



Radio Maria

IDC Solutions Enhance World's
Largest Catholic Radio Network

On Sunday mornings, Catholics in over 60 countries turn on the radio to experience the Mass, thanks to The World Family of Radio Maria. For many, radio is the only way to experience a Sunday service and maintain a connection to their religious beliefs.

Radio Maria was founded in 1983 as a means to communicate Catholic teachings to those who, for a variety of reasons, may not be able to attend a nearby church. While it now broadcasts to approximately 1,700 transmitters throughout the world, there is still great demand for more coverage in parts of the world hindered by conflict or poverty and remote areas where listeners live far from any concentrated population.

The logistics involved in starting a radio broadcast network, regardless of the region's economic or political situation, can be daunting. The STAR Pro Audio™ Solution from International Datacasting (IDC) is easing the technical burden inherent in Radio Maria's mission. Over 3,000 IDC receivers receive signals for the World Family of Radio Maria Network, enabling the programming to reach listeners eager to hear its message.

The World Family of Radio Maria's programming consists mainly of traditional Catholic worship music, but some stations air a mix of traditional and contemporary Catholic music, along with talk and teaching programs discussing the Catholic faith, daily Mass from various parishes, and recitals of the Holy Rosary — all with the help of volunteers.

CASE STUDY SNAPSHOT

Customer

- World Family of Radio Maria and Radio Maria Inc.

Industry

- Global, listener-supported radio network

Business Challenge

- With growth into 60 multi-lingual broadcast operations in the five continents, the World Family of Radio Maria needed a cost-effective and upgradeable satellite reception platform to receive audio signals at its 1,700 terrestrial radio transmitters.

Technology Solution

- The STAR Pro Audio™ Solution from International Datacasting (IDC)

STAR
PRO AUDIO™



RADIO MARIA

Business Challenge

With a presence in each of the countries where Radio Maria broadcasts, the World Family of Radio Maria operates a vast, global broadcast network, delivering Catholic radio programming in multiple languages to over 1,700 transmitter locations in 60 countries.

The World Family of Radio Maria's programming is broadcast mainly from one centrally located studio or station in a given region or country, and is then re-broadcast on a network of repeater transmitters using the AM, FM, DAB+, HD, OIRT, and DVB-T standards.

The network's reach has expanded significantly since it began. The terrain over which it broadcasts in the five continents represents every potential reception obstacle imaginable, with mountainous terrain representing the most serious challenge.

At a time when its audience and technology needs were rapidly increasing, the World Family of Radio Maria was using legacy equipment to transmit its signals to listeners around the world. Because the entire network is listener-supported, the cost for the much-needed new system was a top concern.



“... Since 2012, the STAR Pro Audio Solution has helped Radio Maria continue to maintain and expand its network and ensure the highest broadcast quality while reducing costs ...”

*Claudio Re, Network Supervisor
World Family of Radio Maria*

Technology Solution

Having successfully deployed IDC technology for the past 20 years, the World Family of Radio Maria turned to IDC and a customized version of the company's STAR Pro Audio™ Solution. There are currently 3,000 IDC receivers now installed throughout the world receiving signals for the World Family of Radio Maria Network.

IDC's STAR Pro Audio Solution works well for the World Family of Radio Maria's requirements because it features open standard modulation, combines DVB-S2 satellite demodulation with MPEG-4 AAC audio decoding, and offers connectivity with IP networks for management and streaming with TSOIP. This makes the STAR Pro Audio Solution a future-proven platform for replacing aging satellite radio networks.

The STAR Pro Audio Solution was developed in close conjunction with World Family of Radio Maria's Network Supervisor, Claudio Re, and the IDC EMEA team. The STAR Pro Audio Solution is used in conjunction with the TRS Audio Satellite Receiver which Radio Maria relied upon for almost a decade. The new STAR Pro Audio Solution includes updated satellite modulation, connectivity to the IP world, and audio compression technologies with open standard alternatives, while maintaining IDC's rock-solid reliability. The STAR Pro Audio Solution also improves on the previous platform's density, offering up to two stereo channels per rack instead of one.

Business Value

A listener-supported and growing worldwide radio network such as Radio Maria, must be sure the infrastructure investments they make today can be relied upon to support their needs for many years into the future. The STAR Pro Audio Solution is designed

specifically to optimize the efficiency and reliability of distributing audio programming over satellite to radio networks.

Combining DVB-S2 satellite demodulation with MPEG-4 AAC audio decoding reduces annual satellite bandwidth and lowers operating costs dramatically. *Depending on the size of the network, the yearly satellite bandwidth savings alone can quickly offset the cost of upgrading an older network to the STAR Pro Audio Solution.* In addition, its low-power, fan-less architecture maximizes network uptime.

Per-channel costs are further reduced through shared hub support. The STAR Pro Audio Solution's three models support different decoder configurations. With multiple decoders in one chassis, more than one channel can be delivered to each transmitter site, further reducing investment costs.

“Since 2003, the Radio Maria networks have relied on IDC's TRS Audio Satellite Receiver,” said Claudio Re. “Since 2012, the STAR Pro Audio Solution has helped Radio Maria continue to maintain and expand its network and ensure the highest broadcast quality while reducing costs. A key to this success story is the effective communication between Radio Maria's consultancy and the IDC EMEA team. This formed the basis of a great product with proven reliability and quality as represented by both the TRS and STAR Pro Audio Solution.” Mr. Re added, “IDC solutions play an important role in helping Radio Maria accomplish its mission.”

Learn More

To learn more about International Datacasting solutions, please visit www.datacast.com.

To learn more about World Family of Radio Maria, please visit www.radiomaria.org.

International Datacasting Corporation (TSC:IDC) is a global leader in digital content distribution for the world's premier broadcasters in radio, television, data and digital cinema. IDC's products and solutions are in demand for radio and television networks, digital cinema, 3D live events, targeted ad insertion, satellite news gathering, sports contribution, VOD and IPTV among others.

HEADQUARTERS:

50 Frank Nighbor Place, Kanata, ON
Canada K2V 1B9
Tel: +1 613-596-4120

UNITED STATES:

#130-6215 Ferris Square
San Diego, CA 92121, USA

EUROPE:

Marga Klompelaan 18, 6836 BH
Arnhem, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 26 323 6969

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DATACASTING

WWW.DATACAST.COM

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