

## **“Revving up radio” at WorldDAB Automotive 2024**

- **WorldDAB President describes radio as “relentless”, calls for continued collaboration to ensure broadcast radio’s prominence in the dashboard**
- **International organisations including EBU in Europe and NAB in United States come together to highlight broadcast radio’s strength, and new in-car opportunities**
- **Key DAB+ markets grow with new multiplexes in Austria, coverage rollout in Spain and marketing to drivers in Switzerland**

### **17 June 2024**

The unique annual WorldDAB Automotive event brought together both in-person and online, over 300 executives from across the global automotive and broadcast sectors in Prague, Czechia on Thursday (13 June).

Setting the scene, WorldDAB President, Jacqueline Bierhorst made a passionate call for continued collaboration to ensure broadcast radio’s prominence in-car. She described radio as “relentless” for its longevity and added: “we all have to pull together to ensure that DAB+ remains at the heart of the dashboard, in the best quality possible.” Bierhorst was joined on stage by EBU Head of Radio, Edita Kudláčová, to highlight radio’s critical role as a trusted source of news, and its importance in times of crisis.

Tomas Granryd of Swedish Radio and Gwendolin Niehues, from Germany’s ARD, presented the new EBU “Playbook” for the connected car, an initiative from public service broadcasters in Europe aiming to unify the radio industry. Niehues echoed the call for collaboration: “We really want to create one voice for the broadcasters with which we can then go to other industry players – car manufacturers, operating systems - so we can define clear projects to work on. Where we agree on the fundamentals, we are an attractive partner to the industry,” she said.

The growth of DAB+ around the world was highlighted by many of the speakers. Karel Zyka of public broadcaster Czech Radio set out the development of DAB+ in the host country, with construction of new DAB+ networks for private commercial broadcasters just beginning. He also noted that the relaunched certification of DAB+ receivers in Czechia supports sales and protects customers.

Corinna Drumm, from the Association of Austrian Private Broadcasters (VÖP) spoke ahead of this week’s (21 June) launch of a second national DAB+ multiplex in Austria. “People just expect to find broadcast radio in their cars – this is a need which has to be filled by the car manufacturers,” Drumm said. “Radio is the medium which offers the easiest access not only to entertainment but to information, and has the highest marks for trust, and is the most used source of news.” Meanwhile Javier Sánchez Pérez from Spanish public broadcaster RTVE spoke about its continued rollout of DAB+, expanding with one site each month, to reach 50% of the population by the end of this year.

The importance of marketing to drivers was reflected by Kathrin Kluser from Swiss regulator OFCOM. Kluser set out that stations in Switzerland are starting to plan their individual FM shutdown strategies. She explained that once awareness of DAB+ and its advantages is high, communication can be targeted at drivers, and that this was important, as FM use in cars is higher than at home or at work. She showed the latest creative work, featuring “Bobblehead” models on car dashboards explaining the benefits of DAB+.

From Ford Motor Company, Frank Nowack, told the audience that in his view broadcast radio would stay as a part of vehicle entertainment systems, and that online services, data and audio streaming will be implemented and used to improve the broadcast radio UX and the overall audio offering. Nowack urged stations to use the available functionality to be competitive with other radio systems.

Offering a view from the US, April Carty-Sipp, from the NAB and Fred Jacobs of Jacobs Media said that despite the crowded dashboard landscape, broadcast radio remains dominant in the US, identifying two key benefits enjoyed by listeners: that it's easy to listen to, and it's free. They also highlighted the opportunities open to broadcasters. "It's fundamental, but given how connected these cars are, radio organisations must have an in-vehicle strategy," Jacobs said.

These themes were supported by automotive market analyst, Roger Lanctot, CEO of Strategia Now, who set out the importance of the screen in-car, urging broadcasters to reimagine radio as a visual experience, and leverage digital radio for wide-screen, interactive experiences. He called on broadcasters to "show car makers what is possible and prove that radio is ready for its digital future."

Closing the day, WorldDAB Project Director, Bernie O'Neill said: "This event really demonstrates what WorldDAB is all about - bringing together broadcasters and auto manufacturers, industry leaders, experts, to discuss and work out together the future of broadcast radio." O'Neill also revealed that Zagreb, Croatia will be the venue for WorldDAB Summit 2024, on 14 November.

#### **Graphics available [via Dropbox](#)**

- Jacqueline Bierhorst
- Jacqueline Bierhorst (left) with Edita Kudláčová
- Gwendolin Niehues
- Lindsey Mack (left) with Roger Lanctot
- Bernie O'Neill
- WorldDAB Automotive reception at Prague's Žižkov broadcast tower
- Automotive 2024 graphic
- Bobblehead advert
- WorldDAB logo

#### **Notes to editors**

- The event was hosted by Klára Nováková from Radio Junior, Czech Radio's DAB+ station for children.
- Most speakers are available for interview – please contact WorldDAB.
- WorldDAB Automotive 2024: More details, full programme, speaker biographies and ebrochure: <https://www.worlddab.org/events/detail/663>
- WorldDAB Summit 2024 will be held at Hilton Garden Inn, Zagreb, Croatia on Thursday 14 November: <https://www.worlddab.org/events/detail/667>  
Journalists are welcome to attend – for further information, contact WorldDAB as below.

#### **About WorldDAB**

WorldDAB is the global industry association responsible for defining and promoting DAB digital radio. By bringing together radio industry professionals, WorldDAB provides knowledge and expertise that helps countries successfully adopt and implement broadcast digital radio.

Our 1300+ experts from 120 member organisations in 38 countries across the globe include public and commercial broadcasters, regulators, network providers and manufacturers of receivers, chips, professional equipment, and automobiles.

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