RADIO IS ALIVE.

Global Radio Diffusion Report 2024–2025

USA · United Kingdom · Netherlands

225M+
Weekly US listeners

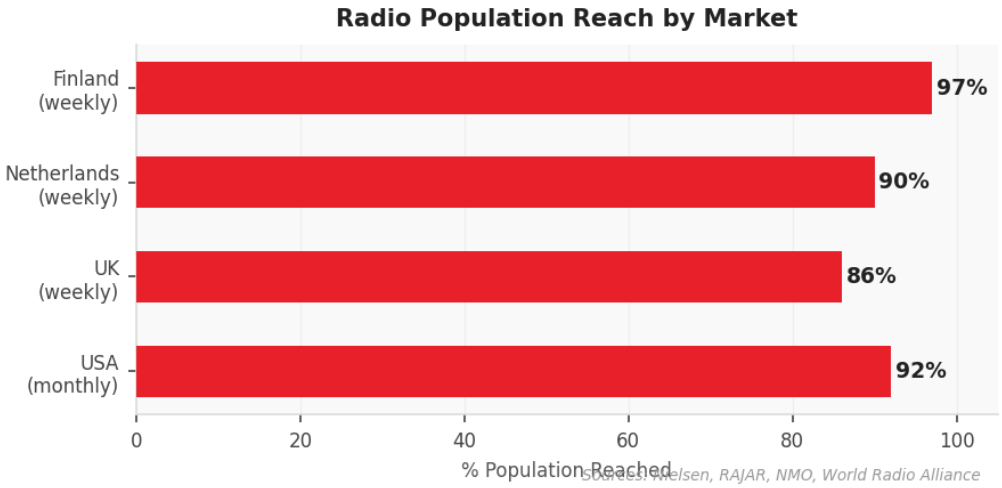
50M
UK weekly listeners

90%
Netherlands weekly reach

Sources: RAJAR, Nielsen, NMO AudioMonitor, World Radio Alliance, Edison Research, Radiocentre · May 2026

Global Overview: Radio Is the World's #1 Medium

Radio remains the single most-reaching mass medium on the planet in 2025. According to the World Radio Alliance, radio reaches up to 90% of national populations in key markets — above any other platform. The global radio advertising market reached $27.78 billion in 2025, projected to grow to $36.71B by 2030 (CAGR 6%). In a fragmented digital media landscape, radio's trust credentials stand out: 69% of EU citizens cite radio as the most reliable source of information.



Sources: Nielsen, RAJAR, NMO AudioMonitor 2024, World Radio Alliance (Feb 2025), Edison Research Infinite Dial 2025

$27.8B
Global radio ad market 2025

90%
Max population reach (NL, IE)

69%
EU listeners trust radio most

Sources: TBRC Global Radio Advertising Market Report 2026; World Radio Alliance World Radio Day 2025 data release

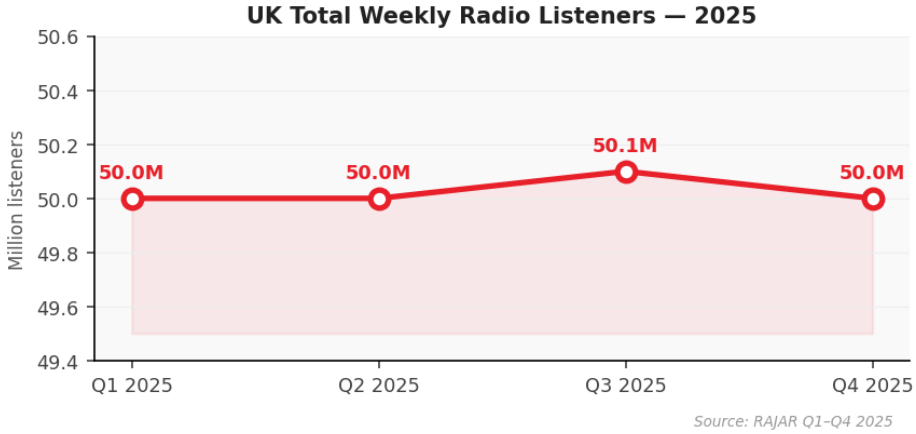
United Kingdom

RAJAR Data 2025 — A Market in Record-Breaking Form

01

United Kingdom — Audience & Listening Data

The UK radio market delivered a remarkable 2025: 50 million adults — 86% of the adult population — tune in every week, consistently across all four quarters (RAJAR). Commercial radio's audience share reached an all-time high of 56% in Q3 2025, the highest ever recorded versus the BBC's 42%. Total weekly listening hours exceeded 1 billion hours in every quarter of 2025.



Source: RAJAR Official Data Release Q1–Q4 2025 (rajar.co.uk)

50M	86%	20h+	£747M
Weekly listeners	Adult population	Avg hrs/week	Ad revenue 2025

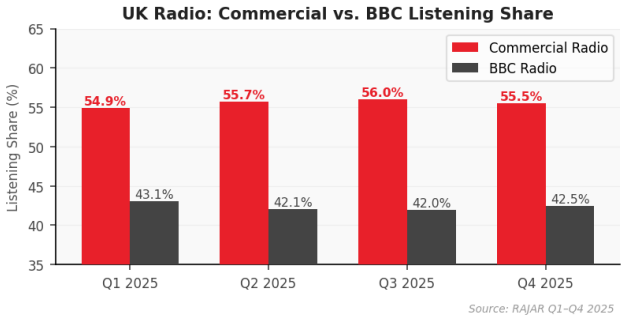
Sources: RAJAR Q4 2025; Radiocentre Full Year 2025 Ad Revenue

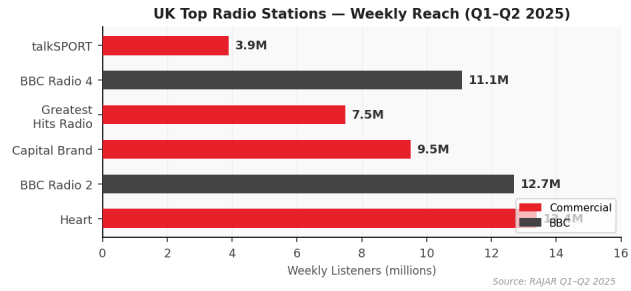
Digital Overtakes Analogue for the First Time

A historic milestone was reached in Q1 2024: online listening overtook analogue FM/AM in the UK for the first time. By Q2 2025, online accounts for 29.3% of all listening (vs FM 26.6%). Smart speaker listening hit a record 18.4% of total UK radio time in Q2 2025 — rising to 22.4% for commercial stations. In total, 75% of all UK radio listening now happens via a digital platform (DAB, DTV, online, smart speaker).

UK Commercial Radio vs BBC — Record Listener Share

Commercial radio's audience share surpassed the BBC in every quarter of 2025. For the first time ever, Heart overtook BBC Radio 2 as the UK's #1 radio brand in Q1 2025 with 13.4 million weekly listeners. The Capital Brand beat BBC Radio 1 on reach, hours and share. GB News Radio was the fastest-growing speech station, up 44% year-on-year in Q4 2025.





Sources: RAJAR Q1–Q4 2025 Data Releases; Global, Bauer Media Audio UK, News UK press releases

Key UK Station Performance 2025

Station	Group	Weekly Reach	Notable Trend
Heart	Global	13.4M	#1 UK brand Q1 2025 — first time beating BBC R2
BBC Radio 2	BBC	12.7M	Lost #1 spot for first time; rallied in Q3
BBC Radio 4	BBC	11.1M	Flagship speech/news; stable audience
Capital Brand	Global	9.5M	Beat BBC Radio 1 on reach & hours
Greatest Hits	Bauer	7.5M	Most-listened commercial station in UK
talkSPORT	News UK	3.9M	Biggest-ever reach Q1 2025, +5% YoY
GB News Radio	GB News	672K	Fastest-growing speech: +44% YoY (Q4)

Sources: RAJAR Q1 2025 (May 2025); RAJAR Q2 2025 (Jul 2025); RAJAR Q4 2025 (Feb 2026); Radiocentre 2025

United States

Nielsen & Edison Research — Radio Dominates Audio

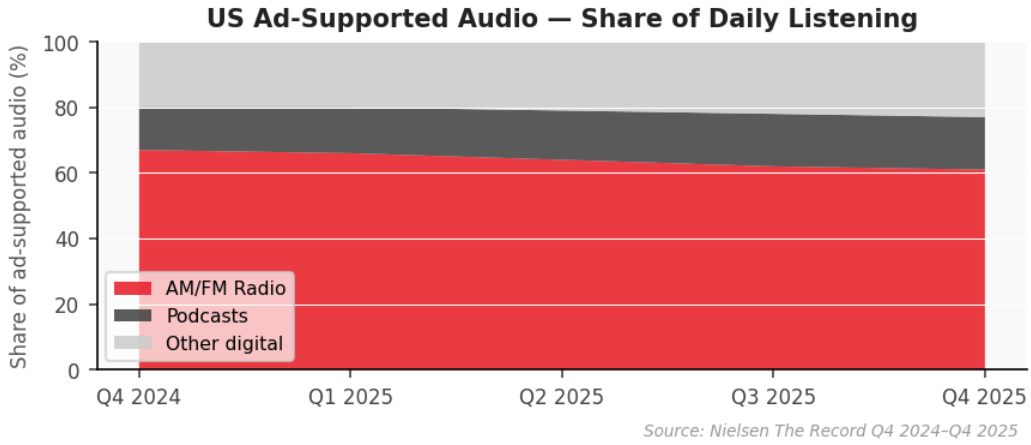
02

United States — The World's Biggest Radio Market

AM/FM radio is the #1 reaching medium in the United States, ahead of social media, connected TV, smartphones and traditional TV. According to Nielsen Audience Insights Data, 225.78 million adults 18+ listen to radio every single week — and nearly 242 million (92–93%) tune in monthly. Radio reaches 84% of adults weekly, versus social networking on smartphones (78%), connected TV (74%) and traditional TV (58%).

226M	92%	$14B	61%
Weekly adult listeners	Monthly adult reach	Ad revenue (2024)	Share of ad audio

Sources: Nielsen Audience Insights Data 2025; Nielsen The Record Q4 2025; Reed Intelligence US Radio Advertising



Source: Nielsen The Record Q4 2024–Q4 2025 Audio Listening Trends Reports (nielsen.com)

Demographics: Radio Reaches Every Generation

Radio's dominance is cross-generational. Among adults 35 and older, radio captures 71% of ad-supported listening time — but even among 18–34 year-olds, radio accounts for 45% of daily ad-supported audio (vs. podcasts 32%). Remarkably, 55% of Gen Z Americans (approx. ages 13–27) listen to AM/FM radio every day. In-car, radio is near-total: 90% of all ad-supported in-car audio goes to AM/FM.

US Format Landscape, Digital Growth & Methodology Note

Top Radio Formats — US 2025

Format	Overall Share	Streaming Share	Key Insight
News/Talk	~11%	23.5%	Largest format; disproportionately dominant online
Country	~8%	~7%	Strong rural & suburban audience
Pop/CHR (Top 40)	~7%	~9%	Leads 18–34 demographic
Classic Hits	~6%	~5%	Booming 35–54 segment
Adult Contemporary	~6%	~6%	Broad mainstream appeal

Sources: Nielsen Audio Format Rankings 2025; Compass Media Networks Radio Statistics 2025

Digital Audio & AM/FM Devices (Edison Research 2025)

79% of the US population (~228 million) reported listening to digital audio monthly (Edison Research Infinite Dial 2025). Yet 87% of all AM/FM radio listening still happens through a traditional radio receiver — down from 93% in 2015, but still dominant. Smart speakers are the fastest-growing device, now used for radio by 30%+ of smart speaker owners weekly.

Methodology Note: Nielsen PPM Change (January 2025)

From January 2025, Nielsen reduced the minimum listening threshold from 5 minutes to 3 minutes to be counted as a radio listener. This resulted in a reported +15% average increase across all US radio, with +41% for all-news formats. Comparisons between 2025 US figures and prior years should account for this methodological change.

Source: James Cridland / Podnews (May 2025); Nielsen PPM methodology update documentation

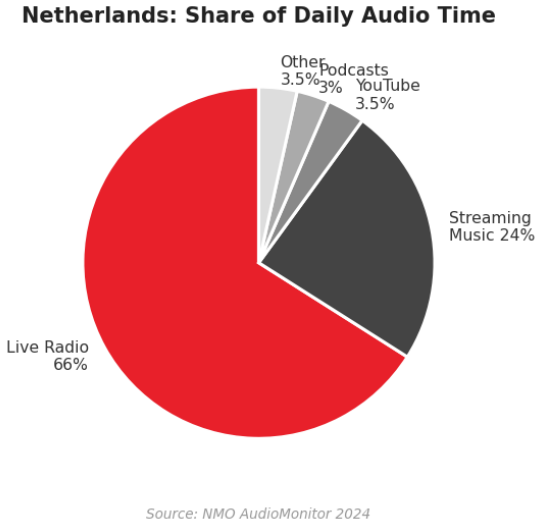
Netherlands

NMO AudioMonitor — One of Europe's Most Engaged Radio Markets

03

Netherlands — 90% Weekly Reach & Live Radio Dominates

The Netherlands is among the top radio markets in the world by penetration rate. According to the World Radio Alliance and NMO AudioMonitor 2024, 90% of Dutch people listen to radio every week. Audio reaches almost 11 million Dutch people daily (more than 7 in 10 of the population). Live radio commands a 66% share of all daily audio time — a figure that dramatically outpaces streaming music (24%), YouTube (3.5%) and podcasts (3%). The average Dutch listener spent 2h 04m per day listening to radio in 2025 — up 3 minutes from 2024.



90%
Weekly population reach

11M
Daily audio listeners

66%
Live radio share of audio

Sources: NMO AudioMonitor 2024 (nationaalmediaonderzoek.nl); World Radio Alliance Feb 2025; NMO Luistercijfers 2025

NMO Measurement & 2025 Methodology Update

The Netherlands uses the NMO Luisteronderzoek — a passive app-based measurement system using the MediaCell+ app by Ipsos, capturing actual listening behaviour. From Week 15, 2025, NMO expanded its system to include listening sessions of just 1–2 minutes (via audio encoding), which increased reported weekly reach for most stations. This means 2025 NL figures are not directly comparable to earlier periods for some stations.

Netherlands — Key Stations & Market Share 2025

The Dutch radio market is led by three main sales houses: OMS (Talpa + Mediahuis), Ster (NPO public radio) and DPG Media Radio (Qmusic, Joe). In 2025, public radio (NPO/Ster) gained share at the expense of commercial OMS, while DPG Media continued its strong growth on the back of Qmusic's sustained dominance across demographics.

Group Market Share — Full Year 2025 (13+ Target Group)

Sales Group	Key Stations	2024 Share	2025 Share	Trend
OMS	Radio 538, Radio 10, Sky Radio, Sublime	37.0%	35.9%	–1.1pp
Ster (NPO)	NPO Radio 1, 2, 3FM, 4, 5	33.8%	34.9%	+1.1pp
DPG Media Radio	Qmusic, Joe FM	17.9%	18.7%	+0.8pp
E-Power	Regional stations	4.5%	4.1%	–0.4pp
Other	Various	6.8%	6.4%	Stable

Source: NMO Luistercijfers 2025 Full Year (marketingreport.nl, Jan 2026)

Top Stations 2025

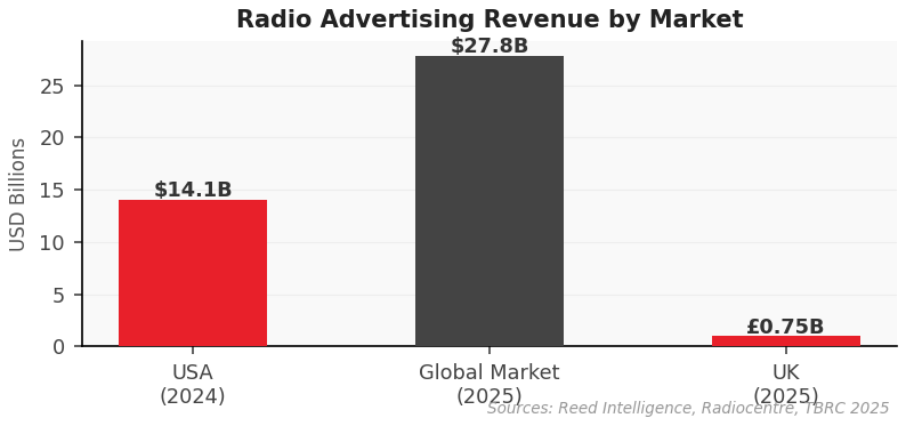
Qmusic (DPG Media) is the dominant station by reach, with ~7.4 million cumulative weekly listeners in November 2025. NPO Radio 2 leads on market share during multiple weeks. Radio 10 surges to 13.1% share during its annual Top 4000 countdown event (Week 50, 2025). Sky Radio peaks at 5.3 million weekly listeners in December (Christmas programming). The Dutch radio market has a total broadcasting industry value of €204.8 million in 2026, with 296 radio businesses growing at a 2.2% CAGR since 2020.

Sources: NMO Luisteronderzoek Week 50-2025; IBISWorld Netherlands Radio Broadcasting 2025; marketingreport.nl Nov 2025

Cross-Market Comparison & Advertising Revenue

Metric	USA	United Kingdom	Netherlands
Weekly reach (%)	84% adults 18+	86% adults 15+	~90% all ages
Weekly listeners (abs.)	225.78M adults	50M adults	13M+ (age 13+)
Avg. daily listening	~104 min (radio)	~174 min	124 min (2025)
Commercial vs Public	Fully commercial	Commercial 56% / BBC 42%	OMS+DPG ~55% / NPO 35%
Digital listening share	~13% streaming	75% digital platforms	90%+ digital incl. DAB
Ad revenue (latest)	$14.05B (2024)	£747M record (2025)	€204.8M mkt (2026)
Measurement body	Nielsen PPM	RAJAR	NMO Luisteronderzoek

Sources: Nielsen Audience Insights 2025; RAJAR Q4 2025; NMO AudioMonitor 2024; World Radio Alliance; Radiocentre; IBISWorld



Sources: Reed Intelligence US Radio 2025; Radiocentre UK 2025; TBRC Global Radio Advertising Market Report 2026

Key Takeaways for Broadcasters & Advertisers

01

Radio is unbreakable mass reach.

No other medium touches 84–92% of a national adult population weekly. Radio's reach exceeds social media, streaming TV and podcasts in every measured market.

02

Commercial radio is winning — especially in the UK.

UK commercial radio hit a record £747M ad revenue in 2025 and a 56% audience share — its highest ever. Heart dethroning BBC Radio 2 marks a structural commercial shift.

03

Digital is the growth engine.

75% of UK listening is now on digital platforms. In the US, smart speakers and mobile are driving streaming growth. In the Netherlands, the NMO expanded measurement to capture micro-sessions.

04

Speech & news formats punch above their weight online.

In the US, News/Talk captures 23.5% of all streaming radio listening vs 11% overall. In the UK, GB News Radio grew 44% YoY. The shift to on-demand favours spoken word content.

05

Gen Z listens — the myth of radio's death is wrong.

55% of Gen Z Americans listen to AM/FM radio daily. In the Netherlands, 90% weekly reach spans all age groups. The radio demographic is broader than marketers assume.

Primary Sources & Data References

- RAJAR Q1–Q4 2025 Official Data Releases — rajar.co.uk
- Nielsen The Record: Q1–Q4 2025 U.S. Audio Listening Trends — nielsen.com
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