

RDS Forum - the association of RDS users

A few good reasons for joining the RDS Forum in 2021

For 27 years the RDS Forum (a non-profit worldwide industry association) offers to the industry, broadcasters, transmission providers and regulators a superb professional contact network. The Forum studied how to link national, regional, sub-regional and local radio programmes best in a hybrid (analogue and digital) radio landscape. Today the RDS technology is in the process of being adapted to what mobile FM/RDS radio receivers need (e.g. linkage to Internet). Thanks to the high level of expertise of its members and cooperation with other Fora, a huge experience has been acquired. As a result, guidelines have been issued and will continue to be developed, specifically for RDS2, as a valuable support in design and implementation for the benefit of all Forum members involved.

In 2021, the RDS technical specifications already exist for 37 years. There has been success all over and billions of FM radios with RDS have been built so far. In quantities on top were smart phones, followed by car radios of which the features of RDS auto-tuning (AF), the pan-European traffic info system using the traffic announcement feature TA/TP and the TMC concept have had worldwide support from the automotive industry, since at least 20 years.

Worldwide, FM radio will remain a popular radio technology and it will continue to co-exist next to digital radio.

In 2015, the RDS Forum entered the years for an adaption of the RDS technology to RDS2 for the next 30 years, using the full experience gained in the past. Full backwards compatibility is for the Forum a very important objective to be met. With the IEC the worldwide RDS standard IEC 62106 has been adapted in line with the progress made in the RDS Forum on the ongoing RDS2 development.

An RDS2 station logo transmission demo was presented in a public meeting during the first RDS2 Info Day, held in November 2015 in Berlin, where RDS Forum experts explained to 70 radio professionals from 14 countries the new developments and possibilities that RDS2 will be able to offer.

For RDS2, it was necessary to completely re-structure the worldwide RDS standard IEC 62106 into Parts 1 to 6, available from the IEC since October 2018, an objective being fully achieved by the RDS Forum already by the end of 2016. In 2019 this standard adaptation has been enlarged to include RBDS (Part 9), used in North America. On this issue the RDS Forum closely collaborates with the NAB and the US NRSC. Part 10 will be the Universal Encoder Communication Protocol for RDS, fully adapted to RDS2. The drafts for these two parts were submitted in autumn 2019 to the IEC for launching their standardization process. Part 2 was already updated in 2021 to include the RDS2 file transfer protocol, first submitted by the RDS Forum for standardization by the IEC in 2019.

The whole RDS2 concept and the process for its adaptation had been agreed by the RDS Forum in 2015. This opened the door for a large number of innovations that can now be included into RDS using the Open Data Applications (ODA) feature on the three upper subcarriers and the new RFT specification for RDS2 file transfers, developed by the RDS Forum in 2018. All these new developments from the RDS Forum will play a pre-dominant role for RDS2 in the future. RDS2 is not only data over the air, but a complete platform that shall connect FM broadcasting with IP radio streaming of the same audio content. The ODA (Open Data Application) concept will be fundamental for RDS2 and form a solid foundation on which one will be able to create quickly very innovative added value service applications. This may include FM radio apps for smart phones and support for the connected car concept.

During 2020 the RDS Forum started the development on the following RDS2 applications:

- 1. Station logo,
- 2. Slideshow with or without text elements and
- 3. Service following via the internet.

Most important for you and your company: RDS2 is IPR free as it was jointly developed by the RDS Forum members to be an open technology, just like RDS has always been.

RDS2 may offer a new boost to your business plans and set new objectives. This could be for you the right moment and the opportunity now to join the RDS Forum 2021 as a member and contribute, influence and share these exciting developments that continue to take place within the RDS Forum. Being part of such a motivated team is inspiring and may give fun as well, enjoying being part of moving forward on continuing using RDS for FM radio worldwide.

One annual meeting of the full Forum is held, always in May/June, at Hotel Victoria in Glion/Montreux, Switzerland. This location can easily be reached by train from Geneva airport (see www.victoria-glion.ch). The RDS Forum has met there during the last 20 years, since 1999, as this was since then considered by the Forum as an excellent meeting and networking location.

Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, currently only virtual meetings using Zoom can be held.

Find more information about the RDS Forum on its web site: www.rds.org.uk/

There was also an opportunity at the Salon de la Radio / European Radio Show in Paris-La Villette on 24 January 2020 to promote our aim to move forward with RDS and we discussed with the audience the new possibilities for data services using RDS2.

We, the RDS Forum members, most active in the development of this new digital technology, explained the options and answered questions about RDS2.

With RDS2, FM radio will be future-proof in the (digital) radio landscape.

New RDS/RDS2 encoders (RDS2 ready) are available from RDS Forum members Worldcast Systems and 2wcom. A USB RDS/RDS2 data receiver and RDS data analyser is available from RDS Forum member MacBe. These are the tools permitting you to conduct already now trials with RDS2 and test its new data transmission potential. For automotive applications you may be able to upgrade your NXP infotainment board with firmware for RDS2 from RDS Forum member NXP. To do so, you will have to contact them.

The next annual RDS Forum meeting will be held in Glion/Montreux in 2022, if the Covid-19 travel and meeting situation has improved by then. Until then, the RDS Forum will hold a number of virtual meetings..

To encourage you to become a member of the RDS Forum, in the first year of your RDS Forum membership your annual member fee of CHF 2900 (EUR 2750) will be discounted by 870 CHF (825 EUR).

Dietmar Kopitz (CEO of the RDS Forum Office) and Frits de Jong (RDS Forum Chairman).

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RDS Forum 2021 membership registration form

Annual membership fee in Swiss franc per delegate for the RDS Forum is CHF 2'900.— .

After your registration you will be invoiced in 2021-Q1. Payment is due in 2021-Q2.

As a new member of the RDS Forum, in the first year, the annual member fee of CHF 2900 will be discounted by CHF 870.

Members that want to receive the bill and pay the equivalent annual membership fee in Euros can request this from the RDS Forum Office.

There is also a possibility to pay by PayPal in Euro or Swiss Francs.

The membership renewal is automatic and those wishing to leave would have to opt out and give a two months' notice before their annual membership subscription ends.

Please register me as a member

..... Name

..... First Name

..... Company / Organisation

..... Address (1)

..... Address (2)

..... Telephone

..... Fax

..... E-mail

Please return this form to the RDS Forum Office in Geneva by e-mail to rdsforum@bluewin.ch

You will receive a confirmation of your registration as RDS Forum Member