



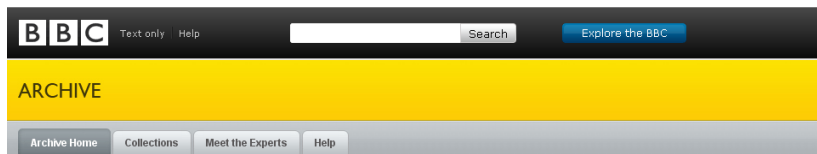
Click!

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Click! focuses on World Wide Websites, PC software, and hardware that can be used to listen to international broadcasters and other English language public broadcasters via Internet-based technology. Broadcaster websites and other web resources are covered. Feedback and suggestions are always encouraged – please include Click! in the subject line of any e-mail.

When you don't know what to listen to...part three...how about the BBC's growing radio archive? *Maybe not...*

While I've been critical of the short duration of BBC Radio 4's online archive – for many programs it's only one week's worth of programming – the BBC is building an online museum of radio craft with an archive that crosses the various stations of the BBC's radio history. It's at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive> .



Programming dating back to the 1930s is available, and is organized into a series of thematic collections that appear to be rotated as

various features. One current feature focuses on Big Ben, the clock that lent its distinctive timekeeping to the BBC World Service for many years. The Big Ben collection consists of 10 programmes and one gallery of photos; the online audio segments range from one to 49 minutes in length. Included is audio from 1936.

There's only one catch: Much of this audio is available only to UK listeners, it appears; we who have North American Internet addresses will get a message reading "not available in your area".

I checked with the custodians of the BBC online archive, and there's no workaround to enable the listening to audio, though the non-multimedia material (galleries, articles) is available without restriction. .

Radio / TV Cameroon online

Quick: Who was the colonial power in this African country? France? Great Britain? Germany? How about all of the above? Why is this paragraph nothing but questions?

Anyway, Harold Sellers passed along a tip for online English-language audio from the state-run Radio TV Cameroon, available at <http://www.crtv.cm/> . Click on the link labelled <Radio>, then look for the <Radio Newscast> entries. You'll be able to listen to three daily newscasts (6:30 AM, 3 PM, 7 PM local time) that are archived for at least three weeks back. Each newscast runs anywhere from 14 to 28 minutes in length; a

recent 3 PM newscast ran 28 minutes. For local news from an African perspective, this is a very good online choice.



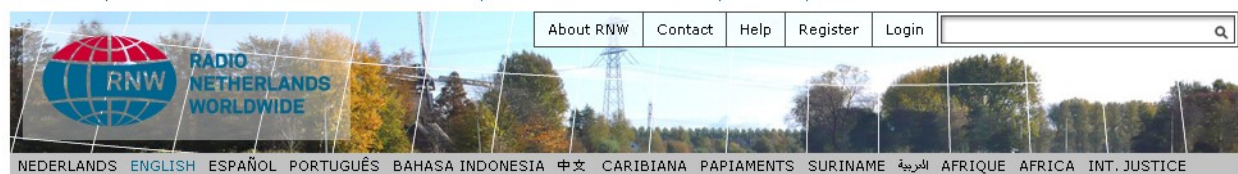
It appears Radio TV Cameroon uses a Flash-based media player, which might prove problematic for WiFi radio users; my favourite program for capturing Flash-based audio for later listening via MP3 is Replay Media Catcher, a \$40 piece of software that does a very good job of capturing Flash media – an area where other software falls down on the job. Check out Replay Media Catcher at <http://applian.com/download-videos/> ; a Google search will also bring you there straightaway. More on flash-based media later in the column.

Radio Netherlands overhauls their website...what do you think of the new design?

Radio Netherlands has long worked to have an accessible, content-rich website, as it recognized many who would be interested in what Radio Netherlands would have to say would never pick up a shortwave radio and tune it around. This website has recently been overhauled; while there are certainly some spiffy enhancements to the website, it still feels to me like someone rearranged all the furniture in my home while I was away at work. Everything's there, but I don't know where to find it.

One of the items that's hard-to-find is the detailed shortwave program schedule – a single listing of frequencies, times of day, target zones, and program content. Yes, you can find which programs are on which days, and you can find another list that shows which frequencies are on air at which times to which target zones, but that single, unified list is missing.

RNW - NEWS, ANALYSIS AND BACKGROUND IN 10 LANGUAGES, WORLDWIDE 24 HOURS A DAY, ON RADIO, TELEVISION AND THE INTERNET.



Other than that, the website seems agreeable; Radio Netherlands has long made its programs available via download, podcast, and streaming, and in low-bandwidth and high-bandwidth audio versions. One no longer needs to look for Radio Netherlands programs to be on at a specific time on a specific day.

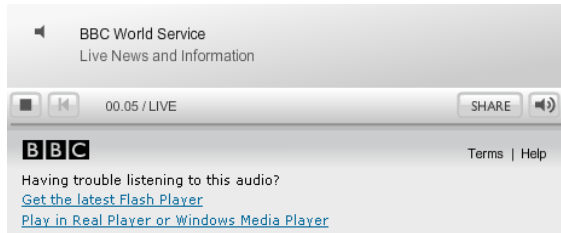
So, what do you think of the new website? What's good about it? What's not? Drop me a line to let me know.

BBC switches to the Flash player as its basic audio platform...one step forward, two steps backward?

Back in the dark ages of streaming audio in the mid-1990's, the predominant media format was Real Audio; Windows Media was clearly in the minority, and MP3 had not yet become the *de facto* encoding standard for compact discs

ripped for PC audio platforms.

Over the years, Windows Media and MP3 appear to have captured a significant chunk of the streaming audio market, based on my casual, unscientific observations. A recent arrival for streaming audio has been embedded Flash audio, developed by Macromedia and now owned by Adobe, the folks who developed the PDF format that enables your online enjoyment of *Listening In*.



The BBC has kept with RealMedia for its default audio format, even as these other audio formats gained traction. However, since early June, the new default embedded audio

player on the BBC website is Flash-based. This upgrade was implemented at the same time that the BBC increased the audio bandwidth for most of its programming; the result is high-quality audio across the BBC's universe of programming, and across the Mac OS, Windows, and Linux operating systems, all of which appear to handle Flash media with no issues. Thankfully, RealMedia and Windows Media streams are also available, at least for the World Service. Indications are that RealMedia streams will disappear altogether, at least for the domestic services.

So far, so good, right? Yes, as long as you use your PC – whether desktop, laptop, or netbook – as your listening platform. Those of us who capture audio to our PCs and then transfer it to portable devices (MP3 players) have been inconvenienced by the switch – as most streaming audio capture software packages don't handle Flash streams well. Replay Media Catcher – the software I mentioned earlier – appears to capture the BBC's Flash audio fine. What it doesn't do, though, is transform the audio into the MP3 format that is common across portable audio players, whether you're talking the Apple iTunes or a budget MP3 player. The built-in audio converter in Replay Media Catcher can't handle the BBC flash audio; you need another Applian software product, Replay Converter, to convert the Flash (.flv) audio into MP3. Further, you need the current version of Replay Converter (v3.37), not the prior version (v2.80). I've updated both software packages to their current versions, and I can now capture *Newshour* – which is not directly podcast – and save to my MP3 player.

The use of the Flash streaming format is also problematic for Internet radios – none that I know of directly handle Flash-formatted content. Thankfully, the RealMedia and Windows Media formats appear to remain available, and the URLs for these haven't changed. No word as to whether these secondary formats will remain available for the foreseeable future. However, when I tried to listen to either the RealMedia or Windows Media versions of a recent on-demand edition of *Newshour*, I received error messages stating that the content wasn't available. I notified the World Service website team of the problem, but as of today (June 24th) the problem had not been corrected.

Don't throw away your Internet radios due to the increased usage of Flash Audio / Video just yet; I know of very few web radio stations that don't offer alternatives to Flash streaming audio, and some that do have worked with the Internet radio database vendors (specifically Reciva) to provide URL information for non-Flash streams that Internet radios can handle.

That's all for this month – hope you have an enjoyable summer (if you're in the Northern hemisphere)!