Automotive Workshop XVI

20th March 2024, Munich

Meeting Summary

To encourage frank exchange of ideas and experiences, detailed notes are not circulated. We encourage people to attend the workshops if they want to fully engage in discussions.

This workshop was attended by representatives from broadcasters, vehicle manufacturers, Tier 1 suppliers and service providers.

Station Metadata and Content ("Logos and Album Art")

The discussion explored all the current approaches to handling station metadata and content, and where the process weaknesses lay. The meeting concluded that:

- Stations must take responsibility for providing the correct metadata - either directly or working with a trusted provider - and do so using standards[1]
- Stations must clearly understand that failing to do so has a negative impact on their presentation in vehicles
- Vehicle manufacturers are working with suppliers to achieve consistency in metadata and content, filling in the "gaps" left by broadcasters as required.
- Manufacturers should only implement solutions that allow for metadata and content to be updated by radio stations at appropriate intervals - using "static" or "burned in" solutions is likely to misrepresent radio stations over time, which is not acceptable
- Access to metadata and content may be controlled by broadcasters to ensure proper use, but requesting/gaining access should not be an onerous task.
- A clearer understanding of which receivers use metadata/content, and how they use it, would help justify more investment by broadcasters - WDAB & RDNS to look at collating and publishing this information

Broadcaster Provided Apps ("Apps in Cars")

The discussion explored the existing and likely scenarios for broadcasters to provide their own (branded) apps into connected car environments like Android Automotive and Apple Carplay. The meeting concluded that:

- Broadcasters are already providing high quality apps that allow deep exploration of their content, and personalisation, at an extent that is different to replicate in a generic "radio" app.
- These apps are likely to be ported into Android Automotive and Apple Carplay.

[1] Relevant standards include DAB SPI/EPG, RadioDNS, HD Radio PSD etc.

- Broadcast radio must continue to be very easy/quick/familiar for the driver to use, and installed "as default" by the manufacturer.
- It should be possible to define "bridges" between the manufacturer provided broadcast radio app and the broadcaster provided apps, allowing the driver to easily and seamlessly switch between them.
- Linking from live radio to on-demand/podcast content may be a valuable use case - RadioDNS is investigating this with its members
- There are functionality gaps that need to be defined in a consistent way.

IP Only Radio Apps

There was a short discussion on the implications of a manufacturer implementing a "radio" that didn't support broadcast, only IP-stream.

- Replicating the attributes of broadcast radio that drivers like in an IP-only domain is very hard
- Failing to make "radio" an easy/quick/familiar experience means drivers will probably use it less
- Station navigation is a very visible and difficult problem; filtering is probably necessary based initially on geographic location, which requires accurate and honest geographic information from broadcasters.

The next meeting is scheduled for 25th June, as an on-line meeting. Check the website at https://radiodns.org/campaigns/automotive-workshops/ for the registration process.