

Bandscan analysis of Radio Handbooks for 2010

by Anker Petersen, Denmark, January 01, 2010. © DSWCI.
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On the 25th of October 2009 the B09 winter schedules became effective. Already on the 10th of December I received the "2010 edition of the World Radio TV Handbook" (WRTH) from its publisher Nicholas Hardyman, UK. The next day arrived the "2010 Shortwave Frequency Guide" (SWFG) with the 2010 Super Frequency List (SFL) on a CD from Joerg Klingenfuss, Germany.

Both annual, printed Handbooks have kept their well known, but different format.

The **SWFG** 2010 (14th edition) contains 440 pages in English (230 about Broadcasting and 210 about Utility stations). The Broadcasting part begins with an updated article about DRM including a list of DRM schedules on LW, MW and SW. It is followed by the comprehensive SW frequency list which for each frequency contains a line for each broadcast, practicably arranged in time order within each frequency. That includes exact times, transmitter site, language and target area. The Country section contains the same data listed by Station, but without details like geographical coordinates, addresses, web sites, QSL info, etc. Price: EUR 40,-.

At the same time Klingenfuss has published the 16th Edition of the 2010 Super Frequency List (**SFL**) on a CD with the same 8,200 Broadcast frequencies and 8,400 utility frequencies in use plus 21,500 formerly active frequencies. This modern tool is very easy to use on a PC using Microsoft Windows and has excellent search functions for specific frequencies, countries, stations, languages, call signs and times - or any combination thereof! Price: EUR 30,-. More details at www.klingenfuss.org.

It is a Frequency List with SW schedules on all broadcast stations, but without any other details about the stations. I prefer the SWFG when I scan the SW broadcast bands, because the current schedule and language is available at each frequency in time order. But I have no use of all the 210 pages about utility stations.

The **WRTH** 2010 (64th edition) has 672 pages, including 64 in full colour. Our good Italian friend Dario Monferini introduces himself as one of the numerous WRTH Contributors 2010. Next John Nelson reviews the following expensive SW-receivers Icom IC-7600 and IC-7000, Etón Satellit 750 and these very low cost portables: Go World Band, Crown CRMR-1, Texon 4029 and Palito PA-6622 (the latter costs only 8 Euros!) After a nostalgic article about Cold War Classics (Collins R390, Racal RA17, Harris RF-590 and Rohde & Schwarz EK 070), John Nelson interviews the BBC Director of Future Media, Transmission & Distribution and the Director of the Global News Division about the future in Global broadcasting. Then follows a "Digital Update", "Samoan Radio Journey" and the traditional update by George Jacobs on reception conditions.

After the maps, on page 65 begin the fully updated sections with all details about National and International Radio, MW and SW Frequency Lists, International broadcasts in English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. On page 606 is a useful list of current DRM International Broadcasts followed by terrestrial Television and on page 653 References. Read more at www.wrth.com. Price: GBP: 23,-.

In contrary to the SWFG, the **WRTH** also contains LW, MW and some FM and TV information. Therefore I use the WRTH when I DX on the bands mentioned or need more information about the stations. It is highly appreciated that, like the two last years, an update free of charge will be published on their

website in January 2010 and a full summer edition of the International Section will be available in May 2009.

Spot check by bandscanning

As in my previous analyses, I also scanned through the SW-bands in mid December. I listened to 50 broadcast stations at random in frequency band and time and identified them 100%, no matter what language, and made a comparative analysis.

I then checked in the two Handbooks, if each particular broadcast heard, was mentioned in the Country Section and in the SW frequency list. This must contain the five essential details: Station name, frequency, scheduled at that exact time, exact language and site of transmitter. Half of the stations heard carried domestic broadcasts, and half of them international broadcasts. For further details on any of my results, please look at: www.dswci.org/specials/bookreviews/201001handbooks.pdf

Analysis

I consider the five details mentioned above to be essential for the DX-er during his listening and identification of the transmitter and broadcast. Thus it was checked for each logging, if the Handbooks have all these essential details and if they are correct. This is then marked "+" in my detailed analysis. If just one is missing, the column got a "-".

I still consider it useful, if the Handbooks also can provide the DX-er with additional information about Geographical Coordinates for his propagation calculations and Google Earth search, and ID in the language heard. Furthermore it is necessary to know current addresses (postal, e-mail and web) and QSL-policy for his reception report writing. For listeners with Broadband internet (ATDL) is it also useful to know, if the station broadcasts live audio on the web.

Most of these useful details can be found in the WRTH, but they are still missing completely in the SWFG!

Comparison

I then counted how many essential details were correct for the 25 international and 25 domestic stations randomly heard. The results were (each figure out of 5x25 = 125 possible):

	SWFG		WRTH	
	Int.	Dom.	Int.	Dom.
Analysis result	120	120	119	119
Sum (Max. 250)	240 (96%)		238 (95%).	

This year both the WRTH and the SWFG were missing a few essential details.

Please be aware that changes in broadcast schedules occur nearly each day and also during the period from the editorial deadline till the printed Handbook reaches the listener. It has always been so. Because of this, it is almost impossible to achieve a 100% score!

Conclusions

It is evident that the editors of both Handbooks once more have done a tremendous work to gather up-to-date broadcasting schedules and other information for the B09 period and have succeeded in this to a very high degree! Each of the Handbooks is useful for the DX-er and ordinary shortwave listener. The details published are at a very high accuracy level and can hardly be much better!

An important feature when searching for and identifying broadcast stations, is their complete frequency schedules, so that all parallel frequencies can be checked, e.g. as an identification tool. The schedules are easily available and very complete both in the WRTH and SWFG, and on the SFL CD-version.