



By Appointment to
H.R.H. The Prince of Wales
Supplier of Consumer Electronic Products
Sony United Kingdom Limited
Weybridge, Surrey

our ref:

your ref:

date:

12th March, 2009

Mr S Carter CBE
Minister for Communications, Technology & Broadcasting
BERR Department for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH

Dear Stephen,

May I thank you for our recent meeting and also to congratulate you on your interim report, "Digital Britain" which we both welcome and support. Prior to your report we have been actively supporting both Intellect and the DRWG to gain clarity and direction of both spectrum and the future direction of this exciting digital radio platform.

Over the years Sony has been one of the early supporters of DAB and investing in products which are designed exclusively for the UK market prior to its mass market appeal.

Today Sony's investment in DAB technology is significant; with 19 different DAB models ranging from clock radios to portable, entry to high end hi-fi systems. These support the broadcasters to deliver their content to the UK consumers and have made the technology accessible.

Given the healthy state of product being available within the market place, why has DAB stalled?

One of the key elements, which have been reflected within your report, is the automotive sector and the lack of a co-ordinated European strategy. Global or indeed European CE manufacturers face the same issues as they look to supply a single product to their markets. This affords economies of scale which can be passed onto the consumer in terms of lower prices. The Government can help here by promoting DAB at EU level and encouraging other governments to invest in Digital Radio.

We welcome the formation of the "Digital Radio Delivery Group" and see this as a positive step which Sony will fully support. However from our past experiences of TV digital switch over, this group needs to have a clear mission statement, defined deliverables and the responsibility for a clear roadmap. This should include not only technological issues but buy-in from all stakeholders so we deliver a unified switch.

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As eluded to earlier it is also imperative the technology roadmap is part owned and driven for the total European market. This needs to be pulled together within the real commercial world, therefore needs to be conducted with a clear understanding of the costs and benefits to UK plc.


Learning from past experiences these can only be achieved given clear direction hence we need to inject certainty into digital radio. This can be achieved through legislation and defining the timescales to switchover. This will ensure that the commercial radio sector sees digital radio as their primary delivery platform for the future.

From the consumer's perspective, there is currently little or indeed no unified communication of the benefits of DAB. Consumers are therefore confused and do not have the confidence to invest in the technology. The market has thus far been driven by purchases of products that would have been brought anyway but happen to have DAB incorporated because of the manufacturers considerable investments.

As discussed, price is not the issue with DAB.

We look forward to working together with the wider industry stakeholders in order to make this happen and deliver "Digital Britain".

Yours sincerely,



Steve Dowdle
Managing Director