

Name and title: Mr R Castledine

Representing: Self

Comments:

I have a particular point to make about DAB. DAB was to be the answer to all the quality/reception problems of FM (and AM). Now quality is being downgraded by the reduction of the bit rate in order to fit in more stations in a limited bandwidth and DAB is becoming the 'digital medium wave'. This is unacceptable, but there is an answer. The UK was an early adopter of digital radio, and the standards of the MP2 codec that the UK adopted have now been eclipsed by AAC+. We should bite the bullet and update our system to the standards now being used elsewhere which use the bandwidth more efficiently without compromises on quality. Everyone wins - room for more stations and listeners enjoy high quality sound. If a listener is not concerned with quality then he/she won't notice and won't be disadvantaged. The current state of affairs guarantees that anyone wanting quality audio will be disappointed (apart from Radio 3 where the bit rate is still currently maintained at a high level). Adopt AAC+ in place of MP2 and avoid returning us to the sort of poor quality for programmes we want to listen to that was current in the era of Radio Luxembourg and Radio Caroline. As the industry regulator Ofcom must consider the issue of sound quality and set minimum standards to ensure listeners can receive high quality sound.