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Journal of Radio & Audio Media ›
Volume 18, 2011 - Issue 2

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SYMPOSIUM: RADIO IN BRAZIL

Digital Radio in Brazil: Indecision and Impasse After a Ten-Year Discussion

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Pages 371-380 | Published online: 14 Nov 2011

Cite this article https://doi.org/10.1080/19376529.2011.616786

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Abstract

Government and radio broadcasting stations have been debating the model of digital transmission to be adopted in Brazil, without having come to a consensus. The impasse is related to the technological characteristics of the available systems (IBOC, DRM, and DAB) that are not integrally adaptable to the model of radio broadcasting, to the regulatory laws, and to the rules of the radio market in the country. Tests done with IBOC reveal that the digital system does not provide the same coverage as a quality analogical AM radio. Other aspects are the technical conditions of the Brazilian broadcasting stations and their adaptability to a digital system: 37% of them still function with valve transmitters, most of them being between AM commercial and public radio stations. As they are broadcasting stations with few resources for investment in transistorized equipment, it will be necessary to create public policies of incentive for digitalization, which would collaborate toward the sustainability of the

sector. The present study presents data from a sample of 750 stations, which corresponds to 96.45% of the profile of the Brazilian radio market, and integrates the data with national research.

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Notes

This work was financed by the Ford Foundation under the coordination of Professors Carlos Eduardo Esch and Nelia R. Del Bianco from the Universidade de Brasília.

[1]Brazilian Association of Radio and TV

[2]In-Band, On-Channel is a form of broadcasting in which a station broadcasts digital and analog signals simultaneously.

[3]The tests with DRM made by the University of Brasilia for the Brazilian Company of Communication (Empresa Brasileira de Comunicação), were not conclusive and because of this, have not been cited in this article.

[4]The research is financed by the Ford Foundation with the support of the bursars for students in communication at UnB Ana Rita Cunha, Flávia Drummond, Camila Louise Ferreira, Rafaela Feliciano, Márcia Simães and Simone Simães, as well as the consultation by Estat–Escritório de Estatística da UnB–with financial support for the students Catharina Goes, Lívia Ventura, and Monique Brant.

[5]It was necessary to obtain information on the stations in other non-official databanks, since the registered data of the Ministry of Communications available on the System of Radio Broadcasting Control was extremely outdated.

[6]Joomla is a system of content management (Content Management System) that permits the creation of Web sites with reliable data. It has several components as publication systems for content.

[7]The number of computers in Brazil has reached 60 million, between residential and corporate machines. Thus, proportionally, there is one computer for every three Brazilians. The forecast is that by 2012, the country will have 100 million computers, which is equivalent to a micro for each two inhabitants. The data can be found at 20[a]

Pesquisa Anual do Uso de Informática (20th Annual Study of Information Use), done by the Centro de Tecnologia de Informação Aplicada da Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV—Center for Applied Information Technology of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation) in 2008. JB Online http://jbonline.terra.com.br/pextra/2009/05/26/e260510292.asp

[8]A modular transmitter uses potent transistors instead of old transmission valves. This decreases the size of the transmitter cabinet necessary and also is more economical in terms of electric energy. Another important characteristic is to be able to connect via the Internet, making maintenance possible at a distance by the responsible engineer.

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