

# New digital audio technology cuts the buzz from radio

## **MDA, Robert Bosch, MediaCorp Radio to jointly promote DAB**

*By Carolyn Quek*

TIRED of the hissing, crackling sound from your FM receiver? Here's some good news, with Singapore's plans to push the uptake of the new digital audio technology (DAB) format.

The Media Development Authority (MDA) has tied up with Germany-based Robert Bosch and MediaCorp Radio in a \$500,000 joint project to promote DAB to Singapore households.

"DAB has been available here since November 1999 with SmartRadio from MediaCorp and was Asia's first digital radio service," said James Yip, MediaCorp Radio CEO. "Since its inception, we invested about \$2-\$3 million in capital and about \$1 million in annual running costs to promote DAB car receivers."

Martin Low, Robert Bosch's regional general manager of car multimedia sales, said the biggest barrier that prevented DAB from taking off was its high pricing. Radio sets cost about \$2,000. This will change now

because the company has acquired exclusive rights to distribute DAB radio products in Singapore without the need for new antenna or additional equipment.

"This will mean households will be able to obtain DAB equipment for about \$300 now," Mr Low said.

DAB technology is the most significant advance in radio technology since FM stereo radios were introduced in the 1960s. DAB produces crystal clear CD-quality sound with low-interference noise-to-signal ratio that eliminates the usual buzz and fade.

It also supports data services, so information such as traffic, weather reports and details about the song and artists can be displayed as scrolling text.

DAB household users can get SmartRadio's seven simulcast stations on their receivers and six other DAB channels, including financial news from Bloomberg. They can also access 20 data services such as news, traffic reports and flight information.

Robert Bosch said it has also tied up with Courts Singapore to retail its Pure-digital brand of DAB products for six months, from yesterday. The products cost from \$300 to \$1,099.