

UK Government says DAB to be the primary platform for radio

The Digital Britain report released today has more positive news for the digital radio industry. UK government policy is committed to DAB becoming the primary distribution network for radio.

Also announced today are the UK's best ever digital radio listening figures, with 35% of homes using DAB digital radio, by far the most popular digital platform for listening to radio.

London, 29 January 2009

The UK government today released its 'Digital Britain' report and once again confirmed its policy commitment to making DAB digital radio the primary means of migrating from analogue to digital radio.

The Digital Britain report follows the Digital Radio Working Group's own report published in December 2008 which recommended steps towards analogue radio switch off as soon as 2017. Today's UK government report endorses these steps for migration to digital radio and sets out its strategy for DAB to become the primary radio platform in the UK.

WorldDAB President, Mr Quentin Howard, said "The Digital Britain report is a ringing endorsement for DAB digital radio, further assuring consumers and the radio industry that the platform is not only highly successful but here to stay. Sales of DAB receivers continue to be strong in established markets with many new countries adopting DAB standards, such as Australia and China. Meanwhile France and Germany are rolling out the DAB family in 2009 and 2010, confirming the platform as Europe's preferred digital radio standard."

In his statement today Lord Carter, Minister for Communications, Technology and Broadcasting said "The innovation, creativity and vitality of our communications industries rightly demand clarity from Government on its role and a framework for the future."

The report sets out a number of UK Government decisions which include:

- a clear statement of policy commitment to DAB
- a plan for digital migration of radio and the necessary criteria to achieve this
- the creation of a new Digital Radio Delivery Group to increase the attractiveness, availability and affordability of DAB receivers and to advise on the Digital Migration Plan
- the intention to expand the BBC's DAB network to match current FM analogue coverage

Meanwhile the Digital Radio Development Bureau announced that sales of digital radios up to the end of 2008 had reached 8.53 million in the UK and official RAJAR audience figures released today show radio listening via DAB digital radio accounts for 11.4% of all radio UK listening, with DAB ownership increasing to 35%.

PURE, one of the leading manufacturers of DAB digital radio products, announced record export growth in 2008 to Switzerland, Denmark and Norway. A study in Denmark released in December shows that 34% of Danes now own a digital radio and that it is popular in all age groups.

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A copy of the 'Digital Britain' interim report can be found at

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/media_releases/5783.aspx

Notes to Editors: The foundation standard DAB and related standards such as DAB+/DMB can be seen and heard in nearly 40 countries from Canada to Australia, across Europe and the Far East. Countries including India and South Africa are testing DAB and developing consumer trials. More than 500 million people worldwide are within range of a DAB/DMB transmitter, and there are over 1000 services on air. Created from the onset to enable mobile reception with audio, video and multimedia capabilities, the DAB standard has recently extended its lead into the world of mobile multimedia delivery through its compatible DMB application. DMB is DAB's Mobile TV solution and shares the same core standard, infrastructure and receiver technology. The launch of the world's first Mobile TV services took place in Korea in December 2005 using DMB technology. DMB is on-air in China in five major cities including Beijing, and more DAB, DAB+, and DMB services are expected to launch in Europe during the next year. The addition of DAB+ as a highly efficient audio coding has been ETSI standardized and many countries throughout Europe and in the Asia Pacific are planning commercial launches of DAB+ digital radio services in 2009.

About WorldDMB

WorldDMB is an international, non-governmental organisation with a mandate to promote the awareness, adoption and implementation of Eureka 147 based technologies worldwide. The organisation's name refers to 'digital multimedia broadcasting' including radio, mobile TV and broadcast new media services. Its members include public and commercial broadcasters, receiver manufacturers and other companies and bodies committed to the promotion of services and equipment based on the Eureka 147 family of standards.