



## Spectrum crunch?

All around us the news is full of stories about the impending recession - house prices are falling, the cost of petrol and food is rising. But never-mind the credit crunch - programme makers appear to be rapidly heading towards a spectrum crunch.

Already, we regularly borrow spectrum to meet demand. A recent band-by-band analysis of our activity showed the band with the biggest year-on-year growth is 'Other Users' Spectrum! Although this is often due to limitations of users' equipment it is becoming an increasingly essential part of our role at events such as F1 Grand Prix and other international events in the UK.

The impending 2.5GHz and Digital Dividend auctions will see us lose a considerable amount of highly utilised and highly valued spectrum. In addition we believe that it is unlikely that the package intended for the Band Manager come the Beauty Contest will include the full complement of JFMG's current inventory. This is likely to result in a further increase in borrowing of spectrum from other owners.

And all this set around an environment of increasing demand.

So what can we do about it? There's no doubt that many of these changes are inevitable so we need to adapt to the new situation and find innovative ways of making better use of the spectrum that will be available to us.

We've already made a start. By working with industry to re-plan various bands we aim to achieve better compatibility between users and are hoping to broker an agreement for a further reduction in power in the 2.2GHz wireless camera band. These measures should help users utilise the spectrum they still have access to more efficiently.

With regard other spectrum, we have released new compatible groups of duplex talkback in order to expand the resource available to users. We are also making use of geographic data to facilitate better re-use of frequencies in urban environments. We continue to facilitate loans of other users' spectrum, including gaining access to bands that have recently been auctioned or are vacant and awaiting auction.

The 'short-stay' 12hour fee for online wireless camera bookings also gives an incentive for users to book their exact requirements, allowing others access to frequencies sooner.

All of these activities help towards making the most of the available spectrum, but we know that we'll need to continue to think up new ways to work it harder and support users in the future.

**Paul Gill**  
Managing Director

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If you have any comments about JFMG News please email: [amanda.houchen@jfmq.co.uk](mailto:amanda.houchen@jfmq.co.uk)

# Technology...

## Digital Switchover activity update

Since the last edition of the newsletter we've been doing our best to help our customers come to grips with the potential impact of Digital Switchover on their wireless equipment.

Back in February we held a "White Space" forum to a number of interested parties. The purpose of which was to try to explain the contents of Ofcom's recent documents relating to the amount of spectrum available for PMSE after 2012.

The slides we presented are available for all to see on our website at:

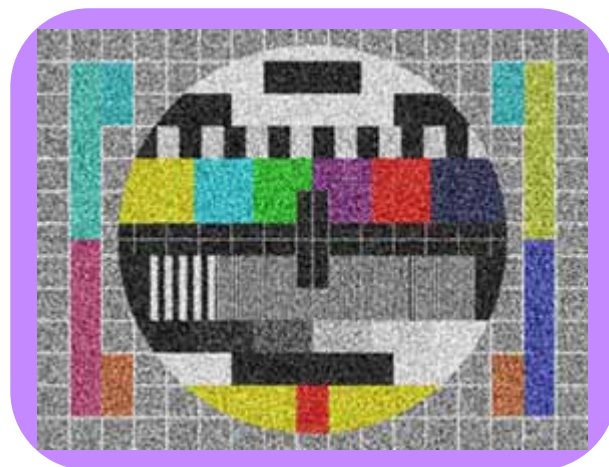
<http://www.jfmg.co.uk/Pages/Docs/WhiteSpaceForumFinalpdf.pdf>

All annual licensees of 470 – 854 MHz were contacted in May with information regarding the likely availability of their frequencies in their region after switchover ends in 2012. However, real clarity will not be gained until the conclusion of a further Ofcom consultation (see next article). As soon as that clarity is obtained we will work with Ofcom to provide customers with the up to date information.

We've also been keeping across international developments and have spoken at the European DDR conference to gain a greater understanding of how changes will affect users abroad. On the whole the rest of Europe are some way behind the UK, but there is a push towards greater international harmonisation, including proposals to harmonise Ch60 – 69 for mobile use and the interleaved spectrum for wireless microphones.



"White Space" forum attendees tuck into refreshments at the Covent Garden Hotel



## Ofcom DDR docs – 2 down, 1 to go...

June saw the publication of two out of the three expected Ofcom consultation documents focussing on the next phase of the Digital Dividend Review.

On the whole their content was as expected, however the biggest shock for JFMG customers is the announcement that due to radio astronomy vacating the channel in 2012, Channel 38 will be auctioned with the "cleared" spectrum in summer 2009.

We will be undertaking an analysis of the impact this may have to future use, but early analysis back in February showed that 38 could be a very useful band in facilitating UK-wide access for touring shows etc.

Another area of particular interest is the timing of the second and third phase auctions of the geographical interleaved spectrum. It appears that the amount of interleaved spectrum auctioned and subsequently, what is left for PMSE, may not be fully realised until early 2010.

At the time of writing the PMSE Band Manager consultation has not been published. We are obviously eager to see what Ofcom have to say about the role of the future Band Manager, selection criteria and spectrum package to be managed.

### DSO & DDR information resources

If you would like to keep up to date with all Switchover and Digital Dividend changes we have the following resources on our website [www.jfmg.co.uk](http://www.jfmg.co.uk):



- 2012 Mic check – see if your frequencies are likely to be available after switchover
- DDR and Digital TV Switchover News page – see all of the latest news and documents we've published on developments

# Out & About...



Later Simon joined the brand new ITN mid-point motorcycle which relayed pictures live from the red carpet back to "London Tonight". Amongst the other crews covering the event was GMTV, BBC and S4C who Simon also checked in with. The event appeared to run smoothly and at time of leaving it appeared that our customers had appreciated our visit.

The purpose of visits like this is two-fold. Firstly it allows us to better understand the usage of the spectrum we license and the way the equipment that uses it is deployed. It also allows us to make ourselves known to our customers and assist with any problems they may have regarding interference or licensing issues.

## On the Red Carpet

As part of JFMG's ongoing site visits Principal Engineer Simon Eley joined "In 5 Broadcast Facilities" and other broadcasters at the red carpet of the film premiere of Matthew McConaughey and Kate Hudson's latest offering, "Fool's Gold".

A whole host of equipment and frequencies were used to cover the event, with US kit also being deployed in some instances for international production.

The use of wireless cameras and microphones at an event like this is paramount due to the number of crowds expected and the general through traffic of pedestrians in Leicester Square.

"In 5" were using talkback, a wireless camera and two sets of receivers above the front of the cinema for reception of the camera on the carpet. They also used a channel 52 wireless microphone as experience had shown Channel 69 was ineffective alongside multiple international crews.

Other events we've visited since April 08 include:



Warwick Racecourse



Rothley News event



Backstreet Boys at the Birmingham NIA



ITN's mid-point motorcycle

# Next Steps...

## More enhancements and onsite demo's

Since January we've been driving our online developments at full tilt. And now you can keep track of them with our "[Online Booking Latest](#)" area on the Login page. It shows a list of all the latest releases along with when they became available.

We have also implemented an [online catalogue](#) that allows you to browse what frequencies can be booked online without logging onto the system first.

The release of our "Single basket" in March has also made booking frequencies for multiple equipment types in a single transaction possible.

As a result we've been eager to share our enthusiasm with our customers. So Des, Simon and Jay have been out and about and receiving a warm welcome from our most frequent spectrum users keen to see how the new facilities can make it even easier to book.

We have successfully completed 13 onsite demonstrations this year with customers subsequently adopting the online portal for their routine jobs and giving us great ideas for enhancements .

Take a look at our list (left) of innovations you can expect us to implement in the coming months.



Jay (Right) demo's our online tools to Chris at Hand Held

## Community users

In addition to the e-commerce enhancements we've also been looking at ways of making some of the technical information on the rest of our site more accessible to non-technical customers.



Community user web pages

Systems used for school shows, religious services and amateur dramatic productions are becoming increasingly sophisticated so many employ the expertise of professional sound engineers to set up and advise them on their equipment.

However there still remain users without this kind of support. We hope that our new Community user pages will help non-technical users of wireless microphones understand the frequency and licensing options available to them.

Our "What are my Options?" page seeks to enable users to compare the pro's and cons of licence exempt equipment versus those requiring licences, so that they can make an informed choice when purchasing equipment.

The "Switchover and you" page aims to explain how digital television switchover will affect access to wireless microphone frequencies in the future, and coming soon, our "Forum" is designed for like-minded individuals to share their views on anything related to the subject.

Please let us know what you think of the area at [admin@ifmg.co.uk](mailto:admin@ifmg.co.uk)



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- On-site camera links at 12GHz