



WorldDAB elects new Presidency

WorldDAB, the international promotional and lobbying body for DAB, has unanimously elected a new Presidency with Quentin Howard as its President and Leif Lønsmann as the Vice President. The result was announced at WorldDAB's General Assembly in Prague on November 4th.

Howard is chief executive of Digital One, the UK's national commercial DAB digital radio multiplex operator. He takes over from Annika Nyberg, director of programmes for the Swedish Radio arm of Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE, and will serve in the post for two years.

A pioneer in the field of DAB digital radio, Howard has seen the technology grow in the UK where more than two million DAB digital radios have been sold. Now, as president of WorldDAB, he is set to address the more global arena for DAB's success. While progress in the roll-out of DAB has been made in many countries, Howard accepts there are still challenges to overcome before the DAB platform is standard throughout the world. Many of these challenges come in the form of regulatory, spectrum and hardware issues, all of which WorldDAB will continue to address under his presidency.

Howard told the General Assembly in Prague he wishes to concentrate on several key areas. "The first is to ensure that DAB is seen as the best platform for multichannel radio and the primary replacement for domestic analogue FM and AM."

His agenda also includes convincing more commercial radio companies of the benefits of DAB. "My message to commercial broadcasters is to embrace more choice, it's not a threat, it's an advantage," he told WorldDAB delegates.

DAB is at the sharp end of convergence. Derivatives of the standard are already driving the full-scale launch of DMB (Digital Multimedia Broadcasting) in Korea next month, while BT Livetime in the UK continues to prove an IP-based transport system over DAB.

Howard believes the extension of DAB standards from an audio broadcast platform to a truly multimedia dimension makes it a highly attractive technology in the digital age. It also allows WorldDAB to move away from Europe, and under Howard's presidency he hopes to send a stronger and clearer message to Asia and beyond. His goal is for

WorldDAB to “create our own roadmap for convergence and make DAB the first choice to be included in every device.”

Howard has worked in UK commercial broadcasting since the mid 1970’s, and at GWR (now GCap Media) the UK’s leading radio group, was Director of Engineering with responsibility for all broadcasting and IT systems, and was responsible for pioneering many technological breakthroughs in the industry.

He also held the position of Programme Director and is a radio presenter with several Sony Radio Awards to his credit. He went on to set up the company’s digital broadcasting division, and then to launch Digital One (owned by GCap Media and Arqiva), working with manufacturers, retailers and alongside other broadcasters on many initiatives. He was chief engineer at a number of radio stations before joining GWR Group.

WorldDAB’s new Vice President, Leif Lønsmann, is managing director of the National Danish Broadcasting Corporation. Starting with just three FM networks, Lønsmann has increased DR Radio’s portfolio to include more than 30 digital radio services across a variety of platforms, including most strongly, DAB. Following DR Radio’s innovative DAB strategy, Denmark now ranks second to the UK in the penetration and use of DAB.

An expert in the business of media, Lønsmann has been advisor and consultant to governments and media institutions in more than 20 countries around the world. He is also vice president of the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) Radio Committee and a board member of the Danish National Committee of the International Press Institute.

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Notes to Editors: DAB has become an internationally adopted standard that can be heard in nearly 40 countries from Canada to Australia, across Europe and the Far East. More than 500 million people worldwide are within range of a DAB transmitter, and there are nearly 1000 services on air.

About The World DAB Forum

The World DAB Forum is an international, non-governmental organisation whose role is to promote the awareness, adoption and implementation of DAB worldwide. Its members include public and commercial broadcasters, receiver manufacturers and other companies and bodies committed to converting the technology behind DAB into a commercial marketing success. **www.worldddab.org**