

# Press Release

## BBC and National Grid Wireless trial new technology for digital radio on medium-wave

19th Feb 2007

BBC Radio and National Grid Wireless have announced a trial of a new transmission technology which will allow the two organisations to assess the practicality of digital radio services in the medium-wave bands.

The trial, which will last for a year, will be centred on Plymouth.

From the end of April, the BBC and National Grid Wireless will re-use a current medium-wave frequency in the Plymouth area to broadcast a trial digital service using the digital radio mondiale (DRM) standard.

DRM is an emerging technology which has been designed to facilitate digital radio at frequencies below 30 MHz.

The BBC, which has been involved in the engineering research and development of the standard over the last few years, already makes the BBC World Service available on short-wave using the technology to some parts of western Europe and north Africa.

The trial will broadcast BBC Radio Devon using the technology from the existing medium-wave transmitter in the city.

An audience panel will be recruited from listeners to Radio Devon and users of [bbc.co.uk/devon](http://bbc.co.uk/devon). Members of the panel will be given radios which are capable of receiving DRM as well as the existing FM and DAB transmissions.

The BBC intends to conduct research with the panel over the following year to explore their experience of DRM and help inform its future digital radio strategy.

The trial will be the first of its kind in the UK using medium-wave to provide DRM to UK listeners.

National Grid Wireless will supply, commission and operate the transmission equipment needed for the trial, as well as being involved in the engineering measurement of the transmissions and validation of the results. The two companies intend to publish the results of the trial by mid-2008.

John Allen, Head of New Services for BBC English Regions, said: "The trial will help us understand whether DRM has a role to play in the all-digital future for BBC Local Radio in the UK.

"We're really excited that BBC Radio Devon is going to be involved in this trial, as it confirms that BBC Local Radio is no stranger to technological innovation."

John Ward, Director of Network Operations and Engineering at National Grid Wireless, said: "We have a track record of being at the forefront of new developments in broadcast technology and this trial maintains our commitment to innovation.

"Importantly this trial will enable us to explore the practicalities of establishing domestic DRM broadcasting that could, in the future, complement existing radio services."

- Ends -