

Why radio remains Africa's lifeline in a digital world



By [Nicolas Pompigne-Mognard](#)

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"Even in today's world of digital communications, radio reaches more people than any other media platform" - Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.



Source: supplied. Nicolas Pompigne-Mognard, founder & chairman, APO Group

Radio has always been an integral part of the African mass media.

While digital media continues to find new consumers all over the world, in many parts of the African continent, radio still dominates. It is certainly Africa's most accessible source of news, particularly for those living in remote areas.

According to an Afrobarometer survey of 34 African countries published in 2019, radio is ahead of television, print media and the internet as the most widely used news medium. And if you look more deeply into the African media landscape and infrastructure, it's easy to see why.

Statista reports that internet penetration in the first quarter of 2020 in Africa was just 43%, against a global average of 64%. In East Africa, this figure drops to 24%. That's less than a quarter of the population able to access the news websites and social media many of us around the world take for granted.

And while it is true print media can reach communities where there is limited power or connectivity, literacy in Africa

remains a struggle. A recent African Union study found that more than a third of African adults cannot read or write, making newspapers and magazines inaccessible for many people too.

Radios, on the other hand, are affordable and portable. In all 54 countries of the continent, people rely on them to stay up-to-date with what is happening in their communities, countries and around the world. For example, in May 2020, the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics released a report stating that 82% of Kenyans received the majority of their information about Covid-19 from radio stations.

Put simply, radios are essential to African people. They go where newer technologies can't reach. They travel beyond electricity and mobile range, and overcome stubborn barriers caused by poor literacy and education. For millions of African people, their radios are their lifeline. Their connection to the outside world.

Sunday, 13 February is World Radio Day. Coordinated by UNESCO, it is a celebration of the medium - and a reminder to us all of the vitally important role radio still has to play in today's global mass media.

In 2020, APO Group joined the UNESCO Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL), working towards ensuring all Africans enjoy greater media literacy and have access to fair and accurate information.

For me, and everyone at APO Group, radio has been a key part of our long-term mission to ensure we are able to reach every corner of the continent with quality news from our clients and partners.

The ubiquity of the internet has led to many Public Relations campaigns focussing solely on online and social media. But Africa is home to a vast, largely untapped audience that can only be reached through their radios.

World Radio Day is an opportunity for all Public Relations professionals to come together and recognise the important role radio plays in Africa. As the leading Pan-African communications consultancy and press release distribution service, we will always advise that radio is a crucial consideration when looking to engage the African mass media.

Now, APO Group has gone a step further by launching the first content distribution service dedicated to radio in Africa. [Radio News Release](#) provides radio stations with a quality feed of Africa-related soundbites and audio files which help them deliver key stories into the heart of the continent.

Soundbites distributed by APO Group are available free of charge and can be incorporated by radio stations in their news output quickly and easily.

Our peerless database of more than 450,000 journalists in Africa or writing about Africa, alongside our partnership with the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB) has enabled us to reach radio stations all over the continent.

As Grégoire Ndjaka, CEO of the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB), comments: "By offering a rich variety of audio news content for free, APO Group is delivering content to radio broadcasters in the exact format they need. No-one has ever offered a service like this to African radio stations before, and it is enabling them to broadcast some of the best sports, business and technology stories to millions of African people for the very first time."

ABOUT NICOLAS POMPIGNE-MOGNARD

Nicolas Pompiagne-Mognard is the Founder and Chairman of APO Group (African Press Organization) (www.apo-opa.com), the leading Pan-African communications consultancy and press release distribution service. More information: www.Pompiagne-Mognard.com

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