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PVR for (XM) Radio Arrives.

August 13, 2004

OK, so I still don't have my jet pack. But at least I may soon have a TiVo for my radio.

You'll remember that the RIAA is complaining bitterly to the FCC about the possibility that, someday, consumers might have the ability to record digital radio (aka DAB or HD Radio) and automatically split the recordings into individual songs (like TiVo does for TV shows). EFF pointed out that having the FCC impose a technology mandate against this is a bit silly, when people will soon have the same recording capabilities for analog FM, DMX, Music Choice, XM and Sirius. (You already have this capability for mp3 webcasts, thanks to Streamripper.)

Well, scratch the bit about "soon." Looks like NeroSoft has already built a piece of software called TimeTrax that gives XM Radio subscribers a record button. Not just record, but automatically divide up the recording into nicely tagged MP3s of individual songs. Not just that, but also select what to record by artist, using wishlists. All on your PC, not locked up in a DRM jail (so, in fact, better than TiVo).

I have no idea if this software works as advertised, but it is a harbinger of the inevitable. I've already seen similar demos that record from cable music services like DMX and Music Choice. And doing it for analog FM is also eminently possible, using metadata from RDS or even acoustic fingerprints like Audible Magic's (finally, a sensible use for acoustic fingerprinting).

So why should the FCC single out digital broadcast radio (which is required by the FCC to play exactly the same music as on the analog FM signal) for intrusive federal "broadcast flag" mandates? How does that make sense again?

Posted by Fred von Lohmann at 05:41 PM | Permalink | Technorati

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