

Name and title: James Gordon

Representing: Self

Comments:

I think it is important to understand that whilst FM and AM transmission are vulnerable to being pirated by sub-standard output, this method of transmission serves a community. The digital divide in Great Britain is a huge challenge that needs to be overcome and it is the voices of the disenfranchised that will not be heard in this consultation to the same extent as people like me, who use computers everyday. Turning over to other transmission methods would serve to isolate pensioners for the most part. They are a fast growing demographic but incredibly diverse as well. Many have lived with wireless broadcast most of their lives and it provides a certain sense of connection to those who may see very little meaningful human contact otherwise, though a sad state of affairs this is the reality. My interest in this also stems from being a frequent listener of London's Resonance FM which would, if a change over to DAB occurred, be relegated to an internet only broadcaster and lose much of what makes it unique. They offer programs to other disenfranchised voices in London, Polish and Iranian immigrants, not to mention independent talk radio and a program specifically for pensioners. These kind of programs to my knowledge are not available anywhere else in our terrestrial broadcast media. Shutting this down is essentially sending a message that your needs are less important than typically white middle class gadget lovers.

The magic of radio is that it can be done incredibly cheaply but the quality of output still manages to surpass the crass output of the broadcast channels. I am thinking specifically of local stations, be they commercial or owned by the BBC, radio 4 and resonance FM. Switching to DAB will disenfranchise many of the voices that make up talk radio.

I believe strongly that FM and AM should be maintained for this reason, at least until an alternative which offers similar sound quality and a cheap way of receiving transmission is brought into place. We cannot sacrifice sound quality on radio for the sake of squeezing channels into a new technology that has up to this point been woefully inadequate at providing a play back rate under 192 kbs. I think regulation must be in place to protect the sound quality of transmission. Anything below FM quality or 320 kbs is unacceptable for music channels.