

October 31, 2012



# Radio TechCheck



The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Radio Broadcast Engineers

## Digital Radio in the United Kingdom: Rising Steadily

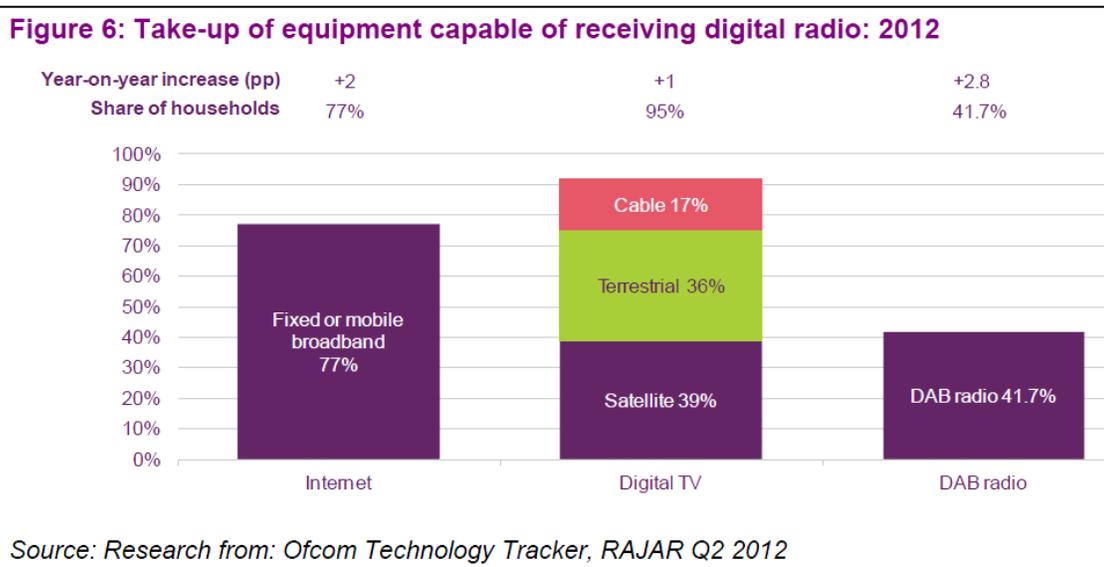
In July 2010, the United Kingdom government’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport released its Digital Radio Action Plan (DRAP). According to the DRAP, at that time digital audio broadcasting (DAB) sets had been sold to 35 percent of U.K. households and digital radio listening accounted for 24 percent of all radio listening in the U.K. The DRAP envisioned a complete switchover for radio from analog to digital radio but cautioned that any digital radio switchover should only begin when the market is ready and stated that a decision on switchover could only be made once the following criteria were met:

- 50 per cent of all listening is to digital; and
- National DAB coverage is comparable to FM, and local DAB reaches 90 per cent of the population and all major roads.

The timetable in the DRAP identified a target switchover date of 2015, but noted that there should be no conflict between the timetable and the switchover criteria, with the criteria taking precedence.

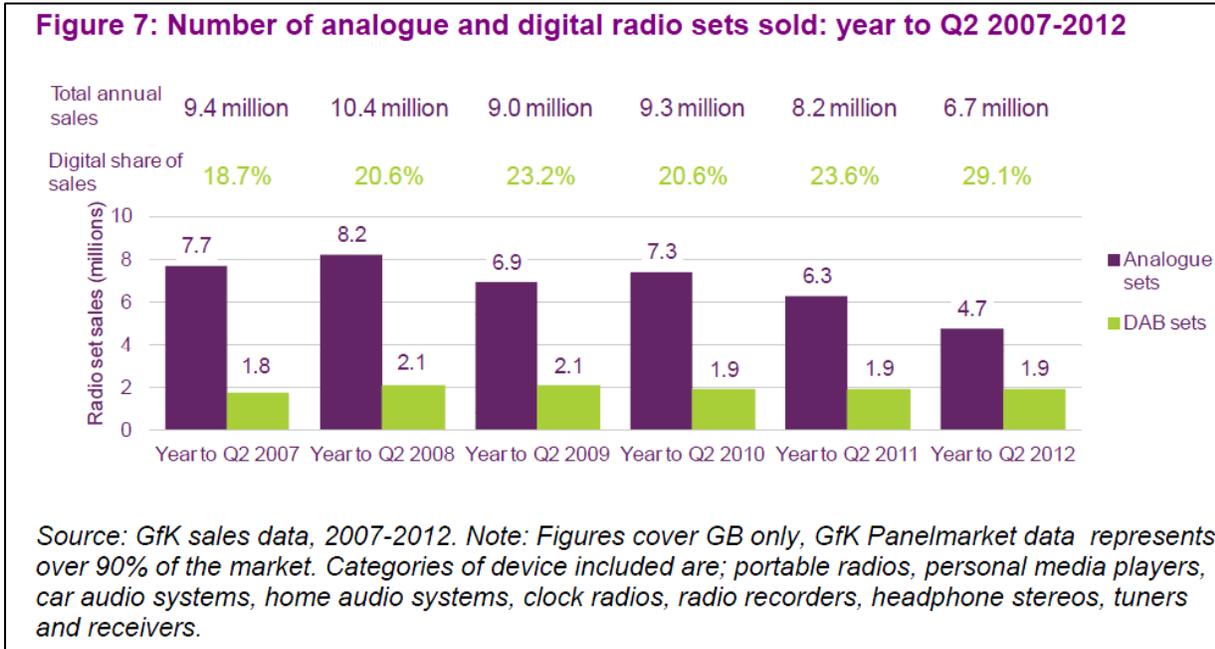
On October 17 2012, Ofcom, the U.K. regulator for broadcast services, issued its third annual digital progress report on digital radio, assessing the progress toward the goals set out in the DRAP. Although full assessment of measuring against the DRAP’s criteria is complicated, below are some charts from the report, which show insight into the overall take-up of digital radio in the U.K. Note that the situation in the UK for digital radio is much different than in the U.S: as opposed to the in-band/on-channel approach to digital radio in the U.S., the U.K. uses a new-band approach, with the frequency band from 217.5 to 230 MHz allocated for DAB.

Overall, over 40% of UK households now claim to have DAB radio receivers:

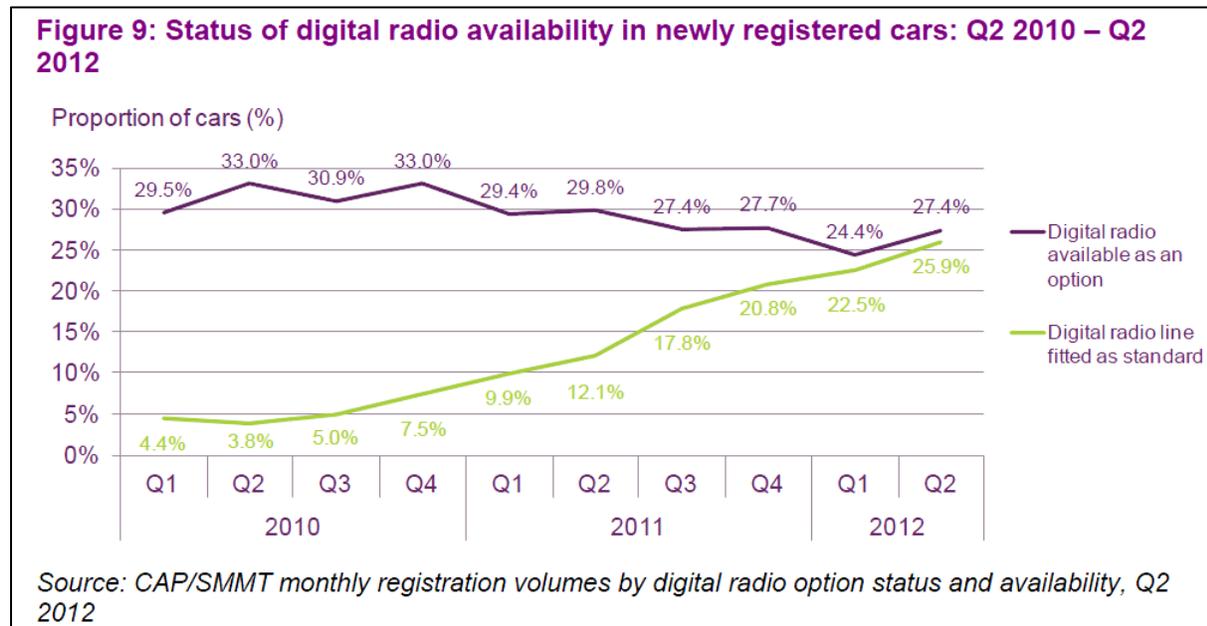


Source: Research from: Ofcom Technology Tracker, RAJAR Q2 2012

Sales of DAB sets have been relatively constant over the past five years at around 2 million radios per year. Analog radio sales, on the other hand, have begun to decline significantly:

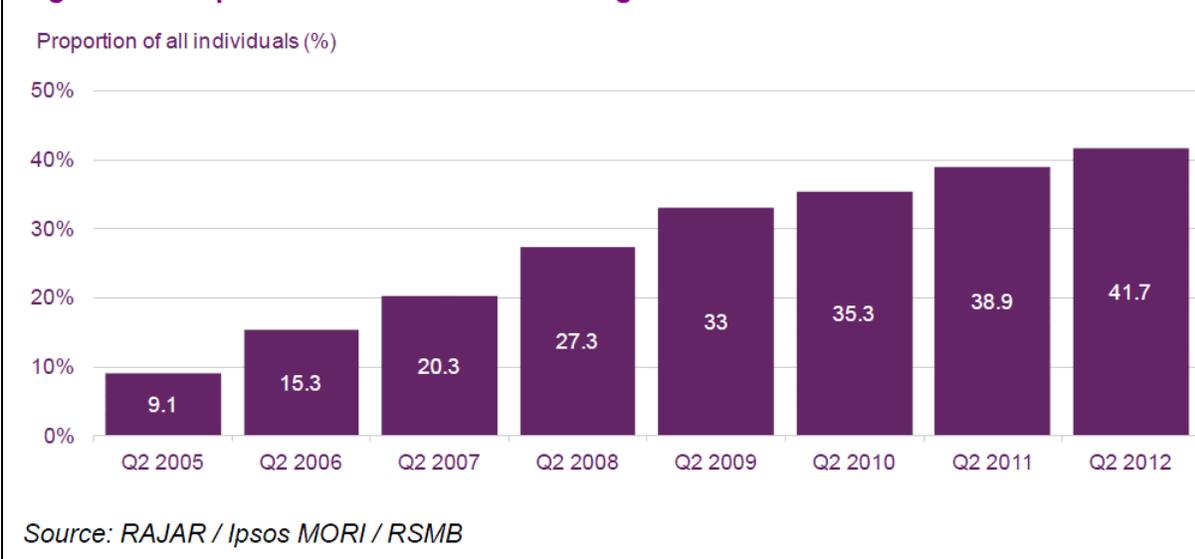


Availability of DAB radio as a standard item in new automobiles has risen from under 5% to over 25% of new cars in just two years:

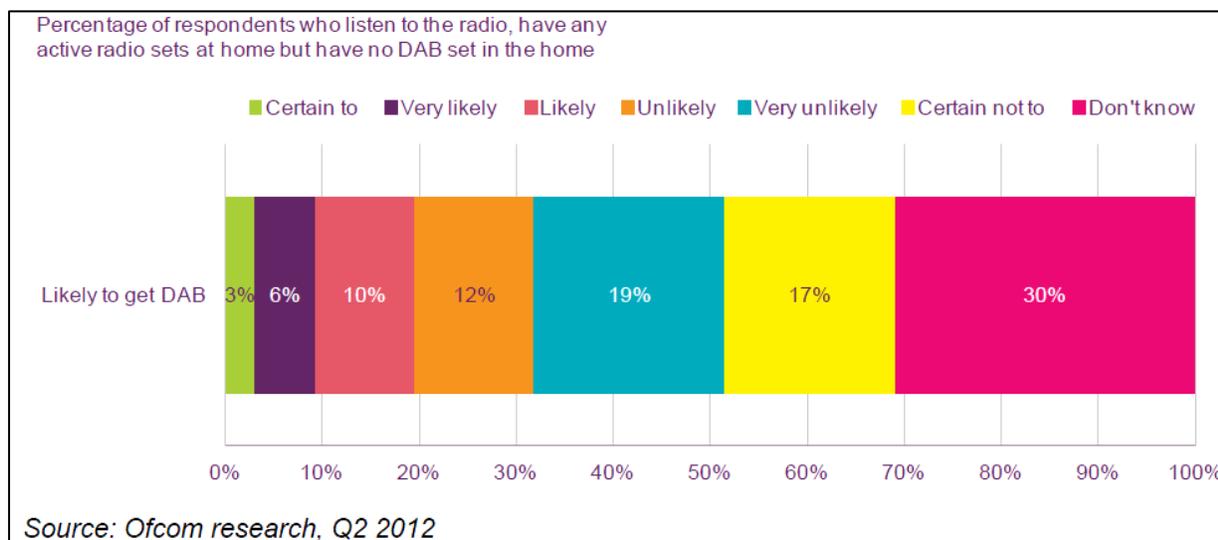


DAB access in the home has also risen, doubling in the last five years, with over 41% of individuals now having DAB access in their homes:

**Figure 13: Proportion of individuals claiming access to DAB in the home**



Of those that do not have access to DAB in their homes, 19% say they are likely, very likely or certain to get DAB in the next 12 months:



The complete Ofcom report can be accessed [here](#).

**We apologize for the delay in sending TV TechCheck to you this week. Our production schedule was interrupted by the recent hurricane.**

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