



DIGITAL RADIO (I)O

SUMMIT

AN EBU EVENT

SHAPING RADIO'S MULTIPLATFORM FUTURE

DIGITAL RADIO SUMMIT 2020 EVENT SUMMARY

EBU, Geneva – 12 February 2020

Presentations and videos:

<https://tech.ebu.ch/drs2020>

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 and check with the speakers themselves.

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KEYNOTE SESSION / A BROADER VIEW



Welcome to the Digital Radio Summit

Antonio Arcidiacono (EBU)

Radio is one area where public service media lead the market. Live content remains a strong differentiator – nothing will replace it. And the ability to deliver news as it happens in real time is the other big differentiator.

We are evolving towards a future that will include broadcast for live content and events; unicast for personalized, one-to-one experiences; and multicast, using local storage in receiver devices, for push content. The smartphone will be a unifying device that knits together the various different platforms and listening contexts.



Update on North America

David Layer (NAB)

[HD Radio](#) is stable in the USA, but showing impressive growth in Mexico and Canada. There are receivers in about 25% of all cars, but with higher penetration in the major markets, e.g. 40% in New York. Notably, SiriusXM is [rolling out 360L, a hybrid radio solution](#).

An informal survey at the LA Auto Show showed that HD Radio was in 82% of new cars. Fewer physical radio buttons, fewer tuner knobs, but more cursor knobs.

As voice platforms become more important, NAB is talking to Google and Amazon about how broadcasters can be more involved in selecting where a stream originates from.



The future of in car listening: opportunities and choices

Eleanor Van Heyningen, Asha Knight (BBC)

Roughly a third of all radio listening is in the car, representing 13% of all time spent with BBC by UK audiences. Since 2012 there's been a 17% growth in UK in-car radio listening, but there's still no audio at all 50% of the time, so there's a big opportunity. There are DAB radios in 95% of new cars, so the preconditions are good. But there are three main drivers for change: young people tend to use a tethered device in the car; the connected car is here; and Big Tech wants to play a bigger role.

BBC sees [Radioplayer](#), which it part-owns, as the best route to protecting its key principles of prominence, attribution and data, while supporting the longer-term strategy. [BBC Sounds](#) will help keep pace with the trends.



Update on Germany

Michael Reichert (BR) in conversation with Graham Dixon (EBU)

We're headed towards a very complicated ecosystem in terms of broadcasting and platforms. [Radioplayer Germany](#) is an important part of the picture for ARD, even if it is not a shareholder. It's important for broadcasters to have a consolidated voice towards the car industry, and Radioplayer serves that purpose well.

DAB is doing quite well in Germany, with coverage of 90% now. Three positive indicators: in southern Germany more DAB radios are sold than FM radios; a second national multiplex, with commercial stations, will launch in September; and the EU directive will put more DAB receivers in cars.



Content Atomization: the first fleet

Ruth Degraeve (VRT), Ben Rosenberg (BBC)

The need for content atomization comes from thinking about the users and how best to serve them. It's also about better distribution of content on the growing range of platforms. There's a balance to be struck between maximizing *findability* of content, regardless of the platform, or trying to shepherd people onto your own native platforms. Having some element of control is paramount.

For **BBC**, atomization is a key enabler for experiments with interactive formats, such as an [interactive news bulletin on Alexa](#). In 2020, they will launch their own voice assistant, Beeb, to be accessed through as many platforms as possible and offering a direct, trusted relationship to those communicating with the organization. And with recognition of UK accents!

VRT developed its own audio chaptering solution, with mostly automated workflows, that now enables them to offer interviews very quickly on their own native apps and websites. But they also put some resources into a news-based Google Action. They used a known VRT presenter to voice this – this approach worked well and is a path recommended to other broadcasters.

Podcasts: From conception to publication

Cathinka Rondan (NRK), Cheyenne Mackay (SRF), Sinatou Saka (FMM)



NRK are moving resources from linear radio to original audio. It's not seen as a big risk, as good content is created and some podcasts end up on radio also. The way we listen to radio is altered by podcasts. The *liveness* of radio is quite unique, which you can't get on podcasts.

[Friminutt](#), a native podcast, tops the [weekly podcast charts in Norway](#), with twice as many listeners as the next on the list. The podcast strategy places a priority on “the voices you trust”.

They distribute on Spotify and Apple but are reconsidering how they distribute on third party platforms, having noticed that they edit artwork, sometimes removing the NRK logo even. These platforms are thus not just distributors – they also function as editors, in a way.



[Pipifax](#) is a native podcast from **SRF**, recorded in Cheyenne's kitchen. As a niche podcast in Swiss German, it doesn't have a huge listenership, but they are very engaged. WhatsApp is used to source listener-generated content. SRF doesn't yet have a podcast strategy, but does have guidelines



[Afrofuturismes](#), launched last year, is a podcast that builds on the international success of the movie Black Panther, which brought [Afrofuturism](#) to a wider audience. Unusually for a news station (**RFI**), it mixes fiction and non-fiction.

Sinatou works alongside a producer and sound engineer. In addition to France, listeners are found among the diaspora in the USA, in Senegal and Ivory Coast.

PRESERVING RADIO'S IDENTITY



Radioplayer

Laurence Harrison (Radioplayer)

Around as a broadcaster-owned non-profit since 2012. Although its apps and aggregation platforms remain important, [Radioplayer](#) is focusing more and more on the car. In-car listening accounts for 25% to 50% across Europe. Radioplayer is in ten countries now, with more to follow.

The aim is to prevent radio falling behind in the increasingly complex ecosystems. It's about preserving the *identity of radio*, through better UI design; *broadcaster identity*, through metadata provided via the [Worldwide Radioplayer API](#); *distribution identity*, broadcast and hybrid; and having a clear vision of *radio's future identity* in dashboards.



Radio in many languages

David Rem-Picci (Vatican Radio)

The Pope decided in 2015 that the Vatican's media and communications systems should converge. Nine entities, including Vatican Radio, the press office, the television centre, the printing press, etc, had to be merged into [a single Dicastery](#).

The brand Vatican Radio was maintained (Radio Vaticana Italiana), with new brands [Vatican News](#) and Vatican Media. Multiculturalism and innovation have always been recognized by Vatican Radio. Its service, in 38 languages, represent a mix between modern and old, digital and analogue.



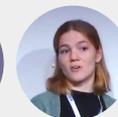
Yle Areena

Toni Ljungberg (Yle)

[Areena](#) is the most popular media streaming platform in Finland, even more popular than Netflix. Audio-on-demand represents 10% of usage, with live audio 9%. It is also Finland's biggest player in audio streaming.

A key goal is to be on the right platforms, which includes cars. Developers have worked to port the Areena apps to the Android and Apple systems (although Android Auto isn't yet officially available in Finland).

With more than 100,000 audio assets, personalization is very important. Mostly based on cookies, but there's also a non-mandatory login that enables added features like favourites or "continue watching".



Improving interaction between radio makers & listeners

Sen De Paepe (VRT), Chaja Libot (VRT)

Within the framework of the EU [MARCONI project](#), VRT and [Pluxbox](#) organized a one-week hackathon to create a prototype integrated radio production system. The aim was to make the information and functions that would usually be spread across several monitors available on a single touchscreen.

The cross-functional team included researchers, media technology experts, designers, developers and – crucially – the content creators themselves. A working product has now been created based on the proof-of-concept that emerged from the hackathon.



Building DAB networks with helicopters

Stan Roëhrich (Digris)

[Digris](#) found its market targeting smaller broadcasters in Switzerland as they prepare for FM switch-off. It's licensed by Ofcom for the installation of local DAB+ networks. It also operates in France now and is active on 43 transmission sites. They use open source software for the transmission chain and a 100% IP backbone.

Using helicopters, rather than cranes, to install masts and antennas is usually cheaper and sometimes much cheaper. They save both time and money. The one-time overflight charge is about 550 CHF, plus 42 CHF/minute. Mobile cranes can cost up to 2,400 CHF per day.



Low-cost digital radio broadcasting

Matthias Brändli (opendigitalradio.org)

The Opendigitalradio Mobile Multimedia Broadcasting tools ([ODR-mmbTools](#)) are like a set of bricks that can be used to set up digital radio broadcasting chains. They include audio encoders, multiplexers, modulators, and scripts, examples, monitoring and documentation. The tools are all available open source.

There are ODRmmb services on air in Switzerland, France, Germany and several other European countries. Small-scale networks in the UK seem to be still in test mode. The community continues to work on new tools and applications.



Panel: The future of radio in the connected car

Matthieu Beauval (Radio France)

Radio France is trying to identify the best way to ensure a presence in cars in future. There is a lot of uncertainty about which brands will use Android Auto and which will have their own in-house solution. Current estimates are that 68% of cars in France allow a smartphone connection, 53% are equipped with a voice assistant, and 13% are equipped with Apple or Android systems.



Daniel Freytag (SWR)

The [SWR audio lab](#) focuses on standards/metadata, platforms, new formats and flexibility. It's not just about pushing linear radio to the car. The ARD Audiothek app works on Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. A new app will enable Skippable Radio. The most important part is to get the metadata right. Collaboration is also key, like in EBU groups.



Nick Piggott (RadioDNS)

[RadioDNS](#) is trying to bring the different parties together and identify the common challenges around connected cars. For example, broadcasters need to get a better idea of baseline figures from the car manufacturers. Car manufacturers, on the other hand, point out that many stations are not transmitting information that would be really helpful for them.



[EBU Media Intelligence Service, Digital Radio 2020 report](#) (login required)



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