

“Automatic Safety Alerts on DAB+ mean lives will be saved,” IBC audience hears in WorldDAB conference session

Technical standards published, successful ASA tests in Germany

17 September 2024

New Automatic Safety Alerts (ASA) mean “lives will be saved as a result”, WorldDAB President Jacqueline Bierhorst said at the IBC Show in Amsterdam on Sunday. Bierhorst highlighted last week’s successful “Warntag” [warning day] tests in Germany, which featured the new ASA system via DAB+ for the first time.

The pioneering innovation in DAB+ digital radio technology aims to protect the public during emergencies by delivering reliable safety alerts without requiring an internet connection. The first roll-out of the ASA system will be in Germany, where many partners including public and private radio broadcasters such as ARD and Deutschlandradio, network providers, safety authorities and Fraunhofer IIS have come together.

WorldDAB’s conference session at the annual content and technology show, which attracts over 45,000 delegates from 170 countries to the Netherlands, also heard from the Chair of its Technical Committee, Lindsay Cornell. He announced that the international ETSI specifications – the official standards underpinning the ASA system - have now been approved and published, marking the successful completion of the technical work. Cornell emphasised that ASA gives broadcasters editorial control over the area in which receivers will respond to alerts, a key differentiator from existing emergency warning provisions. Cornell also showed a development receiver from Frontier Smart Technologies which had been used in the “Warntag” tests.

The importance of these innovations was underlined by Matthieu Rawolle from the EBU, who presented data from its “Radio in Times of Crisis” report. “The impact of natural disasters in Europe is increasing. Terrestrial distribution of radio including DAB+ has shown resilience in extreme situations. It’s a key pillar in times of crisis,” he said. Rawolle also highlighted that radio devices are ubiquitous, portable, easy to use, reliable and innovative. “It’s essential for radio to preserve its strengths while continuing to innovate,” he added.

The global growth of DAB+ was also featured at the IBC event. Xavi Redon Hernandez of network provider Cellnex Telecom detailed the rollout of DAB+ in Spain in partnership with public broadcaster RTVE. 12 sites are already broadcasting DAB+ in Spain, with more to come by the end of the year. “DAB+ is the best way to have good quality radio, a trusted public service, that is open to all, and fully digital radio,” Hernandez said, adding “DAB+ is the most efficient way to deliver linear digital radio, and it’s ready.”

Meanwhile Denis Nikola Kulišić from Croatia’s OIV explained the company started a trial of DAB+ in 2017 with four sites, and by 2022 had extended the network to 27 permanent locations. Kulišić announced it was further expanding DAB+ coverage. “As we speak, we have started a new extension, with an additional nine new transmitting locations, with better coverage of highways and state roads as a main target,” he explained. A new marketing campaign to raise awareness about the platform and popularisation of digital radio is also planned later this year, Kulišić added.

Many of these topics will be explored in more detail at WorldDAB Summit 2024, to be held in Zagreb on 14 November. Registration is now open via the WorldDAB website: <https://www.worlddab.org/>

Details of the new DAB+ ASA standard

The new specification for ASA "Automatic Safety Alert" via DAB+ has been standardised globally by ETSI. ETSI, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute, develops international standards for telecommunications and digital technologies, ensuring global compatibility and safety of devices and systems.

- ASA is standardised as [ETSI TS 104 090](#) "Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB); Emergency Warning System (EWS); Minimum requirements and test specifications for receivers."
- The corresponding system definition is [ETSI TS 104 089](#) "Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB); Emergency Warning System (EWS); Definition and rules of behaviour."

ASA feature overview

- Basis: Spoken announcement ("Alert") with all information on the warning situation: what, when, where; recommendations for action
- Geofencing: A warning area is transmitted in the data stream. The receiver analyses this on a mandatory basis
- Wake-up function: Receivers support "active stand-by" and can play back warning messages at any time. Radios are woken up by the data stream
- Synchronisation: Wake-up cycles are synchronised to the radio signal (ensemble), all receivers wake up every minute at second "0"
- Switching function: receivers evaluate references to warning announcements in other ensembles
- Dismiss: Possibility of manual suppression of the announcement by the listener once it has been heard. Broadcasters also have the option of broadcasting an updated warning message (update)

Graphics

- 1 Jacqueline Bierhorst, President, WorldDAB
- 2 WorldDAB's Will Jackson (left) talks to Lindsay Cornell, Chair, WorldDAB Technical Committee
- 3 Matthieu Rawolle, EBU
- 4 Xavi Redon Hernandez, Cellnex Telecom
- 5 Denis Nikola Kulišić, OIV
- 6 ASA prototype radio
- WorldDAB logo

Notes to editors

- WorldDAB conference session speakers and ASA partners are available for interview – please contact WorldDAB
- Further details of Automatic Safety Alerts are on the [WorldDAB website](#) and on the [Digitalradio Büro Deutschland website](#) (in German).
- Digitalradio Büro Deutschland press release (in German): [DAB+ radio on warning day: 'Automatic Safety Alert \(ASA\) successfully tested / address-specific population warning with wake-up function](#)
- WorldDAB Summit 2024 takes place in Zagreb on 14 November at Hilton Garden Inn Zagreb-Radnicka – trade journalists are welcome to attend, please contact WorldDAB.

About WorldDAB

WorldDAB is the global industry association responsible for defining and promoting DAB digital radio. By bringing together radio industry professionals, WorldDAB provides knowledge and expertise that helps countries successfully adopt and implement broadcast digital radio.

Our 1300+ experts from 120 member organisations in 38 countries across the globe include public and commercial broadcasters, regulators, network providers and manufacturers of receivers, chips, professional equipment, and automobiles.

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