

Bandscan analysis of Radio Handbooks for 2012

by Anker Petersen, Denmark, December 20, 2011. © DSWCI.
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On the 30th of October 2011 the B11 winter schedules became effective. Already on the 13th of December I received both the "World Radio TV Handbook 2012" (WRTH) from its publisher Nicholas Hardyman, the United Kingdom, and the "2012 Shortwave Frequency Guide" (SWFG) with "The 2012 Super Frequency List" (SFL) on a CD from Jörg Klingenfuss, Germany. Thus I immediately could make this comparative analysis.

Both annual, printed Handbooks have kept their wellknown, but different format. In their editorials both publishers are worried about the remarkable reduction in international broadcasting on shortwaves over the past year. Deutsche Welle has even pulled out from the joint DRM-venture with the BBC.

In an article: Radio & the "Arab Spring", Chris Greenway in the WRTH 2012 describes, how the Libyan rebels took over the broadcasting scene in Libya after the revolution. But radio is being replaced by satellite TV and the internet (Facebook and Twitter) as the preferred sources of communication for most Arab audiences. It is different in Asian countries.

Jörg Klingenfuss in his editorial warns the big international broadcasters, that they still have a task using shortwave to people in dictatorship countries, which censor the internet use.

The WRTH 2012 (66th edition) again has 672 pages, including 64 in full colour. The WRTH Contributor 2012 is Tore B. Vik from Norway, who covers South American countries. Then John Nelson reviews the new receivers from Alinco DX-R8E, the Pappradio, the Reuter Elektronik RDR54C, WinRadio Excalibur Pro, Sangean ATS-909X and Tecsun PL-660. After articles about Tristan da Cunha and Radio Bulgaria, comes the analysis from George Jacobs of SW Broadcasting over 50 years and the 2012 reception characteristics. Then follows the usual content. Read more at www.wrth.com. Price: GBP: 24.95. The B11 WRTH Bargraph Frequency Guide CD costs GBP: 9.99.

The WRTH also contains LW, MW and some FM and TV information, in contrary to the SWFG. Therefore I use the WRTH, when I DX on the bands mentioned or need more information about the stations, like addresses. It is highly appreciated that, like the last four years, an update free of charge will be published on their website in February 2012 and a full summer edition of the International Section will be available in May 2012.

The SWFG 2012 (16th edition) contains 408 pages in English (237 about SW Broadcasting and 171 about Utility stations. Last year there were 257 pages about SW Broadcasting)! The Broadcasting part begins with an updated article about DRM, described as a big megaflop with the number of transmission minutes being reduced from 2008: 39.420 till 2011: 28.823.

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,-.

SWFG 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 timeorder. But I have no use of all the 171 utility pages.

At the same time Klingenfuss has published the 18th Edition of the Super Frequency List (SFL) on a CD with the same 7,300 Broadcast frequencies and 8,500 Utility frequencies in use as in the SWFG, plus 22,200 formerly active frequencies. Price: EUR 30,-. More details at www.klingenfuss.org.

Spotcheck by bandscanning

As previously, I scanned through the SW-bands in mid December 2011. I spot checked 50 broadcast stations at random in time and frequency and identified them 100%, no matter what language, and made a comparative analysis. Half of the stations heard carried domestic broadcasts and half international broadcasts.

I then looked in the two new 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. A copy of the detailed analysis can be obtained from the author.

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 2012 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):

	WRTH		SWFG	
	Int.	Dom.	Int.	Dom.
Analysis result	124	122	120	124
Sum (Max. 250)	246 (98,4%)		244 (97,6%)	

This year both the WRTH and the SWFG get about the same results as last year and were missing very few essential details:

WRTH only has broadcast hours of about 20% of the South American SW stations, whereas SWFG and DSWCI Domestic Broadcasting Survey have for nearly 100%.

SWFG continues to wrongly name AIR Jeypore 5040 as AIR Jaypur, not to be mistaken with AIR Jaipur on 4910. I also stated this a year ago!!!

SWFG has not updated the SW-broadcasts of Radio Libye.

Conclusions

Once more, the editors of both Handbooks have done a tremendous work to gather up-to-date broadcasting schedules and other information for the B11 period. The Handbooks are very useful for the DX-er and ordinary shortwave listener and are at a very high accuracy level and can hardly be much better!