



DIGITAL RADIO UK PRESS RELEASE

NEW NATIONAL RADIO NETWORK WELCOMED

Digital Radio UK and the automotive industry today welcomed Ofcom's advertisement for the second national commercial network of radio stations on DAB. The launch of Digital Two could provide the capacity for over 15 further national radio stations and lead to the launch of new digital-only stations.

It is thought there will be a number of bidders for Digital Two, as the national network is known, and that a winner would be announced at the end of 2014. Ofcom recently held a consultation on the Broadcasting Technical Code for DAB which included the use of DAB+ for up to 30% of the new Digital Two capacity. The current national commercial network, a group of stations known as Digital One, broadcasts 14 national commercial radio stations on DAB to around 90% of the UK population. These radio stations are listened to by over 10 million people and they have successfully increased listening by 25% in the last year. They include Kiss, LBC, talkSPORT, Absolute Radio, Absolute 80s, Absolute Radio 90s, Classic FM, Capital Xtra, Smooth, Planet Rock, Team Rock, BFBS, UCB and Premier Christian Radio.

The licence for Digital Two was previously awarded in 2007 to a consortium, the 4 Digital Group, led by Channel 4, including BSkyB and UTV. Channel 4 ultimately decided not to proceed and pulled out but Ofcom chose to protect the spectrum for future use. Since 2007 the number of DAB digital radios sold has tripled to almost 20 million. Nearly 50% of UK homes now have a digital radio, and 55% of new cars have digital radio fitted as standard. Communications Minister Ed Vaizey announced that Digital Two would be advertised in 2014 by Ofcom at a speech at the Go Digital Conference in December 2013.

A new minimum specification and digital tick mark for UK radios also announced by Minister Ed Vaizey is currently being rolled out, and includes both DAB and DAB+ standards.

Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries, said: *“We also want people to be able to choose from the widest choice of national commercial radio stations, like Classic FM. But that isn’t possible at the moment, because our current national commercial multiplex is full. To address that, Ofcom will offer the licence to build and run a second national commercial multiplex (D2).”*

Ford Ennals, CEO of Digital Radio UK, says: *“We welcome the advertisement by Ofcom for this new national network of stations on DAB as this will increase the additional station choice on DAB and could lead to further innovation and creativity.”*

Siobhan Kenny, CEO of RadioCentre, says: *“More commercial stations are good for listeners in a growing radio advertising market.”*

Mike Hawes, CEO of SMMT, says: *“Drivers are taking to digital radio in ever greater numbers. Over half of all new cars sold now come with digital radio as standard and, with a range of affordable after-market products now available, all drivers will be able to enjoy the wider range of stations now available on this ever-expanding network.”*

About Digital Radio UK

Digital Radio UK works with Government, broadcasters, manufacturers, retailers, and a wide range of stakeholders to make digital radio the natural choice at home, in car and on the move, and to help secure UK radio’s digital future. Digital Radio UK’s Board comprises representatives from the BBC, RadioCentre, Arqiva, Global Radio, Bauer Media, Communicorp, together with techUK and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

For further information

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