

Bandscan analysis of Radio Handbooks for 2004

by Anker Petersen, Denmark, Dec 29, 2003. © DSWCI
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Mid December, I received the 2004 editions of the World Radio TV Handbook (WRTH) (688 pages about Broadcasting, £ 22 or about 31 Euro), and the Shortwave Frequency Guide (SWFG) from Klingenfuss (298 pages about Broadcasting and 234 pages about Utility, 35 Euro). Since then I have analyzed and compared their value to the Shortwave Broadcast Dixer. These results can be compared to my analysis a year ago.

Method

I did not choose the traditional way of reviewing each section in the Handbooks, but instead analyzing what information they were able to provide me when I listened to 100 randomly selected broadcast stations throughout the shortwavebands. Half of the stations carried domestic broadcasts, and half of them international broadcasts. All stations were 100% identified no matter what language. Every DX-er, in Europe at least, have the possibility to listen to the same stations and check my loggings. The log list with my detailed analysis will be published on our home page www.dswci.org , Latest News.

Analysis

I consider the following details to be essential for the DX-er during his listening and identification of the transmitter and broadcast: Station name, Exact language, Scheduled broadcast time, Exact frequency and Transmitter site. Thus it was checked for each logging, if the Handbooks contained these details and they were correct.

In addition I took note, if the Handbooks could provide the DX-er with additional, useful information, for his propagation calculations and reception report writing. However, the correctness of this information has not been evaluated.

For each logging I gave a score, depending on the information in each of the Handbooks. The essential details counted double. The scores are shown on the log list only.

Comparison

I then compared how many of the 100 stations heard which had the following details correct:

	WRTH		SWFG	
	Internation.	Domestic	Internation.	Domestic
<u>Essential:</u>				
Exact language	100	80	90	96
Time schedule	90	90	86	94
Frequency	94	96	86	96
Transmitter site	88	90	82	94
<u>Useful:</u>				
Geograf. coord.	96	52	Missing	
ID in lang. heard	68	40	Missing	
QSL policy	86	38	Missing	
Postal address	100	100	Missing	
E-mail address	98	62	Missing	
Web address	100	48	Missing	

For identification purposes, it is necessary that all the essential details are readily available in the Handbook. This was found to be the case in **78% (68%)** of the checks in the **WRTH**, and **80% (74%)** in **SWFG**. (In brackets are the 2003 results).

Conclusions

It is evident that the editors of both Handbooks have done a tremendous work to gather up-to-date schedules and other information and to improve the quality compared to the 2003 Editions and both have succeeded in this ! Each of the Handbooks is useful for the DX-er. I need both for my broadcast DX-ing on shortwave, because they supplement each other.

The details published in both Handbooks are at the same, very high accuracy level. It can hardly be better! But various kinds of information are still missing as indicated by my figures above.

An important feature when searching for and identifying broadcast stations, is their complete frequency schedules, so that all parallel frequencies can be checked. The schedules are handily available and very complete in both handbooks.

I also noted that both Handbooks still are weak on updated details on domestic SW broadcasting compared to international broadcasting. It will probably always be so, because the domestic broadcasting organisations are less cooperative in providing details than the international broadcasters.

The **SWFG** is a Frequency List with SW schedules, but without any other details about the stations. The German editor, Joerg Klingenfuss, and his staff has put a lot of effort to make it as up-to-date as possible. It is in English. Its big advantage is that for each shortwave frequency you can read at what time it is used by various broadcasters and in which language. This is also possible in "The Shortwave Guide" published each summer by the WRTH, but is missing in its traditional Main edition at winter.

Klingenfuss also sells the same broadcast and utility database on a CD-Rom called "2004 Super Frequency List" where you easily can search on a PC using Windows, for specific frequencies, countries, stations, languages or times. This very useful tool costs 25 Euro.

I am afraid that the ordinary Broadcast DX-er does not have any use of the Utility pages, so I suggest again the book split up into two cheaper publications in the future.

In contrary to the SWFG, the **WRTH** also contains LW, MW, FM and TV information. Besides the above mentioned improvement in information about shortwave stations, I also noted that all clandestine stations have been moved to a separate section called "Clandestine and other Target Broadcasts" placed after the International Broadcasts. Both Handbooks cover Clandestine stations well, but the list in the WRTH is the most complete. Another improvement in the WRTH is a highly needed cross reference system for broadcasters using foreign sites.

It shall not be forgotten that the WRTH also contains tests of receivers and other useful articles in addition to the station information. Both books have articles about Digital Radio.

Again this year, I can recommend serious DX-ers to buy this "DX-ers Bible" ! I have all Editions of the WRTH since 1961 in my collection and I am pleased to say that the 2004 Edition is the best ! My congratulations to Publisher Nicholas Hardyman and his team.

These were my conclusions and comments based upon the analysis of the details published on the 100 stations logged. Please also note that this was a comparison and not an ordinary review of each of the two publications.