

RDS Forum – the association of RDS users

RDS2 Info Day in Paris

The RDS2 Info Day was held on 8th November 2016 for the second time. The first time was in Berlin in November 2015. The event has as its aim to inform about the progress made by the RDS Forum to enhance the RDS standard with the RDS2 option, fully backwards compatible with the nowadays widely used RDS technology for FM radio.

RDS2 uses three additional subcarriers that are modulated like the basic RDS subcarrier on 57 kHz.

The meeting was hosted this year by Radio France at the Maison de la Radio. It was attended by about 40 participants and included broadcasters, regulators and RDS equipment manufacturers.

Jean-Michel Kandin, the Director for technical innovation of Radio France opened the meeting stressing the importance of radio innovations for Radio France. Thus they were very happy to host this meeting.

Frits de Jong, the Chairman of the RDS Forum explained why RDS2 offered new opportunities to the industry. RDS2 can also significantly improve car radio reception, even for RDS features already used since many years.



From left to right: Mark Saunders, Attila Ladanyi, Frits de Jong, Dietmar Kopitz

Dietmar Kopitz, the RDS Forum's CEO, explained the progress made in the development of the new RDS/RDS2 standard, almost ready now for submission to the IEC. He said that this new standard version development is also coordinated with RBDS in the USA, the aim being to integrate RBDS into the new IEC standard version. Still remains to be done in early 2017 the UECP adaptation to include RDS2.

Hendrik van der Ploeg from the Dutch company Catena Radio Design BV presented RDS2 reception with a modified tuner platform. This chip set was developed last year and was shown for the first time at the RDS2 Info Day in Berlin. RDS Forum member MacBe had used then the chip set to create the first USB RDS2 receiver product, RX014, also shown first in Berlin last year. New were now the measurements carried out by Catena to find the optimal conditions to configure the RDS/RDS2 signal in a way that the total additional deviation needed in the MPX signal would be minimized by using appropriate phase shifting on the additional RDS2 subcarriers.

Questions asked from the floor concerned the availability of RDS2 encoders. Dietmar Kopitz explained that all encoder manufacturers of the RDS Forum 2wcom, Axel Technology, Worldcast Systems and Jump2Go have already developed such equipment. So, in 2017 it is likely that RDS2 encoders will be on the market.

Olivier Soulié from the French company Wordcast Systems presented their first RDS2 encoder and in addition an MPX signal analyser ready for RDS2 field testing.

Mark Saunders, the Vice-Chairman of the RDS Forum explained the opportunities of RDS2 for TMC towards much richer traffic information. He said that he also leads a working group in TISA that studies already the various opportunities for TMC and his company HERE will be ready to offer RDS2 services if there were a demand for them.

Then an RDS2 demo from Radio France was shown. The project team had developed within only four months under the lead of Vincent Simonacci with industry partners Caméon, Magneti Marelli and Worldcast Systems a demo with RDS2 embedded in the full broadcasting chain.



The French project team that implemented the RDS2 demonstrator for Radio France.

From left to right: Laurent Michel (Caméon), Vincent Simonacci (Radio France), Gwendal Rio (Magneti Marelli), David Jaillet (Caméon) and Frédéric Allard together with Olivier Soulié (both from Worldcast Systems)

They showed with the radio programme FRANCE INTER on air the programme associated RDS2 data for the station logo, a presenter image and an EPG, all taken live from the Radio France broadcast data server. The MPX signal thus created with the new Worldcast RDS2 encoder was broadcast to two receiver prototypes, a portable one developed by Caméon and a car radio developed by Magneti Marelli. Both used the MacBe USB RDS2 stick to receive the RDS2 signal.



For the RDS Forum that was a real world premiere. Paris was thus the first place where the full broadcast chain with RDS2 was realised. This also required Worldcast to already adapt the UECP to transport the RDS2 data, a task still to be coordinated within the RDS Forum's UECP Working Group. However, here in Paris the ultimate aim to be reached was already demonstrated with the new Wordcast's RDS2 encoder prototype.

The last presenter was Attila Ladanyi from LG Electronics. He explained his view of an FM radio being part of an Internet connected car radio's media platform with a variety of multimedia sources, where the car radio moves into the direction of a PC with multiple parallel data streams.

Frits de Jong concluded: Starting with a kick-off workshop of RDS2 in Budapest in November 2014, it is amazing to see the progress made. The revised RDS/RDS2 standard is now almost ready for submission to the IEC and an embedded car radio RDS2 application showing station logos was just presented today. As a next step: New added value applications for RDS2 like RPP and its link to Internet (IPv6) will be developed towards maturity in the RDS forum. Specialists with various expertise are willing within the RDS Forum to contribute to the development work of an open IPR free RDS/RDS2 technology, which also gives fun to be part of.