
DAB+ and IP radio have finally left FM behind Radio industry proposes FM phase-out in 2022/2023

Digital Migration working group publishes half-yearly report on radio use

Zurich, 27 August 2020 – 71% of radio programmes in Switzerland are already listened to digitally. Just 13% of the Swiss population still use analogue FM services only. Given this trend, on SwissRadioDay the Digital Migration working group presented its plan for phasing out FM broadcasting. SRG intends to switch off its FM transmitters in August 2022, with private radio stations following suit by January 2023 at the latest.

The positive signs from the market and the trend in listener numbers are encouraging the Digital Migration (DigiMig) working group to press ahead with the deactivation of FM services. A plan has now been drawn up by the radio associations and SRG in which SRG intends to decommission its FM transmitters in August 2022 to make it easier for commercial operators to switch over. The private radio stations will then deactivate their FM transmitters in January 2023. A few days ago, the Verband Schweizer Privatradios (VSP), the Union Romande des Radios Régionales (RRR), the Union nicht-gewinnorientierter Lokalradios (Unikom) and SRG signed an industry agreement to this effect. The private radio associations will now obtain the approval of their members by the end of November 2020. If they also agree, the switch-off of FM services will be taken up and implemented.

71% listen digitally

In spring 2020, radio listeners received an average of 71 minutes out of 100 radio minutes per day by digital means (DAB+: 39%, IP: 32%), meaning that digital radio use has risen by 22% since autumn 2015. At the same time, FM usage has seen a 22% fall to 29%. DAB+ has thus overtaken FM to become the most popular way of receiving radio programmes, accounting for 39% of total usage.

DAB+ is now the most popular form of reception in cars too

Not only is DAB+ the most popular way of receiving radio programmes at home and at work. In cars – the last bastion of FM radio – DAB+ has also gained in importance and has replaced FM as the main form of radio reception. Together, DAB+ and IP radio use now account for 55% of overall usage in cars.

Digital reception established in all language regions

In German-speaking Switzerland, DAB+ is by far the most popular way of receiving radio programmes with a share of 41% of total usage. In the French-speaking area, DAB+ has just overtaken IP radio and accounts for 36% of listening. IP radio use has increased again in Italian-speaking Switzerland to leave FM behind, and at 39% is now the most popular reception method there. In all language regions, FM radio is now responsible for less than 30%.

Only 13% of the Swiss population still listen exclusively to analogue radio

While four and a half years ago almost a quarter of the population still said they used analogue radio services only, this figure has now fallen by almost half to just 13%. At the same time, the share of people using only digital forms of reception has doubled from 18% to 36% since autumn 2015.



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On behalf of the Digital Migration working group, GfK Switzerland has been monitoring the status of digital radio use in Switzerland using an online survey and telephone interviews every six months since autumn 2015. The radio usage survey was carried out for the 11th time in spring 2020, and included 2,625 people aged 15 or over.

Digital Migration (DigiMig) working group

The Digital Migration (DigiMig) working group was created by the radio industry together with the Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM) in spring 2013 with the aim of phasing out analogue FM broadcasting by 2024 at the latest. The working group includes the Verband Schweizer Privatradios (VSP), the Union Romande des Radios Régionales (RRR), the Union nicht-gewinnorientierter Lokalradios (Unikom), SRG SSR and the DAB+ network operators.

At the end of 2014 the DigiMig working group presented the Federal Council with a scenario for the switch from analogue to digital services. Today, SRG and all the private radio stations already broadcast their programmes via DAB+ as well as FM. What's more, over half of the 125 or so DAB+ radio programmes are only available digitally.

Further information

Available at:

<https://www.bakom.admin.ch/bakom/en/homepage/electronic-media/technology/digital-transmission.html>

- Presentation of radio listening figures (Swiss Radio Day in Zurich on 27 August 2020)
- Key figures on DAB+ in Switzerland from August 2020

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