research can be downloaded here: <https://www.worlddab.org/resources/infographic>
3. **WorldDAB Metadata Resources.** WorldDAB has produced resources to help broadcasters maximise the use of metadata, including: an animated video explaining why it's important for broadcasters' stations to have a visual presence in the car, and how this can improve the digital radio experience for drivers; an information sheet aimed at senior radio managers and those working at a more technical level; and a further video presentation to promote the use of metadata more widely within the broadcasting industry and raise awareness on the importance of metadata. These are available at <https://www.worlddab.org/automotive/metadata>
4. **CRA's Smart Audio Report 2021** will be published at an industry event on 13 July: <http://www.radioalive.com.au/register/smart-audio-report>

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