

Best Buy digital radios

User-friendly, stylish and clear – our latest Best Buy radios are the complete package

Music fans will be in their element with a digital radio, as they can tune in to a much wider range of stations than FM models. The best ones are pricey but look good and sound excellent. The Pure Evoke-2S will even let you pause and rewind live radio.

We tested the Gemini 59 (now called the ecologic 1), the Gemini RD-49 (now the ecologic 2) and the Gemini RD-46 (now the ecologic 3) before the redesign.

Apart from power consumption, they're essentially the same models, so this time we just checked their energy use. We found they now consume less power when switched on or on standby. The ecologic 3 has kept its Best Buy status, but the ecologic 1 is still a Don't Buy.

We also tested the Roberts SolarDAB. The radio will run for free as long as there's enough sunlight, but unfortunately the sound quality is only average.

If you prefer Pure radios, the Evoke Mio and Evoke-2S both have a button that helps save energy in standby mode.

You can find reviews of these models at www.which.co.uk/digitalradio.

which? **MONEY SAVER**

We have tested some cheaper own-brand radios. None of them is a Best Buy, but the Wharfedale NE-3003 is a reasonable choice and costs £135 less than the Evoke-2S.

Green credentials

If you want to save energy as well as money, you may be interested in buying a more eco-friendly digital radio.

Roberts has revamped three models to reduce the amount of power they use.

Expert view

Which? radio expert Lizzy Payne on the best models to choose if you are partially sighted

If your sight is poor, choose a radio with a large, bright screen that uses big, bold letters. Make sure the controls are big enough, and that they're grouped together logically, making it easier for you to memorise their functions. Buttons that have different shapes for different types of action are a bonus.

Ideally, buttons should make an audible click when you press them, or give the definite feeling that they have been

pressed (this is known as 'feedback'). It can take a digital radio a few seconds to find a station, so it's important to be able to tell when you've pressed a button.

The Best Buy Dualit DAB Lite (see p44) has a particularly good screen that is large and bright. Its controls are a decent size and give good 'feedback'.



PHOTOGRAPHY PIOTR GREGORCZYK



87% Pure Evoke-2S £165

The Pure Evoke-2S is billed as a luxury radio. It certainly looks the part, with its maple veneer case and modern design. Our testers thought sound quality was superb, describing it as clear and detailed.

The radio has plenty of features, including bass and treble controls, and a kitchen timer. You can pause and rewind live radio and program in 100 of your favourite stations. You can even pause the text that scrolls along the screen – it contains information

such as football scores and news headlines. All the controls are intuitive and easy to use.

When we checked prices, it was cheapest online and at independents.

WORTH KNOWING It's mains powered, but to make it portable you can buy a ChargePAK – a rechargeable battery that fits most Pure radios and costs about £30.

Available John Lewis, online and independents
Presets 100 (50 FM and 50 DAB)
Batteries ChargePAK FM radio Yes
Pause and rewind Yes



A bold, bright OLED display makes it easier to read scrolling text on the Pure Evoke-2S

ALTERNATIVE MODELS www.which.co.uk/radios



67% Pure Evoke-3 £200

The Evoke-3 costs £45 more than the Evoke-2S, but it's packed with hi-tech features. It lets you record up to 15 hours of programmes to an SD card.



45% Proline DAB401 £40

Although it didn't score top marks for sound quality, this Proline looks similar to the Evoke-2S and comes at a fraction of the price.

79% Roberts RD-60 £145

This Best Buy picks up both digital audio broadcast (DAB) and FM stations, and sound quality is good. Its controls are a good size and aren't cluttered. Tuning is intuitive, but if you do need to use the manual you'll find it simple and informative.

The radio has unlimited presets, so it can remember hundreds of stations, but it doesn't have many other features – there's no pause/rewind facility or a clock. Its looks are bound to appeal, though, and Roberts has brought out an

array of different finishes, including a floral Cath Kidston design. You'll pay more for a limited edition like this.

The RD-60 takes four D-size batteries (not included) – a full new set lasted for 93.5 hours of continuous use in our tests. We found it was cheapest online and at independents.

WORTH KNOWING The RD-60 is also known as the Roberts Revival.

Available John Lewis, online and independents
Presets Unlimited **Batteries** Yes
FM radio Yes **Pause and rewind** No



The display is clear on the Roberts RD-60, but it may not be quite bright enough for partially sighted users

ALTERNATIVE MODELS www.which.co.uk/radios



68% Vita Audio R1 £130

If you're a dedicated follower of fashion but don't like the retro look, the R1 from Vita is a good choice. It doesn't have stereo speakers though.

43% Sony XDR-S7 £58

Sony has gone for an 80s look with this model. This is a budget radio and, like the Vita Audio R1, it doesn't have stereo speakers.





69% Pure Evoke Mio £145

The Mio is another retro radio that sounds great – our testers were impressed with its tone and level of detail. Features include a timer, an on/off alarm and an input socket, so you can connect an MP3 player and play your music through the radio's speaker.

The Mio is easy to use – its controls are very accessible, so it may be a good choice if you have limited dexterity. It's mains powered and comes with a ChargePAK battery, so

you can use it as a portable model. The handle is a little uncomfortable, though.

The Mio is more future-proof than many other radios – you can connect it to your computer via a USB socket and download updates for its software. When we looked at prices it was cheapest online and at independents.

WORTH KNOWING The Mio comes in pink, brown, green, red and black.

Available John Lewis, online and independents
Presets 30 (15 FM and 15 DAB)
Batteries ChargePak (supplied)
FM radio Yes **Pause and rewind** No



The brightness of the Mio's display adjusts automatically, depending on the level of light in the room

ALTERNATIVE MODELS www.which.co.uk/radios

60% Pure Evoke-1S £96

If you're not a fan of the Pure Mio's leather-look case, the Pure Evoke-1S is the answer. It's the same radio but has a wood veneer case.



85% Dualit DAB £146

The Dualit DAB produces excellent quality sound and is very easy to use. It doesn't have stereo speakers though.



66% Dualit DAB Lite £85

This DAB and FM radio from Dualit is designed to complement its toasters and kettles. Sound quality is impressive and, although it lacks advanced features, it's still a Best Buy.

It's easy to use, with intuitive tuning, clear instructions and well-spaced, rubberised buttons. It's small, but its maximum volume can easily fill a room with sound. The clock, alarm and kitchen timer are well thought out and useful. Battery life was below average

compared with other models on test. We found this radio was cheapest online and at independents.

WORTH KNOWING Although it looks like metal, the DAB Lite is actually metal-look plastic. We've tested the matching Dualit Lite four-slice toaster and it just missed out on being a Best Buy as it was a little difficult to clean.

Available John Lewis, online and independents
Presets 20 (10 FM and 10 DAB)
Batteries Yes **FM radio** Yes **Pause and rewind** No

ALTERNATIVE MODELS www.which.co.uk/radios

61% The Pure One Elite £78

The Pure One Elite is a basic portable model with good sound quality. However, it didn't make it as a Best Buy as it's not that easy to use.



61% Technika DAB-407 £45

Although it doesn't look great, the Technika DAB-407 sounds good. It can also be used as an iPod dock.



The white text is easy to read against the blue display

Don't Buy

**34% Logik
LOGR118D £40**

The Logik LOGR118D from Dixons may seem like a bargain, but we found its sound quality is so poor we've made it a Don't Buy. We heard a prominent buzz in the first model we tested. We thought it might be faulty, so we bought a



second sample – it had the same problem. We also thought the minimum volume setting was too loud and found the display difficult to read unless the radio was tilted at an angle.

HUGHES DIRECT

Great savings

Hughes Direct is offering Which? members an exclusive discount on Best Buy radios: the **Pure Evoke-2S, £134**; **Roberts RD-60, £121**; **Pure Evoke Mio, £121**; and **Dualit DAB Lite, £69** (delivery £5). Offer subject to availability and runs until 31 July 2009. To find out more and for other member discounts, go to www.hughesdirect.co.uk/which or call 01473 321883. All goods guaranteed to be a minimum of 10% below high-street prices in Which? product reports. If you find the same product cheaper elsewhere (including delivery) within seven days of purchase, Hughes Direct promises to refund 110% of the difference.

Contacts

Dualit 01293 652 500; www.dualit.com

Pure 01923 277488; www.pure.com

Roberts 01709 571722; www.robertsradio.co.uk

Vita Audio 01702 601410; www.vitaaudio.com

USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

How many DAB or FM stations the memory can store.

Specification

Price See p41 for full details.

Weight Includes batteries.

Number of alarms Number of different times you can set an alarm in a given period.

Number of presets

Batteries

Running time For supplied batteries.

Score

Ignores price and is based on:

Sound quality **40%**

Ease of use **30%**

Battery life **15%**

Features **15%**



Read the full review of the Roberts SolarDAB solar-powered radio and the ecologic range

at which.co.uk then head to whichcompare.co.uk to find out where you can buy one at the best price.

MODEL	SPECIFICATION							BATTERIES		TEST PERFORMANCE		SCORE (%)
	PRICE (£)	WEIGHT (kg)	SIZE (h x w x d) (cm)	STEREO SPEAKERS	CLOCK RADIO	NUMBER OF ALARMS	NUMBER OF PRESETS	BATTERIES	BATTERY RUNNING TIME (HRS) (DAB/FM)	EASE OF USE	SOUND QUALITY	
1 PURE Evoke-2S	165	2.7	22x30x13	✓	✓	1	100	CP ^a		★★★★★	★★★★★	87
2 ROBERTS RD-60	145	2.2	15x25x12				Unlimited	4xD	93.5/64.5	★★★★★	★★★★★	79
3 ROBERTS ecologic 3	60	1.6	15x27x8				10	4xD	82.5/61	★★★★★	★★★★★	77
4 PURE Evoke Mio	145	1.8	18x21x13		✓	1	30	CP	15.5/12	★★★★★	★★★★★	69
5 DUALIT DAB Lite	85	1.3	16x24x10		✓	1	20	6xAA	8.5/7	★★★★★	★★★★★	66
6 PURE One Elite	78	1.2	16x26x10	✓		1	50	6xC or CP	37/39	★★★★	★★★★	61
7 ASDA Alarm Clock DAB Radio	24	1.1	13x27x12	✓	✓	2	20			★★★★	★★★★	56
8 WHARFEDALE NE-3003	29	0.7	10x23x9	✓	✓	2	20			★★★★	★★★★	53
9 AUDIOWAVE DAB-907	22	1.4	12x20x9				20	6xAA	14.5/12.5	★★★★★	★★★★	52
10 PURE One Mini	30	0.4	14x14x6				16	CP ^a		★★★★	★★★★	52
11 SONY XDR-S100CD	189	4.1	25x34x14	✓	✓	1	40	6xC	12.5/9.5	★★	★★★★★	49
12 ROBERTS SolarDAB	78	0.7	11x19x8 ^b				10	BI	16	★★★★	★★★★	46
13 PROLINE DAB401	40	1.9	18x23x13				10	6xC	20.5/18.5	★★★★	★★★★	45
14 ROBERTS ecologic 2	60	0.7	25x19x5				10	6xAA	22/18.5	★★★★★	★★	43
15 SONY XDR-S7	58	1.1	16x16x10				20	6xC	25/20	★★	★★★★	43
16 ARGOS NE-3107	25	0.9	13x20x8				10			★★★★★	★★	42
17 BUSH KRDA801BLK	39	1.6	18x25x8	✓			20	6xC	19/17	★★★★	★★	42
18 ROBERTS ecologic 1	49	0.5	11x16x4				10	4xAA	15/10	★★★★★	★	37
19 LOGIK LOGR118D	40	1.7	18x23x13	✓			20	6xC	25/21	★★★★★	★	34

a Not supplied b Without static aerial CP = ChargePAK BI = Built-in rechargeable