

DIGITAL & HYBRID RADIO

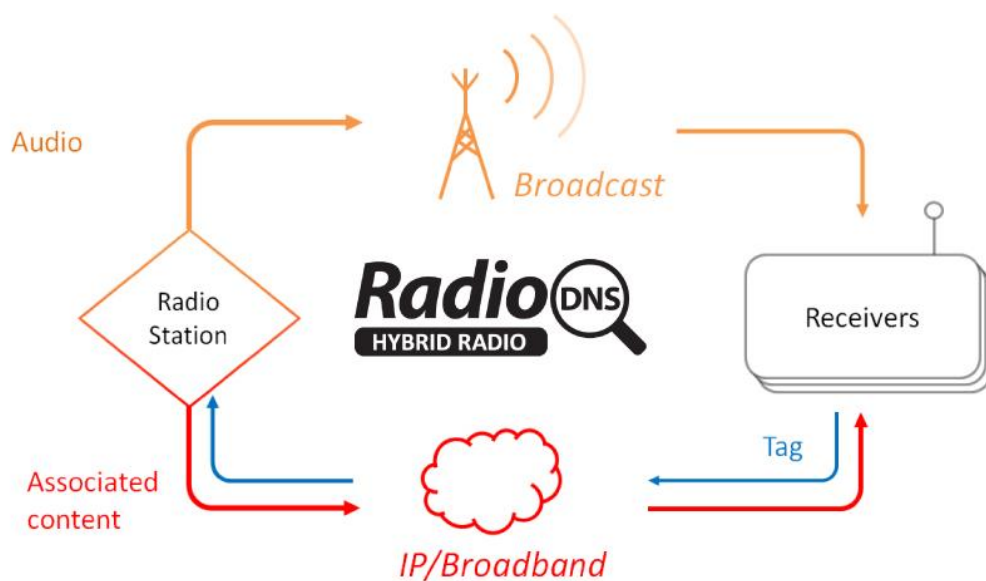
Radio in Europe is turning to digital. Whether delivered over terrestrial broadcast or over an internet connection, broadcasters have embraced the potential for new forms of content and new modes of consumption to better satisfy current and future demands of their audiences.

BACKGROUND

Norway was the first country to implement a digital radio switchover plan, resulting in increased choice for listeners. This is predicted to lead to growth in the overall market by the end of 2018. Switzerland is expected to move to DAB+ as the main distribution channel in 2020, and the UK recently passed the 50% mark for digital share of listening.

Digital broadcast services offer audiences a range of audio alongside additional data: e.g. textual and visual information on the current content and programme guides, all available free-to-air.

Hybrid radio enhances the user experience on connected radio devices able to receive both digital broadcast and IP services, enabling seamless switching of audio between broadcast and IP, offering opportunities for personalization and adding a backchannel to broadcasters.



RadioDNS promotes a set of open standards that enable additional services and applications to be built.

THE CHALLENGE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

While traditional receivers are still the dominant device for radio listening, ownership and use of smart speakers is on the rise. At the same time, the range of listening options, whether on mobile or portable devices, smart speakers or in connected cars, has expanded greatly. Music streaming platforms, podcasts and other formats that are not radio in the traditional sense all compete for listeners. To remain visible and relevant, PSM organizations should seek to leverage the possibilities of digital and hybrid radio in the following five areas:

1. Branding and logos

Having a strong identity is key for radio stations. Devices with large colour screens can prominently show a station logo and other information, such as genre and description. Additional station information can be used to more effectively provide sonic branding and name recognition on voice-controlled platforms.

2. Contextual on-air information

The display of textual information, like the current artist and track title, is a key benefit of digital broadcasting to listeners. Hybrid radio can add images – such as album artwork, traffic reports, news or advertising, delivered either by broadcast or by an IP connection.

3. Seamless listening

Devices that seamlessly switch between FM, DAB+ and IP, based on reception quality, provide an improved user experience and enable audiences to keep listening to the content they want, wherever they are.

4. Interactivity

Users can interact with radio devices in new ways, such as using voice user interfaces to actively request content, as well as being able to communicate directly with the broadcaster. Being able to 'tag' or bookmark content for later interaction, perhaps on another device, is an opportunity for broadcasters to build personalized services for the listener.

5. Personalization

The rise of personalization and on-demand listening is a place where radio, with its wealth of content, can excel. Enabling a listener to blend between linear, semi-linear and fully personalized radio can create a unique and engaging user experience, while providing broadcasters with valuable audience insights.

WHAT IS THE EBU DOING?

The EBU is active through several expert groups, working with Members to understand, implement and make effective use of digital and hybrid radio technologies.

Working with other organizations, including RadioDNS and WorldDAB, the EBU is involved in the promotion and development of open standards that enable broadcasters and device manufacturers to work with hybrid technologies

The **EBU open.radio** initiative seeks to maintain the prominence of radio services across existing and future automotive, mobile and home devices. An element of this initiative is the creation of a service platform that broadcasters can use to provide their own hybrid services.

EBU Digital Radio Week takes place every February, with a range of meetings and workshops, as well as the annual RadioHack event. This includes the Digital Radio Summit, a key annual update on technologies, services and strategies in digital and hybrid radio.

FIND OUT MORE

Strategic Programme: Radio

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

RadioHack Community

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

EBU open.radio initiative

<https://open.radio>

Free / open source hybrid radio tools

<https://ebu.io>