

Equipping community radio to meet the digital age challenge

This month representatives from some 150 community radio stations attended "future-proofing" workshops to equip them with the skills to ensure that community radio meets the challenges of the digital age.



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In addition, the workshops enable them to capitalise on possibilities presented by new technologies and content platforms.

A framework to the digital age

Run by a partnership comprising the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA) and the Media Development & Diversity Agency (MDDA), the three-day workshops, held in Johannesburg and Cape Town, were based on the NAB's comprehensive *Future Proofing Community Radio* guide.

The innovative guide provides a framework designed to assist the sector to successfully navigate the transition to the digital era. This is an imperative if this sector is to remain viable and sustainable.

"As is widely known, the media landscape, as a whole, is in the midst of rapid and fundamental changes brought upon by the digital era and resulting technology convergence.

“Not only have the lines between platforms been blurred but access to social media and the internet have enabled audiences to create, curate and shape their own content,” says notes NAB executive director, Nadia Bulbulia.

Challenges to traditional platforms

“Such changes are disruptive and pose many challenges to traditional regulated media platforms like radio and its sustainability, but also present opportunities, which could possibly extend community radio’s reach and enable it to further enhance media diversity and pluralism in South Africa,” adds Bulbulia.

Therefore, the workshops aimed at assisting community radio to respond creatively and effectively to this new and growing digital multi-platform space.

This ranged from ascertaining the sector’s training needs considering technological advances, through to equipping radio with an understanding of new developments and possibilities, including enabling policy options and considering how technology can contribute to the sector’s financial sustainability.

“Participation in the workshops and development of the guide are indicative of NAB’s strong commitment to supporting community radio, despite our limited number of community broadcast members,” says Bulbulia.

The NAB “Future Proofing Community Radio” guide is available for download on the [NAB website](#).

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