



Radiocommunication Bureau
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Circular Letter
CR/332

24 April 2012

To Administrations of Member States of the ITU

Subject: The BR International Frequency Information Circular (BR IFIC) - Terrestrial Services - New DVD Media, Presentation and Layout

To the Director General

Dear Sir/Madam,

1 The BR International Frequency Information Circular (BR IFIC) - Terrestrial Services - is a service publication on DVD-ROM. It contains particulars of frequency allotments and assignments to terrestrial services and is published by the Radiocommunication Bureau in the six official languages of the ITU once every two weeks.

2 Since the beginning of the BR IFIC (Terrestrial Services), the information concerning the frequency assignments and allotments was stored in a Microsoft Access® database on CD-ROM (and later on DVD-ROM). Various programs distributed on the BR IFIC (such as *TerRaQ* for queries, *TerRaNotices* for generation of electronic notices, and *TerRaNV* for validation of electronic notices) read that database. In addition, administrations and other users of the BR IFIC have developed their own programs which also read that database.

3 The Bureau noted that the security requirements related to Microsoft Access® have been tightened. As a result, installation of the BR IFIC (Terrestrial Services) currently requires that users reduce the default security settings, at least during the installation, which could present some technical difficulties and safety problems. In addition, with the introduction of Windows 7®, the Bureau noted several incompatibilities and system security adjustments which resulted in increasing the difficulty of the installation and use of the BR IFIC (Terrestrial Services).

4 Many BR IFIC users have expressed their concern about this situation on several occasions, including the World Radiocommunication Seminar 2010 (WRS-10), where the Bureau conducted workshops regarding the use of the BR IFIC. In addition, many of the participants did not have licenses for Microsoft Access®, which hindered the use of the BR IFIC during that event. A number of users requested that the Bureau find an alternative to the Microsoft Access® database management system.

5 Consequently, the Bureau decided to replace Microsoft Access® on the BR IFIC (Terrestrial Services) by an alternative database management system, and added this task to the Bureau's Operational Plan presented to the Radiocommunication Advisory Group (RAG).

6 For some time, the Bureau has been conducting tests with an alternative database management system named SQLite. See <http://www.sqlite.org/>. SQLite is an "open source" product; there is no need to purchase a license to use SQLite, and there is no need to adjust Windows security settings to install an SQLite database. The Bureau's tests included distribution and use of a small portion of the BR IFIC database with SQLite rather than Microsoft Access®. Since the results of these tests have been favourable, the Bureau decided therefore to proceed as planned with the introduction of SQLite on the BR IFIC (Terrestrial Services).

7 One of the major advantages is that SQLite format allows compacting the whole database in a single file. This permitted the Bureau to develop:

- a new version of the query program *TerRaQ*, as well as revised versions of *TerRaNotices* and *TerRaNV* which will be included on the BR IFIC, and will read the SQLite database;
- a new "navigation menu" in a "plug-and-play" mode, which allows the user to browse the data, perform queries, execute one of the above mentioned software packages, directly from the DVD without the need to perform any installation.
- an "install-on-demand" utility, which allows the user to install the BR IFIC data and/or its software packages on the user's hard disk, if he elects to do so.

8 The Bureau recognizes that this switch to the SQLite database management system may cause inconveniences to those users who have developed programs which work directly with the Microsoft Access® database on the BR IFIC. It is to be noted in this regard that there are several free of charge ODBC drivers, .Net providers, etc. for SQLite which allow easy and transparent transition for those users who have developed their own programs. It should also be highlighted that the database structure (e.g. name of tables, name and type of fields) has remained unchanged, so as to reduce the necessary changes to any other third party software. However, to minimize any potential disruption, the Bureau investigated various possibilities, including:

- utilities to convert an SQLite Terrestrial BR IFIC database to a Microsoft Access® database and vice-versa;
- offering the option, in *TerRaQ*, of exporting data to a Microsoft Access® database, in addition to an SQLite database.

9 Therefore, in order to allow for a test period before moving the Terrestrial BR IFIC to the new format, the Bureau decided that, starting with BR IFIC No. 2719 of 15 May 2012, a Beta copy of the same BR IFIC with the new BR IFIC DVD layout will be sent along with the regular BR IFIC DVD. The purpose is to collect comments and suggestions about the Beta tests in order to apply the possible enhancements before the "cutover" date.

Your Administration may participate in the "beta" testing of the move to the new format, and communicate its comments by e-mail to:

brmail@itu.int

10 The Bureau remains at the disposal of your Administration for any clarification you may require with respect to the subjects covered in this Circular Letter.

Yours faithfully,

François Rancy
Director, Radiocommunication Bureau

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