Subject: Digital Streaming Radios
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 30 Sep 2021 22:01:30 GMT
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Mini-Rant Warning:

I am really angry with the internet radio I have now, and the irresponsible companies that have brought its demise. So if you're having a happy day, don't read on. :evil:

I have a Grace Digital radio that recently stopped working. It's not just a table radio, but is a tuner that I use as part of my hi-fi system. I never expected it to be truly high-fidelity, but I did expect it to be good source of convenient background music. Broadcast radio isn't what I'd consider to be super high-quality either. So any tuner is mostly just good for background music, in my opinion. To be honest though, I did hope that there were a few stations/sources that streamed high-quality material, but again, that was not really a requirement, more a "stretch goal." I did, however, expect it to at least work.

And that's what makes me angry. Internet radios depend on servers, and sometimes, those servers aren't owned by companies that last. So if you buy an internet radio, there's a chance that the thing won't be even servicable in a few years. That's happened to me twice now, once by C.Crane company and once by Grace Digital.

To be honest, C.Crane has been selling high-quality analog radios for quite some time, and I really like them. So I ordered an internet table radio from them, back when I first moved to Bella Vista, where I am surrounded by hills. It didn't cost too much, and it let me tune in stuff I could receive in Tulsa (on the plains) but that I could never receive in the Ozark mountains where I now live. It worked for many years, but eventually became worthless after the service provider of the streaming platform went out of business. The radio became a brick.

I noticed C.Crane stopped stocking internet radios after that, so maybe they're avoiding internet radio products until manufacturers create a business/technical model that prevents this kind of problem in the future.

You might think I would have learned from that experience, but instead, I assumed that manufacturers must have already learned this, by the time my C.Crane table radio stopped working. I figured they could see how vulnerable this industry is, and surely they would have started making business arrangements and/or configurable endpoints so their radios could be changed to whatever servers are available. So I set out to find a really nice internet-streaming receiver I could use with my stereo system. I found a nice looking unit with all the features I wanted made by Grace Digital in 2015.

It worked just fine until a few weeks ago, when I powered it up expecting to find my Pandora stations. Nothing, no Pandora. I reset the receiver. Nothing. I reset the router. Nada. So I found other material to listen to and went about my business, knowing I needed to write Grade Digital and ask what to do for service.

This is the reply I got:

Quote:Unfortunately your unit will stop being supported by the 3rd party service provider, Qualcomm Inc. This will affect Grace Digital internet radios manufactured between the years of 2007 and 2017 including the original Mondo. (Please note; the Mondo Plus, Mondo Classic, and Mondo Elite are not affected).

The managed shut down began on November 4th, 2020 and will be completed by September 13th, 2021.

Here is a brief explanation why this is happening.

From 2007-2017, our radios and most radios on the market used to connect to servers of Receiva, who is a third party company.

On 2017, we decided to create our own database to stop relying on a third party company to handle the internet streams, and bring those services in-house so we could provide a better service to our customers. For over four years we have been working with our own resources and we even have new radio models.

What changed? Basically 2020, it was a very difficult year.

Unfortunately, this year Receiva announced back in January that they are closing business, and that means that they will shut down the servers that your radio uses to connect to the internet. We tried to strike a deal with them to keep the old radios working, but before we could even finish the conversation Reciva sold out to Qualcom, that decided to shut down the business Your unit will stop connecting to all services.

You have 2 options:

1- From Grace digital, we understand that this is affecting you directly, so if you wish to upgrade your radio, we can offer you a 35% discount code off our new models, available here:

https://gracedigital.com/collections/radios-tuners-amps

(At the moment we are sold out. We will send you an email notification when we restock if you reply back to this communication).

The code is:

CCUP35

The discount code will be available and will work through this entire year, so we do put any pressure and you can use it at your earliest convenience.

2- When your radio is shut down by the third party provider the menus on your radio will change and many items will no longer be accessible. However, based on the current information provided to Grace Digital the presets will continue to function for basic internet radio stations.

If you would like to continue use of your legacy radio please program your favorite 10 stations to your presets (This had to be done before 9/20/2021 as the option might not be available anymore). However, please note this strategy will only work with standard radio stations. Pandora, and SiriusXM will NOT function on a saved preset as the 3rd party servers are required for those services to function properly.

Please do not factory reset your unit, it will stop working all together.

Great. My Grace Digital radio has become just another brick. And they don't even make a receiver anymore, just cheap little table radios.

I think I'm done with internet radios for a while.
