

Qt-DAB 6*,

Updated for version 6.X

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1 Qt-DAB-6.X

1.1 Introduction

Qt-DAB is an advanced program for decoding terrestrial DAB and DAB+ transmissions. The program decodes a DAB stream, input is by an *SDR* device or from a file. Qt-DAB is (or can be) configured with a number of popular SDR devices for input, such as SDRplay RSP's, AIRspy, Lime, Hackrf, Adalm pluto, and obviously, the cheap RTLSDR devices (including the recent V4 version), the dabsticks. Furthermore Qt-DAB can get its input from a file, or using rtl_tcp or from a *spyserver*.

Qt-DAB is developed on Linux (x64) computers. It will also run on RPI 4 and up running some Linux variant, and is *cross compiled* for Windows (32 and 64 bit).

The focus in the development always is - next to actual decoding the signal of course - visualisation of the signal in its raw and its processed form. This is reflected in the structure of the GUI.

The GUI of Qt-DAB consists of 4 larger (and a few smaller) widgets, three of them are visible under user control:

- the *main* widget, the main widget - always visible - contains - next to controls for selecting channels and services - the controls for the visibility of the other widgets;
- the *configuration and control* widget, contains a large amount of controls for different settings in the program;
- the *spectrum scope* widget, containing a *tabwidget* giving the choice of one of 6 difference views on the signal;
- the *technical details* widget, showing the technical details of the audio of the selected service.

The structure of this guide is simple, section 2 deals with installing the program, in section 3 the GUI and GUI widgets are described, In section 4 some functions, related to scanning and showing the map, are discussed. in section 5 *Scheduling* of service selections is discussed, and, finally, in section 6 the supported devices for the Qt-DAB program are briefly discussed.

1.2 Hardware Requirements

Qt-DAB runs pretty well on modern PC's. One does need a reasonable amount of computing power, though. On an RPI the program can be compiled, on an RPI 4 and up the program will run smoothly. Obviously on an Arduino it will not.

The load on Windows is app 5 to 10 times higher than the load on Linux x64, on a 5 year old laptop running W10 (With a 2.5G I5 processor) the load is app 30 percent, on my newer x64 laptop running Linux, also running an I5 (10-th generation), takes between 2 and 3 percent. An overview of Qt-DAB with the 4 main widgets visible is given in figure 1.

1.3 Differences with previous versions

While there are many changes "under the hood", a few are directly visible when using the program.

Audio handling Qt-DAB uses - almost traditionally - the *portaudio* library to send the PCM samples, i.e. the sound samples, to a soundcard. New is that next to *portaudio*, the Qt drivers are included. Selection of the *sound handler* is through a button in the configuration and control widget.

If the Qt_Audio is selected, a volume slider shows on the main widget.

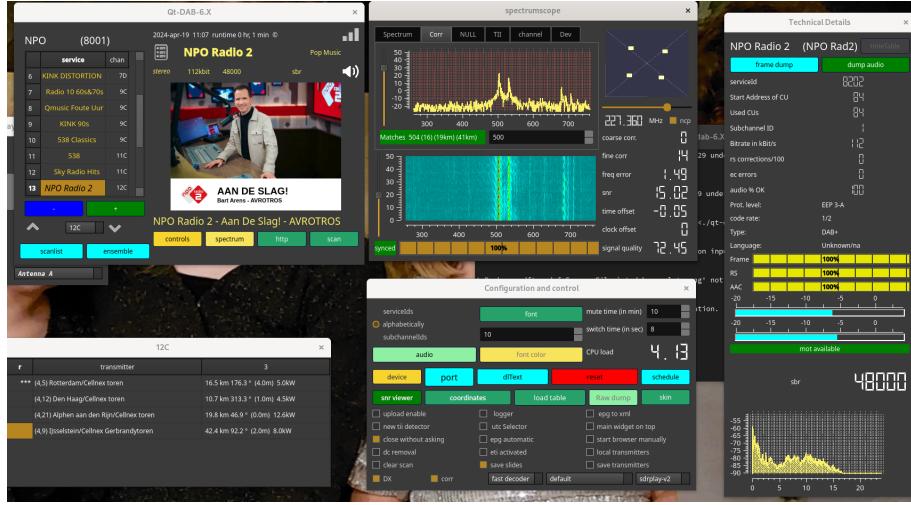


Figure 1: Qt-DAB and the 4 widgets

Improved DX-ing TII decoding was already implemented in earlier versions of Qt-DAB, in Qt-DAB-6.X the *tti decoder* is rewritten, however. While in the previous version, the TII information of the strongest signal was shown, in this version, the *tti decoder* tries to identify as much as possible TII signals in the transmission. Figure 2 shows the TII data of - in this case - the reception of channel 12C in my environment.

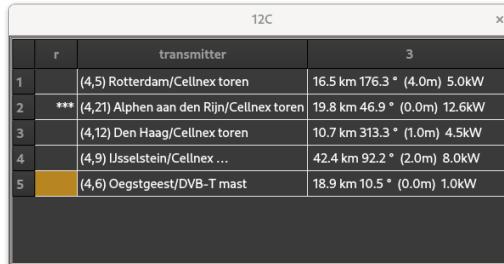


Figure 2: dx display

Of course, if the http handler is activated, all detected transmitters are shown on the map.

Journaline The 6.X version of Qt-DAB supports EXPERIMENTALLY some journaline decoding. As probably known, some transmissions, as far as I know, German ones, carry either as subservice or as data service a "journaline" stream.

Using the *Fraunhofer library*¹, Qt-DAB-6.X recognizes a journaline stream and shows it. As soon as some data is collected, a start window will be shown (see figure 3).

Clicking on a link, another page (if the data is loaded obviously) is shown, see figure 4.

The decoder is experimental since in my environment, there are no transmissions with journaline, so all testing is done on one or two recordings.

¹All rights gratefully acknowledged

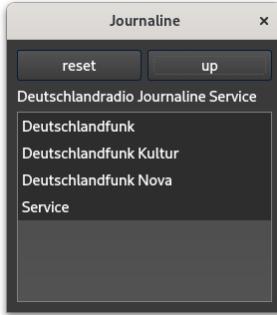


Figure 3: journaline top menu

2 A note on installing Qt-DAB-6.X

Two windows installers for a 32 bit version of Qt-DAB-6.X are available. Each installer will install a version of Qt-DAB by creating a folder in the system folder "Program Files (x86)" on the C drive and will create - if checked - a link to the desk.



Figure 4: a submenu

The difference between the two versions is the support for RT2832 based sticks, while the V3 version is equipped with the classic (osmocom) support software for these sticks, the other version is equipped with support software for the V4 version of the stick. It was suggested that using an older stick with the V4 version library the software was "deaf".

Furthermore an installer for a 64 bit Windows version is available, to keep things simple and manageable, that version supports the RTLSDR V4 library.

For Linux on the x64 PC, a so-called *AppImage* is available. Such an AppImage is itself a small closed filesystem with all programs and libraries for running Qt-DAB aboard. However, the AppImage does NOT contain support libraries for the various configured devices. Since on selecting a device, Qt-DAB will look for a device support library, and will try to load the relevant functions, so Qt-DAB does not need device libraries to be available for unused but configured devices. If not found, Qt-DAB will report that and wait for another attempt to select a device. These precompiled versions (i.e. Windows installer(s) and AppImage) can be found in the *releases* section of the github repository ("<https://github.com/JvanKatwijk/qt-dab>").

Of course, since the sources for Qt-DAB are available, one might compile an executable. Building an executable from the sources is not trivial, that is why a separate section is devoted to the build process.

3 The GUI: the widgets and the control

3.1 Introduction

When starting the software for the first time, there is -obviously- no device selected yet. Qt-DAB then shows two widgets, the *main* widget, and the so-called *configuration and control* widget. The latter shows at the right side of the bottom line a selector for configured devices² Once a device is selected and could be opened, the processing starts.

3.2 The widgets



Figure 5: main widget

The main widget shows the relevant data for the user's selection of a channel and a service. It displays slide(s) carried in the selected service, and dynamic label text. Furthermore, it provides buttons for controlling the visibility of the *configuration and control* widget, the *spectrum widget* and the *technical details* widget, and for operations like scanning, scheduling etc.

The left side of the widget is dedicated to channel and service selection. It shows on top the *ensemble display*, in this view it shows services from the favorites list and below that list a few controls. The view can be changed with the button, here labeled *ensembles*. A choice can be made between the *ensemble view*, showing the list of services in the current ensemble, and the *favorites view*, showing the services from the favorites list..

Selecting a service in either view is by clicking with the mouse on the service name. The semantics of clicking with the mouse on the field right of the service name depend on the view mode: in ensemble

²Be aware that Qt-DAB does NOT provide the device libraries.

view the service will be added to or removed from the favorites, in the favorites view the service will be removed from the favorites list.

With the channel selector, in the picture the small combobox labelled "12C", a channel may be selected, channels are labelled "5A" to "13F". With the "up" and "down" arrow, the selected channel number is incremented resp. decremented.

The *scanlist* button controls the visibility of the scan list, i.e. the list of services detected at the most recent *single scan*.

As mentioned, the button - here labeled *ensemble* is used to switch views from *ensemble view* to *favorites view* and back.

Note that the *configuration and control widget* provides selectors for setting the *font*, the *font size* and the *font color* with which the service names are displayed.

Selectors If an ensemble is detected, the name of the ensemble appears above the servicelist ("NPO (8001)" in the picture above). *Clicking on that name* controls the visibility of the *content widget*, i.e. a widget showing the details of the services belonging to the current ensemble.

Audio services usually carry one or more slides that are displayed. In case a slide is not (yet) found, a default slide is displayed (Qt-DAB has a number of default slides, a slide change for default slides will happen once a minute).

When a service is selected, its name appears in bold on the right half of the widget. Left of that name ("NPO Radio 5" in the picture above) a small list-style icon controls the visibility of the so-called *technical widget*, a widget showing details of the currently selected service.

The icon to the right of the name, the *speaker*, indicates whether or not the system produces sound. Furthermore, it acts as *mute* button. If Qt_Audio is selected, below this speaker icon, a *Volume control* is visible.

Most services, when running, produce next to audio and one or more slides, text, the so-called DLS (Dynamic Label), "Joop en Jessica - Algoertmes" in the picture above. *Clicking with the right mouse button on this text shows a (very) small menu opening the possibility of saving the text to the OS' clipboard.*

Finally, the 4 (four) buttons below this text control (from left to right)

- the visibility of the *configuration and control* widget, a widget with a huge amount of selectors for a large variety of setting of the system;
- the visibility of the *spectrum* widget, a widget dedicated to showing all kind of aspects of the incoming DAB signal;
- the *http handler*, a handler that controls showing a map with indications of the transmitters being received;
- the visibility of the *scan monitor* widget, a *separate* widget for controlling (single or multiple) scans over all or selected channels in the band.

3.3 Technical details

Most services are audio services, and it is always interesting to see what the parameters of the audio data are. The technical widget, see figure 6. shows these parameters. On top of the widget, the name of the current service is repeated, together with - between brackets - the short name - if any. Below this line, there are two buttons, both for saving audio data of the current service. The button *frame dump* - when touched - instructs the software to dump the AAC frames of the audio service into a file. Such a file can be played by e.g. VLC. The button *dump audio* - when touched - instructs the software to dump the audio output into a ".wav" file, i.e. a PCM file, with a samplerate of 48000 samples/second.

The bottom of the widget shows the spectrum of the audio output, it shows that the audio frequency goes to app. 15 to 16 KHz.

The three progress indicators above the spectrum display (for MP2 output there will be only one) show the successrate of the different steps in the transformation from decoded DAB data to audio. The steps are:

- *Frame recognition and extraction.* DAB+ audio is organized in frames, recognizing frames in the input stream requires some testing and verification;
- *Reed Solomon decoding.* The indicator tells the successrate of the Reed Solomon decoder over the last 25 frames (Note however, that the R-S decoding can fix up to 5 errors per frame);
- *AAC decoding.* The indicator tells the successrate of interpreting the AAC frames and transforming them into audio (PCM) samples.

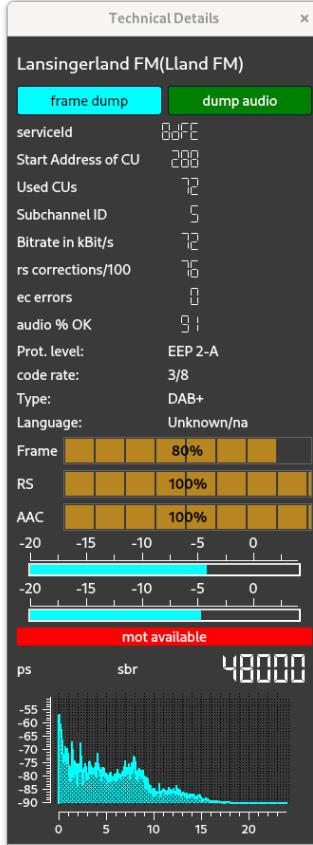


Figure 6: Technical details

Most of the other data that is displayed speaks for itself, a few less obvious numbers:

- *rs corrections* displays the number of corrections, performed by the Reed-Solomon decoder in the last 100 frames. The Reed Solomon decoder operates with frames of 120 bytes, the last 10 of them being parity bytes, and is able to correct up to 5 byte errors in a frame;
- *ec errors* displays the number of errors detected *after* the Reed Solomon decoder has repaired the errors (of course, if the parity bytes in the data contain errors, it is hard to see how an error free audio frame can be constructed);

- *audio % OK* displays the percentage of audio frames that reaches the audio output. If the AAC decoding fails, no data is sent to the audio output (usually the soundcard). If Qt_Audio is selected, this indicator is not used;
- The *red label* with text "MOT" shows that the currently selected services does not carry MOT dat, i.e, the service described here does not contain slides and Qt-DAB will show some generic default slide. The label colors green if MOT data is detected in the current (audio) service.

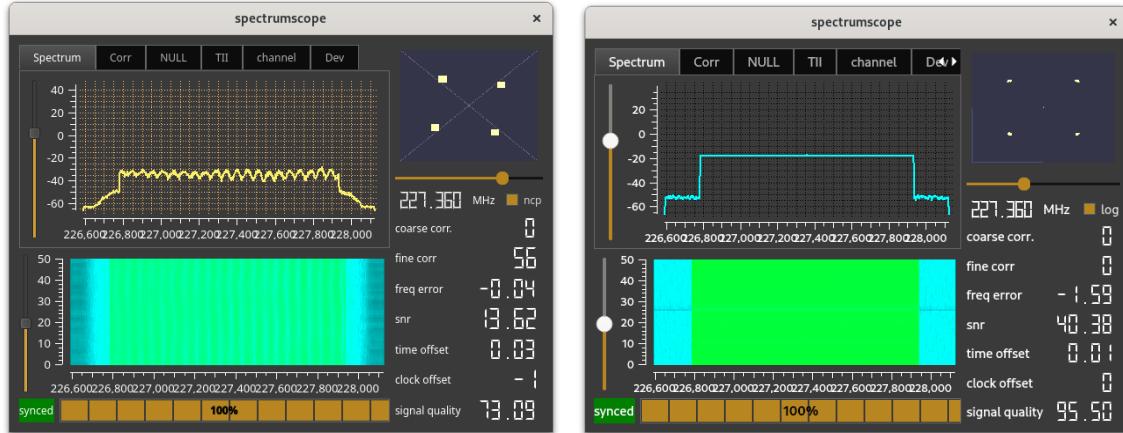


Figure 7: Spectrum scope and ideal signal

3.4 The spectrum widget

In version 6 the various scopes (displays) were put into a single widget. The "tab" defines which scope is shown. The widget further contains an IQ scope, a waterfall display and a list of quality indicators.

Figure 7 shows the spectrum of the signal, which has a width of just over 1.5 MHz. Below the IQscope, a checkbox can be set to select what will be displayed, the "dots" shown in figure 7 show the centerpoints of the constellations of the decoded signal, ideally they are fat dots on 45, 135, 225, 315 degrees. Alternatively, the whole "cloud" of dots of the constellations is shown (figure 9).

The waterfall display is directly coupled to the selected scope, it will show the progress in time of the data of the selected scope.

The first step in decoding DAB signals is *synchronization*, i.e. finding where the actual data of a DAB frame starts in the incoming sample stream. The NULL scope (see figure 8, scope right) shows the samples in the transition phase from the NULL period to the first data block.

To achieve such a synchronization a form of *correlation* is used (figure 8, scope left).

Ideally the maximum in the correlation is on (or about) sample 504 of the current segment of the incoming stream. The correlation scope here shows more than one peak, indicating that more than a single transmitter is received. The software detects here three "reasonable" peaks, it is up to the software to synchronize, given the peaks.

If the current transmitter is "known", i.e. we know its name and distance, the distance and the estimated distances of other peaks to the receiver site are shown. In the picture here, the transmitter transmitting the strongest signal has a distance of 16 km, the others, 19 km resp. 40 km to the receiving location

As known, most transmitters send some identification data, encoded in the NULL period of the DAB frames. This data, Transmitter Identification Information (TII) consists of two numbers, a main Id and a sub Id, unique for each transmitter in a given country. The TII scope shows the spectrum

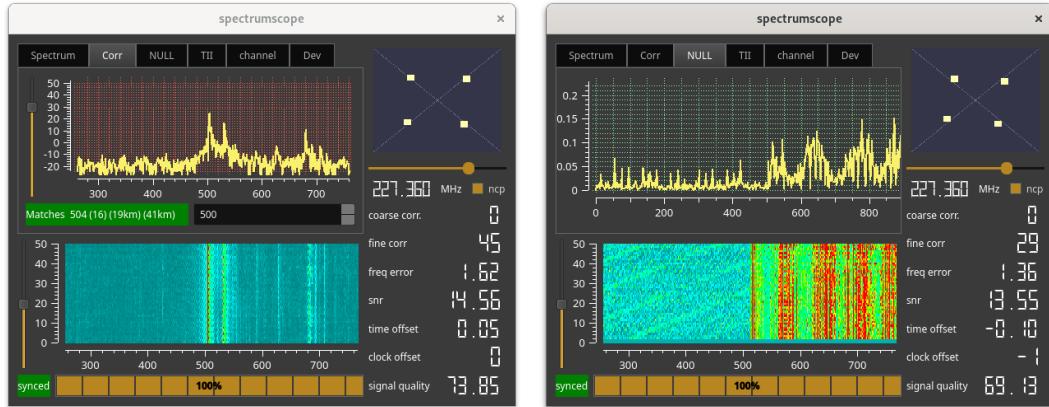


Figure 8: Correlation scope and NULL signal

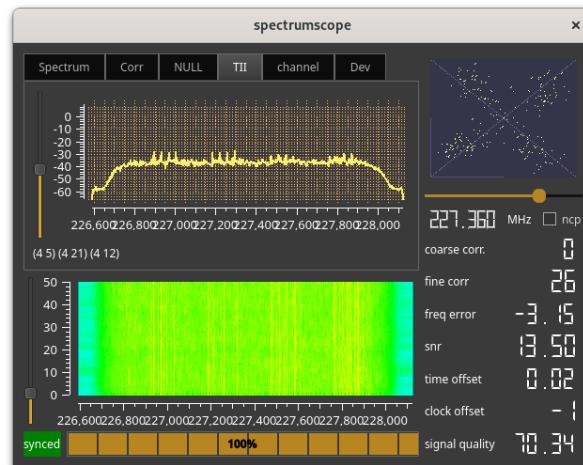


Figure 9: TII scope

of the NULL period, that is where the TII data is to be found. In this case, the software was able to detect that the TII data of the strongest signal is (04 05) and signals from other transmitters in the network were deciphered as (4 21) and (4 12). The pair (4, 5) is transmitted by a nearby transmitter in Rotterdam.

A 5-th scope, a so-called channel scope (see figure 10) shows the channel response.

The first data block of a DAB frame has predefined data, so an estimate of the "channel" is made by looking at the transformation of a selected set of carriers between transmitter and receiver. The green coloured line in the picture shows the amplitude of the channel,, the red line the phase offset³.

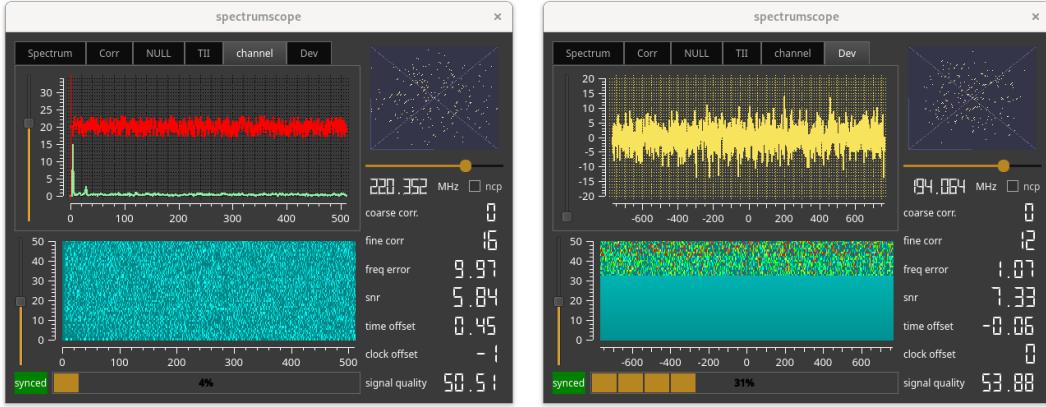


Figure 10: channel scope and deviations scope

The *deviation scope* shows the offsets, expressed in Hz, computed from the phase offsets in the decoded carriers. Ideally the offset in the decoded carrier is zero. Higher offsets means higher chances on errors in the decoding.

The widget shows a number of quality indicators, derived from the incoming signal.

The numbers, an example shown in figure 11, read from top to bottom:

1. The *coarse frequency correction* and the *small frequency correction*, computed from a DAB frame and applied to the data for the next DAB frame. Qt-DAB is able to correct frequency errors to up to app 35 Khz, here the error is pretty small. Using a "dabstick" or so as device will show a much larger correction.
2. the *remaining frequency offset*, which - obviously - should be small, but shows the effect of correcting incoming samples with an offset found earlier;
3. the measured *signal/noise ratio* (measured by looking at the signal strength in the NULL period and the period that data is transmitted);
4. the *time offset*, i.e. the error in the sample clock;
5. the *clock offset*, here we measure how many samples we are short (in this case) or we have too many per second.
6. the *quality* of the decoded signal, compared to the "ideal" signal that shows 4 dots, one in each quadrant. Higher values indicate a higher signal quality. The values are scaled from 1 to 100, so the value above 60 shows a reasonable signal. There are many ways to compute a quality value, the approach in Qt-DAB is derived from ETSI 101 290, which is not completely fair since the decoding for DAB is primarily depending on the phase of the signal and less on the amplitude.

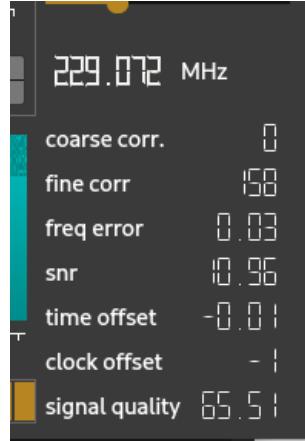


Figure 11: quality indicators

Finally, the bottom line of the spectrum widget contains a *label* and a *progressbar*. The label turns *green* if *time synchronization* can be achieved (i.e. the software "knows" where to find the DAB frames in the incoming sample stream.) The *progressbar* tells the success rate of decoding the FIC (Fast Information Channel) data. If the percentage is less than 100 percent, then apparently something is wrong with the signal and successfull decoding the payload is highly unlikely.

3.5 Configuration and control

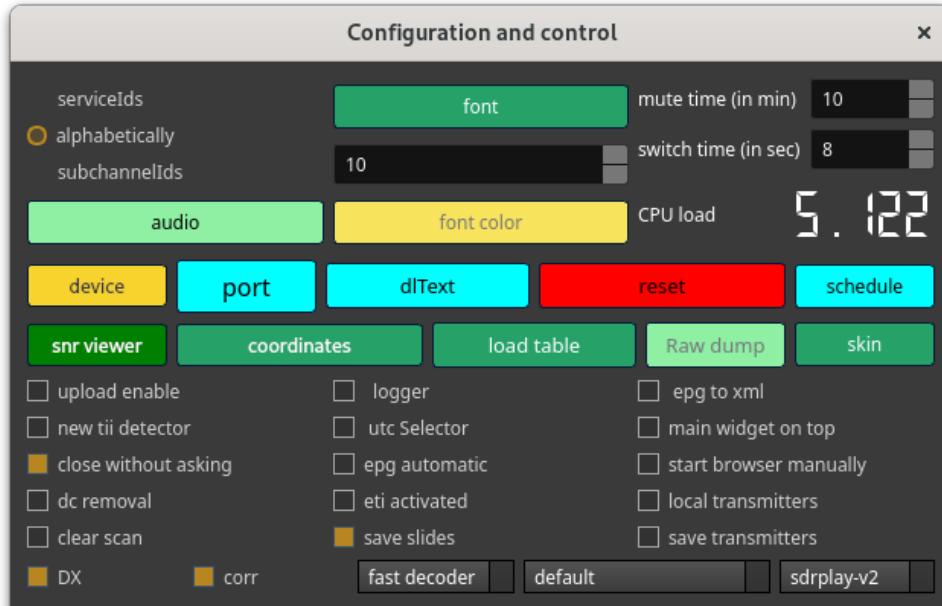


Figure 12: Configuration and control

³A DAB block counts 1536 carriers, so the picture only shows a fraction

The configuration and control widget is the widget with the buttons and checkboxes for influencing the configuration of the decoding process. The settings - together with other settings generated by the system - are stored in the ".ini" file⁴.

- At the top left, one may select the order in which the services, when displayed in an ensemble, are presented;
- Below that selection mechanism, a new selector is presented: the *audio selector*. While traditionally portaudio was used for transporting the audio output to a soundcard, an alternative, using a Qt provided mechanism is now available.
- At the top in the middle, one may choose the *font*, the *font size* and the *font color* of the displayed services;
- At the top right. *mute time* tells the system what the duration should be in muting the audio;
- *Switch time* tells the system what the waiting time should be after switching a channel before the software is convinced that the newly selected channel does *NOT* contains DAB data;
- The *CPU load* tells the *overall* load of the CPU.

Below the top, there are two rows with push buttons

- *device*, a button controlling the visibility of the device widget; A device widget usually shows controls for setting e.g. gain, and once these are set, there is in general no need to have the widget visible;
- *port* allows setting *another port number* than the default one used otherwise for the http handler, i.e. for communicating with the webbrowser when displaying maps and data on maps;
- *dlText* controls an option to save the data from the *dynamic label* into a file. Touching it will show a file selection menu, touching it again will close the file. If a file is selected, the texts in the dynamic label are stored in the file. Note that in this version it is also possible to save the *current text* of the dynamic label. Select the section of the text with the mouse, click with the right hand side mouse button and a small menu appears with an option to save the selected text on the clipboard;
- *reset* will stop all activities and do a restart;
- *schedule button* - when touched - will make a schedule menu visible with which future actions (up to 7 days ahead) can be scheduled;
- *snr viewer* controls the visibility of a small display, showing graphically the progress in time of the SNR;
- *coordinates* allows specifying the local coordinates, used to compute distance and azimuth to transmitters;
- *load table*, if correctly configured, pushing this button causes (re)loading a new instance of the TII database (see section 4);
- *Raw dump* (Obsolete) allows selecting a file to which the input data will be saved in a PCM file. Use xml files instead;
- *skin* allows selection of a skin for the displayed widgets. *The selection will be effective the next program invocation*; The default skin chosen is *Darkeum*.

⁴This ".ini" file is a file created by Qt-DAB and stored in the user's homedirectory

Below these buttons there is a list of 14 check boxes (in the column left the entry "upload enable" is unused)

- *save service on exit* tells the system to save the channel and service name on program termination, and to use these on program start up to initialize the system;
- *logger* obsolete;
- *epg to xml* tells the system to map EPG data using an imported library to xml. Note that it is known that the imported library has a bug that might lead to a crash of the program;
- *new tii detector*. TII detection may use a second algorithm that detects TII data sometimes earlier, but generates more erroneous TII values;
- *utc Selector*, when enabled shows time as UTC rather than local time;
- *main widget on top*, as it suggests, enabling this ensures that the main widget *always* will be on top. Note that it might cause problems on Windows, since newly generated widgets will be on top and therefore be covered by the main widget. Not ideal if the new, covered, widget asks for confirmation;
- *close without asking* does what it suggests;
- *epg automatic*. Some ensembles carry - next to regular services - an EPG (Electronic Program Guide) service. If enabled the system will execute that service in the background;
- *start browser manually*. By default, on enabling the http service, the local default browser will be started. If this option is enabled, the user has to start his/hers favorite browser;
- *eti activated*. Since Version 5 of the Qt-DAB software. there is an option of generating an *ETI⁵* file from the current channel input. If this option is enabled, the *scan* button on the main widget is changed in an "eti" button, with which the eti generator can be started and stopped;
- *current channel transmitters* if enabled, the transmitters shown on a map will only be the ones belonging to the current channel;
- *clear scan*. On scanning (single scan, see below) the service names encountered will be added to the scanlist that can be made visible on the main widget. If this option is activated, that list will be cleared on a new scan;
- *save slides* does what it suggests;
- *save transmitters*. If checked, transmitter names will be saved (see section 4).

bottom line The bottom line of the configuration and control widget contains two checkboxes and three comboboxes. The checkboxes are new in 6.X:

- the *DX selector*, when set, instructs the software to try to detect as much transmitters in the data from the NULL period as possible. The names of the transmitters are displayed on a separate widget, and - when scanning continuous - all transmitters detected are displayed;
- the *corr selector* influences the correlation, if set, the correlation module will report the *first* peak in the correlation (above a certain minimum), rather than the strongest. This solves the problem of decoding when two (or more) transmitters give app the same correlation result.

⁵ETI stands for Ensemble Transport Interface, defined in ETS 300 799

The comboboxes are

- a selector for the *decoder*, just to experiment a number of (more or less) different approaches are exercised to map the phase, resulting from the first decoder step, onto (soft) bits;
- the *audio out selector*, the selector is filled by the underlying sound system;
- the *device selector*, the configured devices are listed here. Note that Qt-DAB is unique in that during a session another device can be selected.

The settings of these selectors is always stored in the ".ini" file and used in initialization.

3.6 Coloring buttons and scopes

Colors for buttons and the scopes are personal. While not essential for functioning, the ability to choose one's own color scheme seems important to me. So, a color for the different buttons on the *main widget* and on the *configuration and control widget* can be set (and subsequently changed). Touch the button with the *right mouse button* and a small widget appears in which first the background color, and second the text color can be selected (see figure 13).

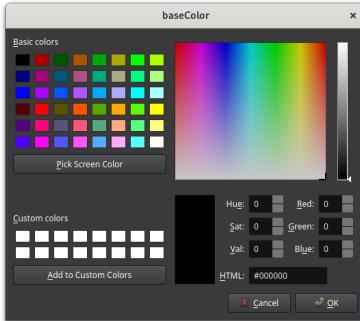


Figure 13: Button color selection

The same applies to the scopes in the spectrum widget, clicking with the *right mouse button* on the field will show a small selection widget with which a *background color*, a *grid color* and a *curve color* can be set. The color settings are immediately effective and maintained between successive program invocations.

4 Contents, scanning and maps

4.1 Introduction

Qt-DAB can display a description of the content of the currently selected channel and offers extensive options for scanning.

4.2 Looking at the content of the current channel

Of course, even without scanning, it is possible to get a view on what services are available in the currently selected channel. Next to the obvious list of service names as given on the ensemble display on the main widget, one might want a look at the "content", i.e. details of the ensemble and its constituents.

	current ensemble	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1												
2	NPO	12C	227360	8001	Est: 04 05	2023-sep-27 0...	SNR 9	9	Rotterdam/Cel...			
3	serviceName	serviceId	subChannel	start address (...	length (CU's)	protection	code rate	bitrate	dab type	language	program type	fm freq
4	NPO Radio 2	8202	1	96	90	EEP 3-A	1/2	120	DAB+	Dutch	Pop Music	107100
5	NPO 3FM	8203	2	186	90	EEP 3-A	1/2	120	DAB+	Dutch	Pop Music	103900
6	NPO FunX	8209	6	570	90	EEP 3-A	1/2	120	DAB+	Dutch	Pop Music	
7	NPO 3FM KX Radio	8214	9	750	90	EEP 3-A	1/2	120	DAB+	Dutch	Pop Music	
8	NPO Soul & Jazz	8206	5	480	90	EEP 3-A	1/2	120	DAB+	Dutch	Jazz Music	
9	NPO Radio 5	8205	4	390	90	EEP 3-A	1/2	120	DAB+	Dutch	Oldies Music	
10	NPO Radio 1	8201	0	0	96	EEP 3-A	1/2	128	DAB+	Dutch	Current Affairs	105500
11	NPO Klassiek	8204	3	276	114	EEP 3-A	1/2	152	DAB+	Dutch	Serious Classical	101600
12	NPO SterrenNL	8212	8	660	90	EEP 3-A	1/2	120	DAB+	Dutch	National Music	

Figure 14: Content description

Picture 14 shows the content of the NPO ensemble, it shows that the TII identifiers at the time of reception were 04 05, the transmitter is located in Rotterdam, that 9 services were detected and the SNR was 9.

For each of the services (NPO does not transmit a data service anymore) the known data is printed. Note that it might take some time before all data items are known. Whether or not the service description shows an FM alternative FM frequency might not be known before a few seconds have passed.

4.3 Scanning

Touching the *scan* button controls the visibility of the scan monitor (figure 15). The *start* and *stop*



Figure 15: Scan monitor

buttons on the monitor widget have their obvious functions, the button labeled *show* button controls the visibility of the *skipList*.

In most cases it is known that on some specific channels no DAB signal will be found. Of course, it is a waste of time to include such a channel in the scan, therefore Qt-DAB has the possibility of indicating which channels can be skipped, hence the name *skipList*.

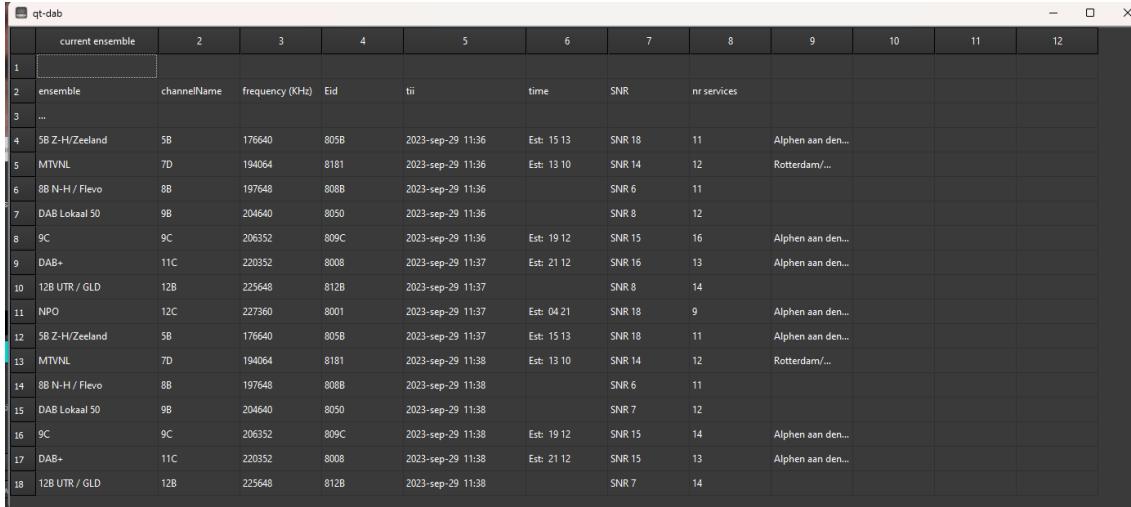
A default skipList may be used, this list is stored somewhere with other DAB data. If, however, one wants different skipLists, e.g. for scanning in different directions, one may create separate - named -

skiplists. Such a skiplist is stored in xml format in a file.

Scanning itself is in one of three modes:

- in *until data* mode, scanning continuous until a channel is detected with DAB signals;
- in single scan mode - the default mode - a single scan is made over all channels (except of course the ones mentioned in the active skipList) of the band, and will stop afterwards;
- in *continuous* mode, scanning will continue until stopped by the user.

Of course, the output of the different modes will be different, while in the second mode a list is generated with for each channel that carries DAB data a full description of that data (similar to the content description), when running in continuous mode, only a single line will be generated for each ensemble encountered (see figure 16).



The screenshot shows a window titled "qt-dab" displaying a table of DAB channel data. The table has 18 rows and 12 columns. The columns are labeled: current ensemble, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The first column contains row numbers from 1 to 18. The second column contains ensemble names like "5B Z+H/Zeeland", "MTVNL", "8B N-H / Flevo", etc. The third column contains channel names like "5B", "7D", "8B", etc. The fourth column contains frequency values like "176640", "194064", "197648", etc. The fifth column contains Eid values like "805B", "8181", "808B", etc. The sixth column contains TII values like "2023-sep-29 11:36", "2023-sep-29 11:36", "2023-sep-29 11:36", etc. The seventh column contains time values like "Est: 15:13", "Est: 13:10", "SNR 6", etc. The eighth column contains SNR values like "SNR 18", "SNR 14", "SNR 15", etc. The ninth column contains nr services values like "11", "12", "11", etc. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth columns contain additional data that is mostly blank or contains placeholder text like "Alphen aan den..." or "Rotterdam/...".

	current ensemble	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1												
2	ensemble	channelName	frequency (kHz)	Eid	tti	time	SNR	nr services				
3	...											
4	5B Z+H/Zeeland	5B	176640	805B	2023-sep-29 11:36	Est: 15:13	SNR 18	11	Alphen aan den...			
5	MTVNL	7D	194064	8181	2023-sep-29 11:36	Est: 13:10	SNR 14	12	Rotterdam/...			
6	8B N-H / Flevo	8B	197648	808B	2023-sep-29 11:36		SNR 6	11				
7	DAB Lokal 50	9B	204640	8050	2023-sep-29 11:36		SNR 8	12				
8	9C	9C	206352	809C	2023-sep-29 11:36	Est: 19:12	SNR 15	16	Alphen aan den...			
9	DAB+	11C	220352	8008	2023-sep-29 11:37	Est: 21:12	SNR 16	13	Alphen aan den...			
10	12B UTR / GLD	12B	225648	812B	2023-sep-29 11:37		SNR 8	14				
11	NPO	12C	227360	8001	2023-sep-29 11:37	Est: 04:21	SNR 18	9	Alphen aan den...			
12	5B Z+H/Zeeland	5B	176640	805B	2023-sep-29 11:37	Est: 15:13	SNR 18	11	Alphen aan den...			
13	MTVNL	7D	194064	8181	2023-sep-29 11:38	Est: 13:10	SNR 14	12	Rotterdam/...			
14	8B N-H / Flevo	8B	197648	808B	2023-sep-29 11:38		SNR 6	11				
15	DAB Lokal 50	9B	204640	8050	2023-sep-29 11:38		SNR 7	12				
16	9C	9C	206352	809C	2023-sep-29 11:38	Est: 19:12	SNR 15	14	Alphen aan den...			
17	DAB+	11C	220352	8008	2023-sep-29 11:38	Est: 21:12	SNR 15	13	Alphen aan den...			
18	12B UTR / GLD	12B	225648	812B	2023-sep-29 11:38		SNR 7	14				

Figure 16: Result from continuous mode

4.4 The TII database, transmitter names and distances

As mentioned earlier, the NULL period preceding the data in a DAB frame may contain an encoding of a number identifying the transmitter. DAB is transmitted with a large number of lower power transmissions, all using the same frequency, the encoding of the TII (Transmitter Identification Information) is added to the NULL period.

A large database exists (and is continually updated) with program and location information of DAB transmitters (see www.FMList.org) worldwide. The owner of the database kindly provided an URL to extract the relevant data for DAB transmitters for use with Qt-DAB only. Due to the latter requirement, the code to access the database can not be open source, and is therefore not part of the source tree.

However, code is included in the precompiled version with which the database can be loaded. The "load table" button on the configuration and control widget will ensure that a copy of the freshly acquired database is installed in the user's home directory.

Qt-DAB can also be configured to use a library with which accessing a local copy of the database is possible, that is why a local copy of the database is provided for in the source tree.

Given that access is obtained to a local copy of the database, and given that the home position of the system where Qt-DAB is running is known, Qt-DAB displays the name of the transmitter received

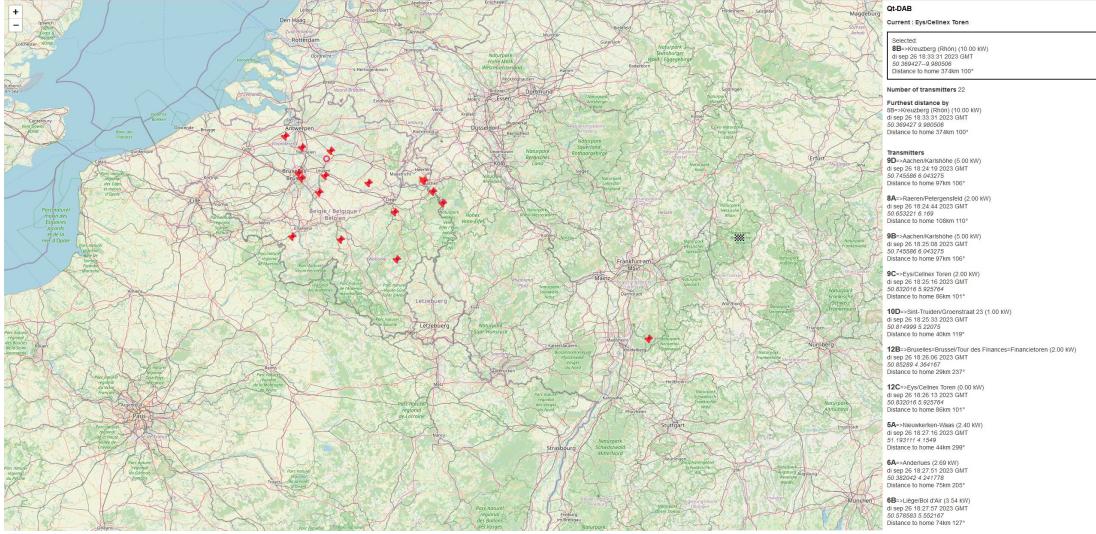


Figure 17: Transmitters on the map

(by looking up the TII code in the database), and will compute an estimate of the distance and the azimuth.

4.5 Transmitternames and a map

Qt-DAB offers the possibility of displaying a map on a webbrowser with the home location and the names and locations of the transmitters seen

The button *http* on the main widget will - whenever the database is accessible and the home location is known - issue a command to start a web browser, and will send data about the home location and the transmitters received to the browser program as shown in figure 17⁶. Note that while by default the *default* browser on the system is selected, the *configuration and control* widget contains a checkbox that, when set, tells the software that the user wants to be able to select the webbrowser him/herself.

The right hand side of the map contains a list of transmitters, with for each transmitter the name, the precise location and if known the transmission power. The description is augmented with the distance and the azimuth from the specified home to the transmitter. In figure 18 part of the list is shown in more detail.

The picture shows that the transmitter with the furthest distance was found on 374 Km, that the number of transmitters - collected for different channels - is 22.

The transmitter descriptions can be saved in a file. If the checkbox *save transmitters* is checked, the *http* handler will - on start up - show a file selection menu, for selecting a file in which the descriptions are stored.

5 Scheduling in Qt-DAB-6

When working, I am usually listening to a service that transmits music without too much talking. But then I want to hear the news bulletins on the hour on another service and of course in 9 out of 10 cases I was late. That is why Qt-DAB has a mechanism to switch over to a specified activity at a specified times.

⁶The picture of the map is made available by Herman Wijnants



Figure 18: list of transmitters

The *scheduling* option allows scheduling an operation to be performed within the next 7 days on a specified time. Since the scheduling mechanism is part of the program, Qt-DAB should run for the scheduling to be effective. Scheduling settings are kept between program invocations, on program startup, the software will remove schedule instructions that refer to the past.

Touching the schedule button shows a selection widget, as shown in figure 19

The first step is selecting a service name or operation. The service names are those in the currently selected channel, and those in the preset list. Furthermore, some operations can be selected

- *nothing*, with the obvious semantics;
- *exit*, which, when executed will terminate the execution of Qt-DAB;
- *framedump* for scheduling the recording of the AAC frames for the service *that is active at the moment the scheduling time is reached*;
- *audiodump*, the same for the PCM output;
- *dltext*, for scheduling the start of saving the dynamic label text in a file;
- *ficDump*, for scheduling the start of the dump of the FIC data into a file.
- any of the services known to the software.

Note that executing the command when a previous invocation of that command is still active, will terminate the execution of the operation.

Having selected an operation of service, the next step is specifying the time and day of the operation to be executed. A small widget shows, that allows setting day and time. see figure 20

If the list of scheduled events is not empty, it will be shown in a separate (small) widget, see figure 20.

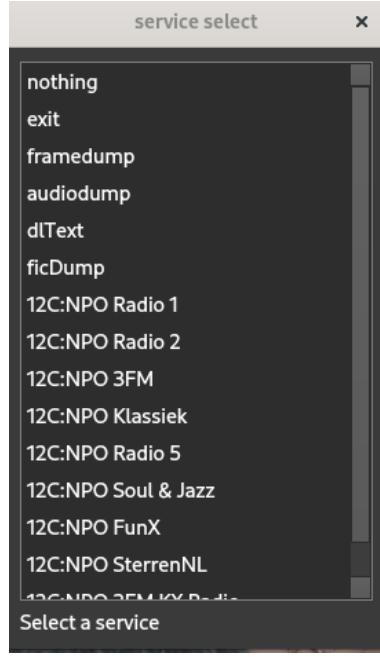


Figure 19: Schedule selection

6 Supported input devices

Qt-DAB supports a variety of input devices, the Adalm Pluto, the AIRspy, the hackrf, the limeSDR,



Figure 20: Schedule time selection and the schedule list

RT2832 based sticks and SDRplay RSP devices. Furthermore, there is support for the rtl_tcp server, support for the spyserver, for file input (raw, wav and xml), and for devices for which a *Soapy* interface library exists,

Both the *appImage* and the *Windows installer* are configured with (almost) the whole range of devices: SDRplay RSP (different versions for the 2.13 and 3.XX library versions), the Adalm Pluto, the AIRspy, the hackrf, the LimeSDR, and - of course - the RT2832 based dabsticks.

6.1 The SDRplay RSP

The Qt-DAB software supports all RSP's from SDRplay. Qt-DAB provides two different device handlers for the RSP's, one for devices using the 2.13 SDRplay interface library, the other one supports devices using the 3.0X SDRplay interface library. Note that if API 3.10 or up is installed on Windows, the 2.13 library is not accessible. Note furthermore that the recently announced RSP 1B is supported.



Figure 21: Qt-DAB: The two control widgets for the SDRplay

As figure 21 shows, the control widgets for the two different versions resemble each other, their implementation differs considerably though. Both have spinboxes for setting the *if gain reduction*, the *lna state* and a *ppm offset*.

Since Qt-DAB is capable of correcting the frequency, there is no actual need for setting a value here.

The spinbox for the *if gain reduction* is programmed to support the range of values between 20 and 59. The range of values for the *lna state* depends on the model of the RSP. The software will detect the model and fill in the range accordingly.

If the *agc* is selected, the *if gain reduction* spinbox will be hidden, its value is then irrelevant.

The RSPdx (and its predecessor, the RSP II) has two (actually 3) slots for connecting an antenna. If an RSPdx or RSP II is detected, a combobox will be made visible for *antenna selection*.

Finally, both versions of the control widget contain a *dump* button. If touched, the raw input from the connected device will be stored in a so-called *xml formatted* file. First a menu is shown for selecting a filename, a suggestion for the name of the file *device name - date* is given. Touching the button again will stop dumping and the file will be closed.

If more than one connected device is detected, a widget appears on which a selection can be made which device to use.

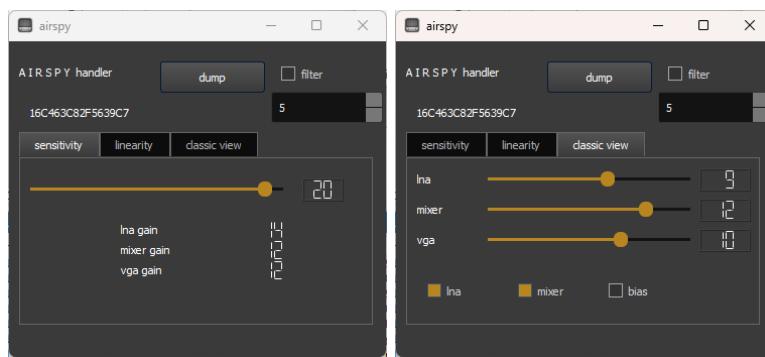


Figure 22: Qt-DAB: Widgets for AIRspy control

6.2 The AIRSpy

The control widget for the AIRspy (figure 22, right) contains three sliders and a push button. The sliders are to control the *lna gain*, the *mixer gain* and the *vga gain*.

To ease balancing the setting of the sliders, two combined settings are included in the widget, selectable by the tab *sensitivity* and *linearity*. Figure 22 left side, shows the setting at selecting the tab *sensitivity*.

Touching the button labeled *dump* instructs the software to dump the raw stream of samples into a file in the *xml format* (Note that while processing DAB requires the samplerate to be 2048000, that rate is *not* supported by the AIRspy, implying that the driver software has to do some rate conversion. The xml file though will just contain the samples on the rate before conversion).

If more than one airspy is detected, a widget will appear with which the device to use can be selected.

6.3 The Hackrf

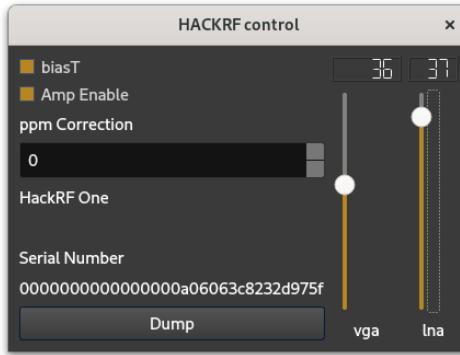


Figure 23: Qt-DAB: Widget for hackrf control

The control widget for hackrf (figure 23) shows, next to the Serial Number of the device, a few sliders, a few checkboxes, a spinbox and a push button.

- the *sliders* are there for controlling the lna and vga gain, the slider values are limited to the range of possible values;
- The *Ant Enable* checkbox is for Antenna port Power control (not used in this controller);
- The *Amp Enable* checkbox is - if enabled - for additional gain on the antenna input;
- the *ppm correction* spinbox can be set to correct the oscillator (on 227 MHz, the Qt-DAB software reports an offset of somewhat over 3 KHz);
- the *Dump* push button when pushed, starts dumping the raw input in xml file format. Touching the button again will halt the dumping and close the file.

6.4 The LimeSDR

On selecting the LimeSDR (if configured), a control widget for the LimeSDR is shown (figure 24). The widget contains five controls:

- *gain* control, with predefined values;
- *antennas*, where *Auto* is usually the best choice;
- *Dump*, if touched, the raw input from the connected device will be written to a file in the so-called *xml* format.



Figure 24: Qt-DAB: Widget for Lime control

New is the inclusion of a filter. Note that the limeSDR reads samples with a samplerate of 204KHz with no filtering, while the frequency distance between successive channels is 1712KHz. So, DX-ing in adjacent channels, where e.g. the first channel contains a strong DAB signal and the next one a weak, is difficult.

Therefore the control widget for the limeSDR has two additional controls,

- switching a software FIR filter on-off (the checkbox labeled *filter*),
- setting the filterdepth of the FIR filter (the spinbox below the checkbox).

Note that using the filter is not free, for a filter with a size of N, $N * 2048000$ complex additions and multiplications are performed. While on a modern PC that is not an issue, it certainly is on ARM based micros like the RPI 3.

6.5 The RTLSDR stick

On selecting the dabstick (i.e. RT2832 based devices) (if configured), a control widget for the device appears (figure 25).

The widget contains just a few controls:

- a *spinbox* for setting the ppm. Note that on average the offset of the oscillator with DABsticks is (much) larger than that with devices like the SDRplay. The DAB software is able to correct frequencies to up to app 35 KHz, for some sticks the frequency error was large and correction using the ppm setting was required.
- a *combobox* for setting the gain. The support software for RT2832 based devices generates a list of allowable gain settings, these settings are stored in the ".ini" file;
- a *combobox* for setting the autogain on or off;
- a *push button* that, when touched, will instruct the software to dump the raw input in the aforementioned xml format. At first a menu appears for selecting a file. Touching the button again will stop dumping and close the file.

New is the inclusion of a *filter*. Note that the DABstick reads samples with a speed of 2048S/s for a signal with a bandwidth of app 1.536 MHz, while the frequency distance between successive channels is

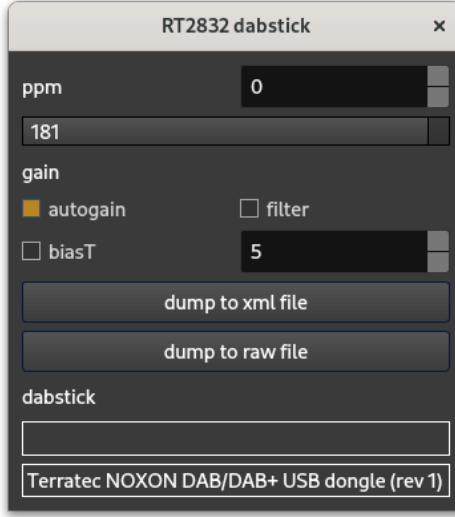


Figure 25: Qt-DAB: Widget for rtlsdr device

1712KHz. So, DX-ing in adjacent channels, where e.g. the first channel contains a strong DAB signal and the next one a weak, is difficult.

The controller therefore contains an optional FIR filter, for which the rtlsdr control widget has two additional controls:

- switching a software filter on-off (the checkbox labeled *filter*),
- setting the size of the FIR filter (the spinbox below the checkbox).

Note that switching the filter on is not for free, for a filter with a size of N, $N * 2048000$ complex additions and multiplications per second are performed. While on a modern PC that is not an issue, it certainly is on ARM based micros like the RPI 3.

If more than one connected RTLSDR based device is detected, a widget appears on which the device of choice can be selected.

6.6 The Pluto device

When selecting *pluto*, a widget (figure 26) appears with a spinbox for selecting the gain, and a checkbox for selecting the agc. If *agc* is enabled, the spinbox for the gain setting is invisible. The widget contains furthermore three buttons:

- the *debug control* button, when activated, instructs the software to show output on each step in the initialization process (note that the setting of the debug button will be maintained between invocations);
- the *dump* button will cause the original input - with a samplerate of 2100000 samples per second⁷ - to be stored in an xml file.
- the *filter* button. The adalm pluto has as option specifying a fir-filter, to be executed within the Pluto device. This implementation of the controller for pluto will load a predefined filter onto the Pluto device which is enabled by default. With the filter button the filter can be disabled or enabled. Note that the button text indicates the action when touching, not the current state.

⁷The smallest samplerate that pluto gives is slightly larger than the required 2048000, 2100000 is chosen since it is easy to handle

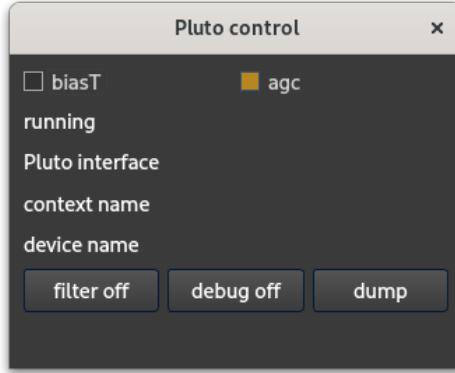


Figure 26: Qt-DAB: Widget for Adalm Pluto device

6.7 Support for Soapy (Linux only)

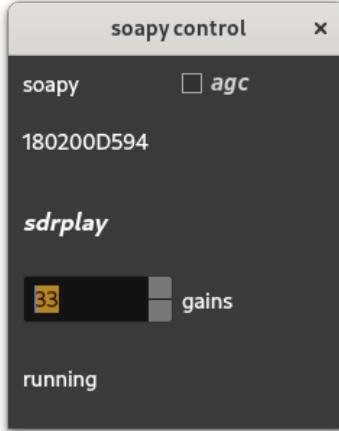


Figure 27: Qt-DAB: Widget for soapy

Soapy is a generic device interface, a kind of wrapper to provide a common interface to a whole class of devices. Qt-DAB supports Soapy, and its use is tested with the Soapy interface for SDRplay, hackrf and rtlrsdr device.

The widget for soapy control (see figure 27) when applied to the soapy interface for the SDRplay contains simplified controls, compared to the regular controls for the SDRplay.

Note however, that to use Soapy for interfacing a specific device, a soapy device interface should have been installed for that device.

6.8 rtl_tcp

rtl_tcp is a server for rtlrsdr devices, delivering 8 bit IQ samples (i.e. 2 bytes per sample).

In the small widget (see figure 28) the ip address of the server can be given. Since the default port for the server is 1234, that port number is the one used by the client. After clicking the *connect* button, the client will look for a server and pass some parameters.

However, the port number can be set in the ".ini" file, by setting

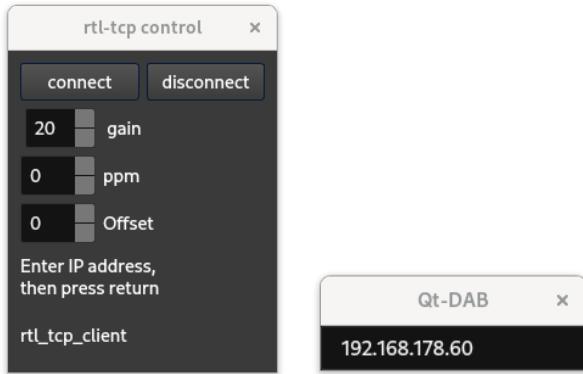


Figure 28: Qt-DAB: Widget for rtl_tcp

```
rtl_tcp_port=XXX
```

where XXX is to be replaced by the portnumber of choice.

6.9 Input from a spyServer

Spyservers are well known, they provide a common interface to the remote use of either an AIRspy device or an RTL2832 based dabstick (see figure 29).

On starting the spy server interface asks for an IP address to be filled in, the port used is 5555.

Qt_DAB offers two versions of the spyserver, one for 8 bit output and one for 16 bit output. Of course, transmission of DAB input requires quite some bandwidth, for 16 bit data, and an input rate of 2500000 (as for the AIRspy), with 4 byte samples (2 x 2), the transmission rate is over 10 MByte/second. Since data is sent as packages, with a (small) header, the actual rate is slightly over 10 Mbyte. Of course, the using the 8 bit variant reduces it to app half.

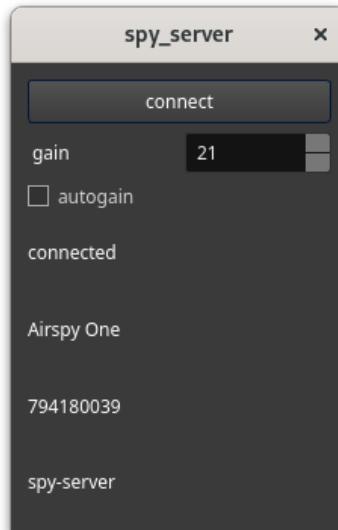


Figure 29: Widget for spyserver

6.10 File input

Qt-DAB supports both *writing* raw input files and *reading* them back. Writing a file as PCM file is initiated by the *Raw dump* button on the main GUI, writing a file as xml file by the *dump* button on the various device widgets. Qt-DAB differentiates between reading

- raw 8 bit files as generated by e.g. Osmocom software (usually files with an extension ".raw" or ".iq");
- PCM (i.e. ".wav") files, provided the data is 2 channels and with a samplerate of 2048000, generated by Qt-DAB and with an extension ".sdr";
- xml files. The xml file format was defined by Clemens Schmidt (author of QIRX) and me and aims at saving files in the original format, so to allow easy exchange between different DAB decoder implementations. In order to support proper decoding of the contents, the data in the file is preceded by a detailed description in xml, hence the name xml file format.

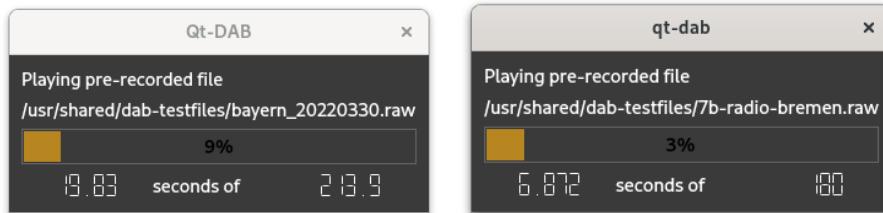


Figure 30: Qt-DAB: Widgets for file input

When selecting file input ".raw" or ".wav", a simple widget is shown (figure 30), with as indication the number of seconds the file is being played.

Since processing an xml file implies some interpretation, the widget (figure 31) for control when reading an xml file is slightly more complex. It contains - next to the progress in reading the data - a description of the contents of the file. So, the program that generated the file as well as the device used in that program are displayed, the number of bits of the samples, as well as the number of elements is displayed as is the samplerate of recording and the frequency of the recording.

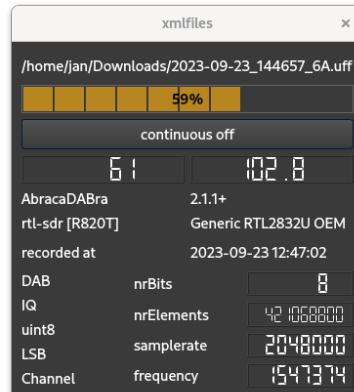


Figure 31: Qt-DAB: Widget for xml file input

Touching the *cont* button will instruct the software to restart reading at the beginning of the segment in the file after reaching the end.

6.11 Other devices

Interfacing another device to Qt-DAB is not that complex, the interface contains a handful of functions that are to be implemented. Interfacing is described elsewhere. The sourcetree of Qt-DAB contains code for a few device handlers, these handlers are - since I do not have access to the devices for which they are written - untested. While the uhd device seemed to have been working with the included device handler, the device handlers for both the elad-s1 and the colibri are very experimental and not tested. Anyway, I am always interested to experiment further with these devices.

7 A Note on building an executable

7.1 Introduction

While for both Windows (32 and 64 bits) and x64 Linux precompiled versions are available, there might be situations where one wants (or needs) to build an executable from the sources. The precompiled executables are all made with a gcc based toolchain, for the Windows executables the *mingw64-xx* chain is used. In theory it would be possible to build a Windows version with the Microsoft C and C++ toolchain, due to incompatibilities between the different toolchains this requires source modifications.

The description here is - therefore - based on the use of a gcc based toolchain for a unix/linux type system.

The process itself consists of the following steps:

- Download the sources and select the AAC decoder;
- Download and install the required libraries;
- install the device libraries for the devices you want to have supported;
- handle further configuration issues;
- run qmake on the prepared "qt-dab-RC.pro" file;
- run make.

7.2 Download the source and select the AAC decoder

For downloading the Qt-DAB sources, one needs "git" to be present, on a Debian based system, e.g. Raspbian on an RPI3 or 4

```
sudo apt-get update  
sudo apt-get install git
```

Sources for Qt-DAB can be downloaded

```
git clone https://github.com.JvanKatwijk/qt-dab
```

The sourcetree contains a number of subdirectories, some are for sources that are shared between the versions, some are for the different versions of Qt-DAB. While the versions share most of the code, the GUI code and configuration code is kept in version specific directories. Sources, specific to Qt-DAB-6.X, can be found in the subdirectory "qt-dab-RC". The so-called ".pro" file, i.e. the one processed by qmake, is named "qt-dab-RC.pro".

Continuing on the Debian based system, one should load the required libraries (and toolchain)

```
sudo apt-get install qt5-qmake build-essential g++  
sudo apt-get install pkg-config  
sudo apt-get install libsndfile1-dev  
sudo apt-get install libfftw3-dev portaudio19-dev  
sudo apt-get install zlib1g-dev
```

```

sudo apt-get install libusb-1.0-0-dev mesa-common-dev
sudo apt-get install libgl1-mesa-dev libqt5opengl5-dev
sudo apt-get install libsamplerate0-dev libqt5-dev qtmultimedia5-dev
sudo apt-get install qtbase5-dev libqt5svg5-dev

```

Depending on the choice in the configuration file (the file *qt-dab-RC.pro*)

```

CONFIG      += faad
#CONFIG     += fdk-aac

```

the support library for *libfaad* or for *libfdk-aac* needs to be installed. For libfaad one may try

```
sudo apt install libfaad
```

For libfdk-aac one may try

```
sudo apt install libfdk-aac-dev
```

On my RPI 3 the latter could not be found.

7.3 Configure devices and install support libraries

Of course the support library for the device used should be installed as well, the followin devices can be included in the configuration (note that support for file input is always included in the configuration):

```

CONFIG += sdrplay-v2
CONFIG += sdrplay-v3
CONFIG += dabstick-linux
CONFIG += airspy-2
CONFIG += hackrf
CONFIG += lime
CONFIG += soapy
CONFIG += pluto
CONFIG += rtl_tcp
CONFIG += spyServer-16
CONFIG += spyServer-8

```

For SDRplay devices one should download the - proprietary - driver software from the SDRplay site. For the AIRspy the *bullseye* repository provides a library., while for dabsticks it is suggested to download sources from the osmocom site

```
git clone https://gitea.osmocom.org/sdr/rtl-sdr.git
```

and build (and install) an executable. Details for compiling and installing a support library can be found at:

<https://osmocom.org/projects/rtl-sdr/wiki>

It is advised to comment out all devices from the configuration that are not used.

7.4 Handle further configuration issues

The *qt-dab-RC.pro* file contains a myriad of possible configuration settings, most of them do not need attention.

```

#CONFIG      += console
CONFIG      -= console

```

sets whether or not output is to be written to the terminal.

```

#DEFINES      += __MSC_THREAD__
DEFINES      += __THEREADED_BACKEND__

```

The first option states whether or not a part of the (rather heavy) FFT operation in the front end of the processing are to be done in a separate thread or not. For RPI 3 and up there is no need to have that enabled

The second option, when enabled, instructs the software to run each backend on its own, separate, thread. A "backend" is the set of modules that interprets a selected (sub)service.

```
#CONFIG      += double
CONFIG      += single
```

The setting determines whether all computations on the incoming signal are to be done in single or double precision

```
CONFIG += PC
#CONFIG += NO_SSE
```

If the software is developed on/for a regular x64 based PC, select the first option. This will ensure that for some computations are optimized for an x64 based system with SSE instructions. If unsure, choose the second option, choosing the first option when the target is not compatible with x64, lots of error messages appear⁸.

7.5 Compiling, installing and running

Once all required libraries are installed, and the configuration is as it should be, run

```
qmake
```

Depending on the Linux distribution, *qmake* or *qmake-qt5* is the correct name. There is always a chance that running qmake fails, because some library cannot be found. Usually this is an issue with the location of the qwt library. Add the correct path to the qwt include files to the INCLUDES section of the configuration file.

```
make -j X
```

The *X* in the second line tells how many parallel threads should be used. For an RPI, use 4.

The resulting executable is installed in the subdirectory *linux-bin*.

8 Acknowledgements

Qt-DAB and derived programs are written and maintained by me. The software is provided *as is*, and made available under the Gnu GPL V2 license.

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⁸There are possibilities for selecting optimized code for RPI's, the user is invited to experiment here

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9 Disclaimer

Qt-DAB is developed as hobby program in spare time. Being retired I do have (some) spare time and programming Qt-DAB (and my other programs) is just hobby.

It is important to notice that Qt-DAB is - both the sources as the precompiled versions - available *as is*. While it is - obviously - nice if the Qt-DAB software is useful, *there are no guarantees, however*. If the software does not fit your purpose, or you have problems building an executable, recall that *the Qt-DAB software is distributed in the hope that it will be useful, but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the GNU General Public License for more details.*

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