

Save FM

Objective:

To stop the BBC switching off its national FM radio stations.

Why Save FM?

- **People simply don't want FM to be switched off** -- whenever it's mentioned there's a huge amount of opposition to the idea
- **People don't want to replace so much audio equipment that work perfectly well** -- the public shouldn't be forced to spend billions of pounds replacing the 120 - 150 million devices currently in-use that can receive FM perfectly well, especially when this is only happening to bail out the commercial radio broadcasters, and so that the BBC can avoid losing listeners to Internet radio. The public doesn't want this to happen, and DAB actually provides lower quality than FM, so the vast majority of people would actually receive a worse service on DAB than on FM.
- **Ofcom's market research has shown that over 90% of people are "very satisfied" with what they're receiving on FM**, so they shouldn't even be considering switching off FM
- **DAB is unpopular with consumers, and it would have failed completely in the next few years without Government assistance** -- annual sales are 50% below the industry's targets and year-on-year sales growth plummeted and have never recovered -- proof that the public doesn't want it, so why is such an incredibly unpopular system being forced upon us? There was a case for switching off analogue TV, because the vast majority of people wanted more choice than just five analogue TV channels, but people typically receive far more than five FM radio stations -- and as Ofcom's research showed, people are happy with the amount of choice on FM.
- **DAB provides far lower audio quality than FM** -- why should we have to accept such blatant Luddism?
- **DAB is an outdated and inefficient system that was designed in the 1980s** -- why should we accept this diabolical replacement in the first place when far superior systems such as DAB+ and in particular Internet radio exist? The speed of mobile broadband systems are about to be transformed in a similar fashion to the change from dial-up to broadband over the next few years. Why pick the worst possible time imaginable to push ahead with the Diabolical Audio Broadcasting system?
- **FM radios are far greener than DAB radios could ever be** -- DAB radios consume several times as much energy as FM radios do, and DAB will never approach the energy efficiency of FM radios.
- **Internet radio provides far higher audio quality than DAB** -- virtually everyone from outside the radio industry thinks it's a crazy idea to use DAB
- **DAB has notoriously bad reception quality** -- and FM "degrades gracefully" when the signal isn't strong, whereas DAB produces incredibly annoying "bubbling mud" type sounds
- **The public has never been asked whether it wants FM to be switched off**, and it is simply being forced upon us by the Government which is once again showing that it bends over backwards to help big business but consumers have to suffer the consequences.
- **The BBC has never consulted with the public about whether it wants DAB to replace FM, or whether the public wants the audio quality on DAB to be worse than on FM.** When the BBC held a public consultation for its five new digital-only radio stations it deliberately omitted to mention that the launch of these new stations would result in the audio quality of the existing stations being drastically reduced. The public should be consulted on whether they consider it to be acceptable that DAB replaces FM even though DAB provides lower audio quality.

- **FM isn't even being switched off anyway**, because the Digital Britain report says that the FM band would carry "ultra-local" stations after the bigger FM stations have been switched off, so people should be allowed to continue listening to at least the BBC's stations via FM if they want to without being forced to spend several hundred up to potentially thousands of pounds replacing existing audio equipment that works perfectly well
- **The plan to speed up switching off FM stations is simply being done to bail out the commercial radio broadcasters** who don't want to pay to transmit on both analogue and digital because it costs them too much money -- pass me the tissues, I'm going to cry. There needs to be a far better reason to make 120 - 150 million radios obsolete than that lame excuse of a reason!
- **Transmitting FM only costs £10 million per annum -- just 17 pence per person per year**, and just 0.27% of the £3,600 million the BBC receives each year -
- The Digital Britain report said that FM only needed £200m to be spent on it to keep it going for the next 20 years. FM is superb value-for-money.
- **The BBC likes DAB because it's the platform on which its stations face the least amount of competition.** The BBC should not take decisions that are against the interests of licence fee payers just so that the BBC can avoid losing radio listeners!

Can FM be saved?

A few hundred people managed to stop the BBC switching off the Radio 4 Long Wave station, so if a few hundred people can do that for what is at the end of the day a radio station with a small audience, then you would have thought that it would be quite doable to stop the BBC switching off its four main FM stations, which have an enormous number of listeners between them.

How to Save FM?

Electronic civil disobedience -- essentially throwing virtual purple flour at the BBC and the Government of the day. The grey suits at Ofcom are better suited to having some cold virtual gruel thrown in their faces a la Peter Mandelson and his soup episode. And Stephen Carter, who authored the ~~Backward Britain~~ Digital Britain report, should have virtual snake oil poured over him from head to toe.

We will be seeking advice from the legal community regarding our Human Right to keep FM on the air and stop the BBC trampling those rights like the bully that it is.

Opposition to FM switch-off in the press:

[Radio revolution will leave listeners in silence](#)

[Don't force digital radio on us](#)

[Put the boot into DAB, and try to Save FM](#)

[Radio: Turn on, tune in, drop out](#)

Radio Times Letter of the week:

Guess what the prize was for Letter of the week? Read on...

Letter of the week



Save our radios!

Do you have a pocket radio that cost two or three pounds and works for months on a small battery? Do you turn on your hi-fi with FM to listen to a concert on Radio 3 that sounds as if you were at the venue? Do you have a radio in every room, so you can listen to Radio 4 no matter where you are?

Make the most of it, because when FM transmitters for national programmes are turned off in 2015, as envisioned by the government's Digital Britain report, you will be forced to use an expensive, power-hungry, non-hi-fi DAB receiver. Millions of serviceable radios will end up in landfill, and radio listening will be less mobile. This is not the way to maintain radio listening as a popular activity.

But if the switch-off date is only announced once 50 per cent of listening is digital (as outlined in the report), then with luck it will be a long time, because it must be clear even to the most technically inept grey suit that people just don't like DAB radios.

Melvyn McGann

Via email

** Legitimate concerns, although the government report did say that manufacturers would be expected to develop DAB radios costing under £20 before the switchover.*

Melvyn McGann's digital switchover starts here: he'll be delighted to learn that he's won the award-winning PURE EVOKE-1S DAB/FM portable radio, which is accredited by the Energy Saving Trust. The radio includes an input for an MP3 player as well as an alarm and kitchen timer. For more information, visit www.pure.com or call 0845 1489001. The PURE EVOKE-1S retails for £99.99.

