



Summary of Automotive Workshop VIII

16th February 2021

Nick Piggott welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that these meetings are to bring together people from the automotive and broadcast industries for discussions to help solve any problems that are arising and to encourage better working practices together.

Update on Broadcasters and Automotive Research

Nick Piggott and Rosemary Smith are currently researching the radio features supported by broadcasters and manufacturers. Attendees were asked for any input and it was discussed that this research is initially to discover if there are any obvious easy fixes for both sides before getting deeper into the research. It was agreed this is a first good step that could lead to a set of certified conditions.

As well as this research, RadioDNS and WorldDAB are looking to collate information on faults that are currently being reported. In some cases, these are not faults, but implementation misunderstandings which can be corrected with the right information, which WorldDAB and RadioDNS will attempt to get to the right people. WorldDAB has an email address set up to report issues coming from either the broadcasters or the VMs metadata@worldddab.org.

The fear with the research is we are setting ourselves up for an impossible amount of complexities to deal with. Joe D'Angelo referenced work Xperi has been doing over the past 15 years, saying it is like opening a Pandora's box, but it is worth it.

There will be a summary available for the next meeting and we will also make more detailed information available before that time.

As an example, we would ask each manufacturer to respond with information for each make, model and build year, and which functionality it supports, such as slideshow and station logos. It was agreed that for current systems this information would be easy to provide, but not upcoming systems.

Update on DL+ and Dynamic Metadata

This discussion in this area was continued from Automotive Workshop VII. Lindsey Cornell presented.

He gave an introduction to DL+, describing it as taking advantage of data already provided, and it is a string of characters that provides something other than audio to a receiver. This could be show information, weather, news headlines and now playing. The intention is to integrate DL+ into existing systems, trying to make it a positive experience rather than a burden.

Nick Piggott reminded us of the demo by Ford from the previous meeting. An example of a question for the research project would be to understand how the head unit chooses which 4 DL+ tags to show?

When looking at pushing metadata markup in hybrid, a decision needs to be made whether to use ID3v2 tags, DL+ tags or another metadata markup? Ford has implemented DL+ but says there is not much support from broadcasters. The broadcasters have said they didn't realise this was possible as it is relatively new.

Audi uses DL+ but only the widely used tags which can be used directly in the now playing screen. All other information is accessed in the radio text menu (ie phone number) in models from the previous four years, but there are only a few stations in Germany and Norway using it. Christian Winter, Audi, said it is difficult to create another menu and another sub menu and it is important for Audi that information is directly accessible.

From comments in the meeting, it seems the more popular tags are being used by a few manufacturers which will be helpful when RadioDNS and WorldDAB start their research. There was then a brief discussion on music rights, licences and implementation. Nick Humfrey asked if there had been any rights issues connected to sending structured metadata synchronously to the audio.

Visuals and Driver Distraction

Nick Piggott introduced current ideas about driver distraction including safety tests and brightness of screens. As the screens have become the primary physical interface in the car this is seen as an opportunity for broadcasters, but it's the manufacturers who need to test for safety and who might be concerned about the varied information sent from broadcasters. This has been discussed by manufacturers for a while but broadcasters are only just becoming aware. Should we complete a set of guidelines?

There was a discussion on worldwide guidelines. Laurence Harrison said we should get on the front foot on this more than we have been, he was involved in some testing on distraction at Digital Radio UK and the relative distractions from using a voice assistant to control the radio. He said they couldn't find any other substantive research on this that would help create a set of guidelines.

Nick Piggott suggested that maybe there is an anxiety that codifying some of this has some risks involved because it makes a statement about something that isn't currently well-defined. Is there an increased risk of liability if you codify behaviour? Is this what is holding us back? Or is it discussing ideas with competitors?

Christian Winter said the guidelines are different from different countries and the OEMs need to be flexible to adapt to different markets. This is not a new topic for car manufacturers, but with many more functions now in the car, it is more of an issue. We've needed to do this for a few years.

Nick Piggott suggested that the need for some sort of consistency might come up within the research as different manufacturers do different things, Lindsey Mack added on chat that if you are designing a website or app that can be viewed on mobile devices, there is only one strict rule, to use a text input font size of at least 16px

Update on Fault Resolution Process

Rosemary Smith said this is not just about Fault reporting, but the kinds of questions we get asked and who asks the questions.

Nick Piggott added that RadioDNS still gets a lot of questions about incorrect station logos in vehicles. We will forward the question to the relevant manufacturer to understand if the problem is their implementation or a fault on the broadcasters side. We always advise people to publish their metadata in the RadioDNS format, so that as time progresses, the ability to source and display accurate information improves.

There was a discussion on whether a structured API for the fault reporting system could be implemented by manufacturers. It was agreed that the current manual system works so there is no immediate need to change it.

Update on DAB+ Services in Arabic Speaking Countries

Update from Lindsay Cornell, who reviewed current situation and receiver requirements. Discussion followed on whether a receiver with EU requirements plus AM and Arabic language is enough.

RadioDNS has started getting requests from Saudi Arabia but no one knows what the start date of either DAB or Hybrid Radio might be.

Other items / Review of 2020 / Plans for 2021

Precedence of alarm/announcement interruptions (DAB - FM)

The alarm function has been in DAB from the start and as part of the cleanup of the DAB specification done in 2016/17 we now have explicit guidelines. It was also added to the minimum receiver specification that support is mandatory, but how do you test it and how does it work?

It was concluded that because you can't be sure what other components are in the same unit, we couldn't put minimum requirements, as configuration might not be possible, when the FM radio was operating for example. Unfortunately no current help or guidance can be given and it probably needs a specification by national legislation. In Europe governments aren't that keen on things like this being available, whereas in Norway it is something they have implemented.

Volatility in silicon chip supply chain

There is a world shortage problem at the moment because factories have been shut. The expectation is this will be corrected over the next few months, but it seems like it might last for the next 6 months.

To conclude the meeting Nick Piggott reminded everyone that the purpose of this meeting is that it's a discussion, therefore please email us anything you would like us to include in future meetings. We are looking forward to when these can be face to face as although attendance is better, there is not as much discussion online.

We are hoping that the research will spark a deeper level of discussions at the next meeting, which we discussed would happen in October, but have since decided it should take place in June.