

RDS Forum - the association of RDS users

A few good reasons for joining the RDS Forum in 2025

For over 30 years already 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 can be 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 2024, the RDS technical specifications already existed for 40 years and they were regularly updated with new backwards compatible features being added. There has been success all over and billions of FM radios with RDS have been built so far. In quantities on top were car radios/navigation systems 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 remains by far the most popular radio technology and it will continue to co-exist next to digital radio still for ever.

In 2015, the RDS Forum entered the years for an ~~adaptation~~ transition of the RDS technology to RDS2, using the full experience gained in the past

An RDS2 station logo transmission demo was presented in a public meeting during the first RDS2 Info Day, held in November 2015 in Berlin

For RDS2, it was necessary to completely re-structure the worldwide RDS standard IEC 62106 into Parts 1 to 6, an objective being fully achieved by the RDS Forum by the end of 2016 and available from the IEC since October 2018. In 2019 this standard adaptation has been enlarged to include RBDS (Part 9), used in North America. On this issue the RDS Forum continues to closely collaborate with the NAB and the US NRSC. Part 10 for the Universal Encoder Communication Protocol UECP for RDS, fully adapted to RDS2 was achieved at the end of 2021. Part 2 was also updated in 2021 to include the RDS2 file transfer protocol RFT.

RDS2 opened the door for a large number of innovative applications that can now be included into RDS using the Open Data Applications (ODA) feature on the three additional and optional upper subcarriers, all backwards compatible and permitting us to create quickly even more value added service applications.. All these new developments from the RDS Forum will play a pre-dominant role for RDS2 in the future, for example create enhanced alarm functionalities for FM radio. 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 RDS Forum 2022 agreed a partnership with the DRM Consortium to harmonise data applications used for both, analogue and digital radio.

The RDS Forum completed by the end of 2022 the development on the following RDS2 applications:

- Station logo,
- Slideshow with or without text elements and
- Service following via the internet (including the same audio stream)
- NFM – Protocol to transmit RDS data over other bearers, not only on FM.

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 in 2025 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.

In 2024 a revolutionary way of distribution of FM/RDS program content came into the spotlight: Micro MPX distributing from the studio center both audio and RDS data in a combined multiplex. The system enables more dynamic sound and better stereo, and for RDS and RDS2, data to be produced and distributed to FM transmitters entirely by software.

The next meeting of the Forum is planned for October 2026. Virtual meetings using Zoom can be held until then.

There is also an opportunity at the Salon de la Radio / European Radio Show in Paris on 28 and 29 January 2025 to promote our aim to move forward with RDS2.

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

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

New RDS (RDS2 ready) encoders are available from our RDS Forum member Worldcast Systems. A USB RDS/RDS2 data receiver and RDS/RDS2 data analyser was available from former 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.

Finally, to encourage you to become a member of the RDS Forum only as from the second year your annual member fee will CHF 3 900, but in the first year of your RDS Forum membership it will be free, but only during 2025 ! This is to encourage you to gain experience in collaborating with the RDS Forum as a full member at no initial cost.

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

RDS Forum – the association of RDS users

New RDS Forum 2025 member registration form

Annual membership fee in Swiss franc per delegate for the RDS Forum is CHF 3900.— as from 2026 onwards. During 2025 it will be free for you.

After your registration in 2025 you will be invoiced in 2026 for your RDS Forum 2026 membership. Payment is due before the end of 2026-Q2.

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 credit card using 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 new member

.....Name
..... First Name
..... Company / Organisation
..... Address (1)
..... Address (2)
..... Telephone
..... E-mail

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

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