

NAVTEQ and BTC moving forward on traffic via HD Radio

The NAB trade show this week was the occasion for NAVTEQ and its radio partners gathered into the Broadcaster Traffic Consortium to make some announcements regarding their initiative to offer traffic and other location-based services over HD Radio in North America.

First NAVTEQ announced the availability of its dynamic content (traffic, fuel prices and weather) for portable navigation devices and automobile in-dash systems over HD Radio systems. Second, the Broadcaster Traffic Consortium announced the addition of Journal Broadcasting, Regent Communications, Saga Communications and Corus Entertainment Inc. and the Corus radio stations in Canada as contributing broadcasters for FM-RDS and HD Radio data distribution.

"Through the addition of these new broadcasting partners and continued contributions by the founding members, BTC has grown to cover U.S. markets numbering 82 FM-RDS and 74 HD Radio Data as well as the top 7 Canadian metropolitan areas with FM-RDS," said Paul Brenner, president for the consortium. 77 FM-RDS markets and 63 HD Radio Data markets are said to be active today with the remaining BTC committed markets to be completed in Q2 2009.

Advertising-based business models

NAVTEQ is also betting on the HD Radio technology to further expand the capabilities of its LocationPoint's advertising system which allow navigation manufacturer to get the traffic service subsidized by advertisers. With a bandwidth up to 40 times larger than the FM system, detailed graphics, imagery, sound and mobile coupons, can be transmitted utilizing HD Radio technology.

BTC's competitor Clear Channel launched traffic via HD Radio in January 2009 at the CES trade show and Dual Electronics was the first manufacturer to present a Personal Navigation Device (priced at \$279.99) integrating this technology.

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