INTERNET RADIO FOR CHRISTMAS

Internet radio company PenguinRadio (Chesapeake Beach, MD, www.penguinradio.com) has recently introduced a new way for listeners to access its vast array of streaming audio signals-the **SolutionsRadio** (see picture). This is a stand-alone Internet Radio device manufactured by SolutionsRadio (Delft, The Netherlands, www.solutionsradio.nl/) which does not need to be connected to a computer, but rather is connected either to a telephone line or a broadband Ethernet signal (wireless operation can be accomplished but an external Wi-Fi device is required). PenguinRadio is selling this device from their Website for $239 for the holidays (normally $249).

When connected to the Internet, the SolutionsRadio takes the listener directly to the PenguinRadio Website and allows for selection from the thousands of audio streaming signals offered there. Other features of the SolutionsRadio include: remote control operation, built in 5W speaker, home stereo compatibility through standard RCA speaker outputs, remote software update capability (using the Internet) and built-in Ethernet and 56k dial-up modem.

(Top view)

(Rear view)

Prior to this recent arrangement with PenguinRadio, the SolutionsRadio company has marketed this device for use by other commercial and non-commercial customers, in arrangements similar to those that have traditionally been supported by FM subcarrier signals. For these applications, SolutionsRadio can set up their device with a unique account number allowing for the establishment of a "closed user group." On the server end, SolutionsRadio can support promotional ad insertions and targeted marketing/distribution campaigns, as well as remote management and remote configuration of the server equipment.

The first large-scale application of this system was establishment of the "ChurchWebRadio" that allows more than 50,000 people in the Netherlands to listen to their very own church service that, for whatever reason, they are unable to attend in person. Another example of a closed user group is the "Expat WebRadio" being used by ex-patriates from Russia and the Ukraine living in the USA and Canada. Previously these groups could only listen to a single Russian radio program (being re-broadcast in the New Jersey and Boston areas), but now the WebRadio offers them a choice of a number of stations from their homeland.

Another Internet radio for this holiday season, the **Acoustic Energy WiFi Radio**, is available to order (but only to customers living in the UK) from "e-tailers" www.lowestonweb.com/ (who indicate they will be receiving 116 units on 12/12/05) and www.play.com, selling for about $350. The AE WiFi radio (see picture) has been designed in the UK by British loudspeaker and hi-fi manufacturer Acoustic Energy (Gloucestershire, England, www.acoustic-energy.co.uk, in partnership with Internet radio technology expert Reciva (Cambridge, England, www.reciva.com).

The AE WiFi radio automatically links into an existing Wi-Fi network (with WEP encryption if enabled) and uses a broadband connection to access Reciva's Internet Radio Gateway. The Reciva Gateway then uploads channel listings alphabetically by country and genre to the AE WiFi radio (there are currently over 2,500 stations registered on the Reciva Gateway). In addition, the AE WiFi radio is also a fully equipped media adapter, accessing audio files stored on a home PC and allowing for play by artist, album or playlist and supports generation of playlists from a mix of music and stored radio content. Some of the other features of the AE Wi-fi radio include: supports Real Audio, MP3 and Windows Media streams; uses 802.11b and 802.11g Wi-Fi connectivity; offers 128-bit (max) WEP security; 'Reply Key' enables future interactive features; and, AAC and "iTunes" available as a future software upgrade.