

Are you listening?

Alex Kidman tests a range of feature-packed digital radios.

Digital radio launched in Australia a little over a year ago. The early DAB+ models were expensive, largely desk-based models aimed at an enthusiast audience who had money to burn.

A year later, the market has fragmented quite a bit. There's plenty of choice in the budget ranges for those on a more constrained budget. Portability is also becoming a key buying choice, with some sleek portable units offering surprisingly good sound. We've also seen a large number of all-in-one DAB+ units that incorporate iPod docks and other AV features.

DAB+ may have been a pursuit of the wealthy to start out with, but new models are now surprisingly affordable and accessible to most people. Are they any good, though?

In this roundup, we put 11 DAB+ models to the test, ranging from budget entry-level models to swish, feature-packed systems.

How we tested

We invited a number of vendors to submit units for testing. Notable omissions in our tests were models from the PURE range, as we were unable to source any from the local distributor. The DAB+ radios were set up in an indoor environment with antennas set in the same direction for all models. We then listened to several hours of music, using ABC Classic FM, ABC 702 Sydney and Koffee digital radio stations to assess both the audio quality offered over DAB+ and the reception quality of each unit. Portable units were also tested in an outdoor environment to see how well they coped. Any additional functions such as iPod compatibility were also tested, but weren't a key factor in our scoring.

_ REVIEWS

80%

PC USER
BEST
BUY

11
TESTED



KOGAN WI-FI DAB+ DELUXE DIGITAL INTERNET RADIO WITH IPHONE DOCK

RRP \$199 / CONTACT KOGAN / PHONE 1300 304 292 / WEB www.kogan.com.au

Kogan's previous DAB+ model was the epitome of cheap and cheerful — while it promised plenty, it left a lot to be desired in terms of audio and build quality. The new Deluxe model is thankfully a lot better. You get stereo speakers in a solidly built (yet undeniably plastic) casing,

with a bright orange LED front display that handles LED, iPod docking and internet radio. The speakers are side-mounted and fill a standard room well with audio from all sources in our tests. Aside from digital radio, the unit will also handle iPods, FM radio and local and internet streaming

music. Annoyingly for an iPod dock, it's not iPhone shielded, and the remote is the tiny credit card-sized model that's all too easy to lose. Those criticisms aside, this is a good-quality unit for the asking price.

PC User says: An affordable all-in-one DAB+ radio.

OXX CLASSIC DAB+

RRP \$299.95 / CONTACT OXX DIGITAL
PHONE 1300 558 702 / WEB www.oxxdigital.com

With a name like Classic DAB+, you might expect this model to just be a digital radio; however, it also caters for internet radio and local streaming, alongside FM radio if that's your thing. The controls are large and easy to understand without too much tweaking required at all. For a unit with a mono speaker, the Classic DAB+ performs adequately, but not superbly,

and this is the case whether you're listening to DAB+ audio or even more highly compressed internet streaming audio. OXX has offered this unit for some time now and it's starting to show its age against newer competitors such as the Kogan digital radio,

which offers the same features at a lower price point in stereo.

PC User says: A nice unit in need of a price cut.

