

DIGITAL RADIO SUMMIT 2019



EVENT SUMMARY

tech.ebu.ch/drs2019

Disclaimer: This report is intended as a quick overview of the event. Before quoting any of the speakers we recommend that you refer to the original presentation. Videos will be available in due course.

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the Digital Radio Summit

Antonio Arcidiacono (EBU)

BROADCASTER VS. PLATFORM

The vast majority of current radio consumption is through broadcast – that's where the strength of radio remains today. But the competition is shifting from broadcaster vs. broadcaster to broadcaster vs. platform. And this is a good thing.

THE NEED TO INNOVATE

You need to create engaging and more modern user experiences every day so that your audience follows you. If you're not innovating and somebody else is, then you're in trouble.

TIME FOR NGA

My feeling is that today the technology is mature enough to launch Next Generation Audio for more immersive experiences. This could be an area of growth for the coming years.



“Broadcasters should work with manufacturers – this is an end-to-end experience, and one without the other does not work.”

KEYNOTE SESSION



Where next for Norway?

Marius Lillelien (NRK) interviewed, by Graham Dixon (EBU), on how things are going for DAB+ in Norway, following the switch-off of FM in 2017.

GROWING AGAIN

When switch-off happened, listening fell by about 20%, but it has been growing and is now at the same level as before switch-off.

NEW STATIONS ARE POPULAR

35% of the time spent listening is now to new stations that did not exist six years ago. One of the new stations, NRK P1+, is the third biggest in the market.

SWITCH-OFF DROVE INNOVATION

Rather than taking energy away from other projects, the FM switch-off forced NRK to use every possibility available. They put considerable effort into developing their app and web services. And switch-off brought radio back into the conversation nationally.

CAR ADAPTOR DIFFICULTIES

As cars are expensive and it takes 15 years to replace the whole fleet, DAB+ adaptors were important. However, they were not straightforward to install and of varying quality.



GOOD COVERAGE; POOR RECEPTION

Some of the cheaper car adaptors did not have service following implemented. For the users this was perceived as poor coverage, when in fact it was the reception rather than the coverage that was poor.

DON'T BE FIRST!

Norway had not expected to be first – they thought the UK would have completed switch-off by the time they did it. Being the first globally generated several problems and challenges.

THE WIDER VIEW



Australia

Jeremy Millar (ABC)



AM IS STILL IMPORTANT

The need to deliver emergency warning information to vast areas means AM services must remain on air. They are reluctant to go with DRM as there's a lack of receivers and no automotive support.

DAB IS GROWING

There are 4.8 million DAB+ receivers in the market and, where it is available, it attracts 36% of listening. DAB+ listening is growing faster than IP streaming.

CRACKING THE YOUTH MARKET

ABC has huge success with Triple J, targeting 18-24 year olds. It's not clear why it's successful, but one key factor is that all staff are under 28 and it's not associated with the ABC brand.

North America

David Layer & Brian Savoie (NAB)



HD RADIO SPREADING

HD Radio has not been formally adopted in Canada, but broadcasters are adopting it. 35% of new cars in 2018 had it installed. Also growing in Mexico

ALL-DIGITAL FOR AM

For AM broadcasters, it's likely that future survival will require moving to an all-digital approach. WWFD is testing the proposition as the first all-digital AM station to be licensed.

SMART SPEAKERS ARE HIGHLY RELEVANT

The top use cases for smart speakers are important for radio audiences: streaming music, news, weather, etc.

AMAZON MORE OPEN; GOOGLE MORE WIDESPREAD

Exploring the two main competing platforms indicates that Amazon is more open than Google. The latter leverages its Translate business to be present in more languages and markets.

ENSURING RADIO'S PLACE

As Amazon looks at offline scenarios for Alexa in cars, NAB is trying to ensure that radio's place in that environment is understood.

How to plan a DAB network

Lucia Luisa La Franceschina (Rai Way)

UPDATED GUIDANCE AVAILABLE

EBU Tech 3391, openly available, provides updated guidance on how to plan a DAB network. The original report was prepared for WRC-04, but there is much more real world experience now.

MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUES

The EBU/BNE working group is now working on a new report on measurement techniques for DAB networks.

DAB+ over IP

Alex Erk (IRT)

EU-FUNDED HYBRID RADIO PROJECT

Using OMRI (Open Mobile Radio Interface), the aim is to use the same service layer on all platforms. Everything needed is already present in the DAB+ mux – this project brings it to the IP world.

TRY THE PUBLIC DEMO

You are invited to test the platform and provide feedback. It's publicly available from <http://editstream.irt.de>

Sustainable broadcasting

Jigna Chandaria (BBC)

BBC SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The first part focuses on what BBC itself does; the second part is about how they work with the rest of the industry; the third part concerns the effect on the audience, using content to inspire change.

IMPACT OF DISTRIBUTION

An initial life cycle assessment of radio suggests that distribution is likely to be the biggest component in terms of environmental impact. The move to digital reduced the power consumption but this was initially offset by more power-hungry receivers.



INNOVATIONS – PANEL DISCUSSION



Broadcast and 5G

Moderator: Peter MacAvock (EBU)

Marcello Lombardo (EBU)

“The first 4G services started in 2009 and today we have 95% coverage in the main countries. If we assume a similar trend for investment in 5G, we won’t see a running service before 2030. On digital radio, do we really want to wait 11 years for something where we don’t even know what form it will finally take?”

Lindsay Cornell (BBC)

“Most EBU Members use things other than broadcasting as well – they have their web services, and so on. [...] We’re so familiar with broadcast that we underestimate what it can achieve.”



Patrick Hannon (WorldDAB)

“For me 5G is fundamentally complementary to broadcast. Mobile and IP is part of the overall picture. But there are three key issues: if you’re the broadcaster, do you want to hand over gatekeeping power to an MNO?; secondly, you’d need so many base stations for universal coverage and who’s going to pay for that?; finally, it’s about reliability in times of emergency.”

Nick Piggott (RadioDNS, from the floor)

“The point is radio is a media experience in the car. We might have a view on what the experience is, but everybody’s having comparative experiences with Spotify or MP3. They’re getting at the very least an image, whereas most radio broadcasters are only using text. We’ve given broadcasters tools to reinvent radio in the car, and broadcasters think it’s important to do that, but they’re not picking up the tools and using them.”

RADIO IN THE CONNECTED CAR



What to expect from EU legislation

Wouter Gekeire (EBU)

DIGITAL RADIO MANDATORY IN CARS

As of 21 December 2020, all new car radios must be capable of receiving and reproducing at least radio services via digital terrestrial broadcasting services.

SUCCESS FOR BROADCASTERS

This was the result of successful lobbying by the EBU and other partner organizations.

Talking with manufacturers

Laurence Harrison (Digital Radio UK & WorldDAB)

WHAT DO CAR MANUFACTURERS WANT?

The WorldDAB Automotive Group has had extensive conversations with car manufacturers. Their wishlist from the broadcast industry:

- Quality data
- Collaboration
- Test routes for DAB and feedback on the ground
- Consistency of implementation (e.g. on service following)



RADIO IN THE CONNECTED CAR – PANEL DISCUSSION



The future of radio in the connected car

Moderator: Laurence Harrison (WorldDAB)

Martin Koch (Audi)

“Radio is the most used entertainment in the car, so if the radio experience is great, the car experience is great.”

The auto manufacturers have to work hard to avoid showing the customer just how ugly digital radio is. Usually there are neither station logos nor artwork. “Broadcasters need to use the technologies they have available.”

Imagine a time when these other services are integrated as radio is today – Sirius XM, Spotify, Apple – if they’re integrated like the radio then you have real competition. They’re outside the car today, but they’re coming closer.



Joe D’Angelo (Xperi)

“We’re singularly focused on enhancing broadcast radio in the car.”

“What we’ve done [with Connected Radio] is looked at this challenge and the resources available to broadcasters. We’ve tried to collate these different systems to deliver a global platform back to the car companies to enable hybrid radio.”

“Where do you draw the line between your over-the-air services and your app streaming platforms? We need guidance to know where you want to draw that line, to make sure we don’t turn radio into an app.”

Nacho Seirul-Lo Salas (NXP)

“NXP semiconductors are in more than 500 million cars in the last 10 years.”

“Broadcast radio will remain relevant – it has better coverage than the telecom network and is more reliable. There are no capacity limitations; it’s more cost-effective and also free for users.”

LOOKING AHEAD



Radio's multiplatform future

Eugenio La Teana (RTL)

CONTENT IS KING

You can put all the technology inside the radio, but without good content we will not win the battle. But it's about being multimedia, multi-platform and interactive.

START WITH LIVE

Radio should be live 24/365. Start with getting them to switch on the radio, and then overlay additional services on top of that. The User Interface is critical – if it's not easy to use the services, we will lose the battle.



New digital waves across Europe

Zorana Bojcic (RTS Serbia)

TWO KEY PLATFORMS

For RTS, both digital broadcast and internet radio will be important in future. Trial DAB+ transmissions began in October 2018. The strategy will go shortly to a public consultation, after which there will be a tender for the first 16 channel mux.



LOOKING AHEAD – PANEL DISCUSSION



The second coming of the podcast

Moderator: David Fernandez Quijada (EBU MIS)

Linear radio in the UK in 2018 accounted for 96% of listening; podcasts were at only 4%.

Audio advertising spend in the US in 2017 was 98% radio, 2% podcast.

James Cridland (podnews.net)

Apple is responsible for about 85% of all podcast listening, including the platforms to which it pushes podcasts, but it doesn't monetize them at all. This seems like a business risk.

Podcasting seems to do well in countries where the level of English is good; it does less well in countries where that isn't the case. That may be to do with the amount of content available.

As soon as you move from smart speakers to headphones, then live streams do much worse. Podcasting is a way for radio to retain its relevance in an on-demand market.

Linda Rulle (Latvijas Radio)

There's some platform chaos, but they're trying to get their podcasts to wherever they are requested. Radio Latvia podcasts are available on Google Podcasts but the platform is not accessible in Latvia!

Florent Latrive (Radio France)

France Culture has been podcasting over a decade and currently gets more than 24 million downloads per month. It has been a long boom, rather than a second coming.

The blockbuster, *Les Chemins de la philosophie*, receives 230,000 broadcast listeners per day, but also has 125,000 downloads.

Growth of radio listening has flattened, but podcast downloads are growing by 30% per year.



EBU