



## Traffic Broadcast by the Südwestrundfunk (SWR) Traffic Information Centre

### *Traffic Information by TextToSpeech solutions*

#### Managing real-time information traffic on a large cross-border area

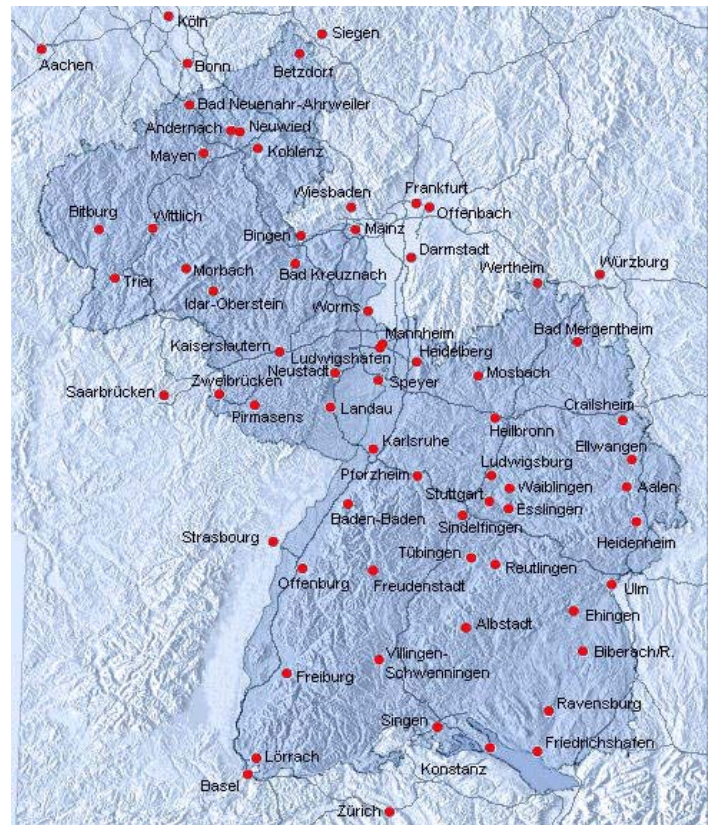
Broadcasting (radio) is still the most important source of current traffic information, pre-trip as well as on-trip. The SERTI partner SWR (Südwestrundfunk) has, by far, the biggest audience (about 5 million listeners per day) in the German States of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate. Traffic information has to be given to the audience as soon as possible, in a convenient and selective way, and by using different media.

#### Combining different data sources and using your mobile phone to offer reliable and real-time traffic information

SWR collects traffic information from different sources, e.g. police Traffic Information Centres (TICs), drivers, the German Automobile Club as well as from Viasuisse (for Switzerland), from CRICR (Regional centre for road traffic information) of Metz and CGT, French Traffic Management Centre (for Lorraine and Alsace). In order to provide up-to-date traffic reports and warning notes to the users, the new GEWI TIC has been implemented in 2004. This system allows to directly supply information with corresponding priority quickly and 'paperless' to the moderators "on air".

Spreading of traffic information is done by different media – verbal messages every half hour in the normal broadcast programme (also immediate broadcasting in urgent cases), RDS-TMC, DAB, Internet, videotex on television, etc.

An additional possibility to access traffic information is the new congestion hotline of SWR, which can be retrieved by phone without any difficulty. This congestion hotline uses modern TextToSpeech modules.



**Figure 1: SWR Traffic Info Area**

#### High level of demand, quick and cheap answer

The congestion hotline was implemented in July 2005 and the number is +49 7221 9282. The hotline number has to be dialled, followed by the direct input of the road number for which information is requested (e.g. "005" for motorway A5 in Germany). Then, all existing information on congestions and disturbances on this road are synthetically given to the caller. Using "#" or "\*" on the phone, information on national roads, special messages or even prognoses of congestions can be obtained.



Since the very beginning, the congestion hotline has been a big success. The hotline is very well accepted and much appreciated:

- Within 2 weeks after installation, the level of about 5,000 calls per day was reached.
- This level has been maintained until now.
- The number of calls vary for the different days within the week. The absolute peak is always reached on Fridays, reaching up to 9,000 calls.
- More than 90% of the calls come from listeners of the programme SWR 3 (target groups: younger people up to the age of 40 and travellers)
- In average the duration of a call is between 50 and 60 seconds.
- The service can be accessed very easily, using rather traditional communication tools already available (phone, mobile) and does not require new hardware (e.g. RDS-TMC receivers, DAB receivers, wireless internet connections).

- For the callers, the level of information, accuracy, selectivity and credibility is very high.
- The service does not charge extra costs to the caller. This is in line with the philosophy of public broadcasters in Germany.

### European dimension and transferability

The service has become an important step in the individualisation of traffic information on a low-cost and easy-to-handle level. Meanwhile, other German broadcasters have also implemented this TextToSpeech solution (the broadcasters WDR and BR are planning an improved TextToSpeech-solution). A multi-lingual TextToSpeech solution is in preparation which will allow travellers from other countries passing South-West Germany to use this service in English and French.

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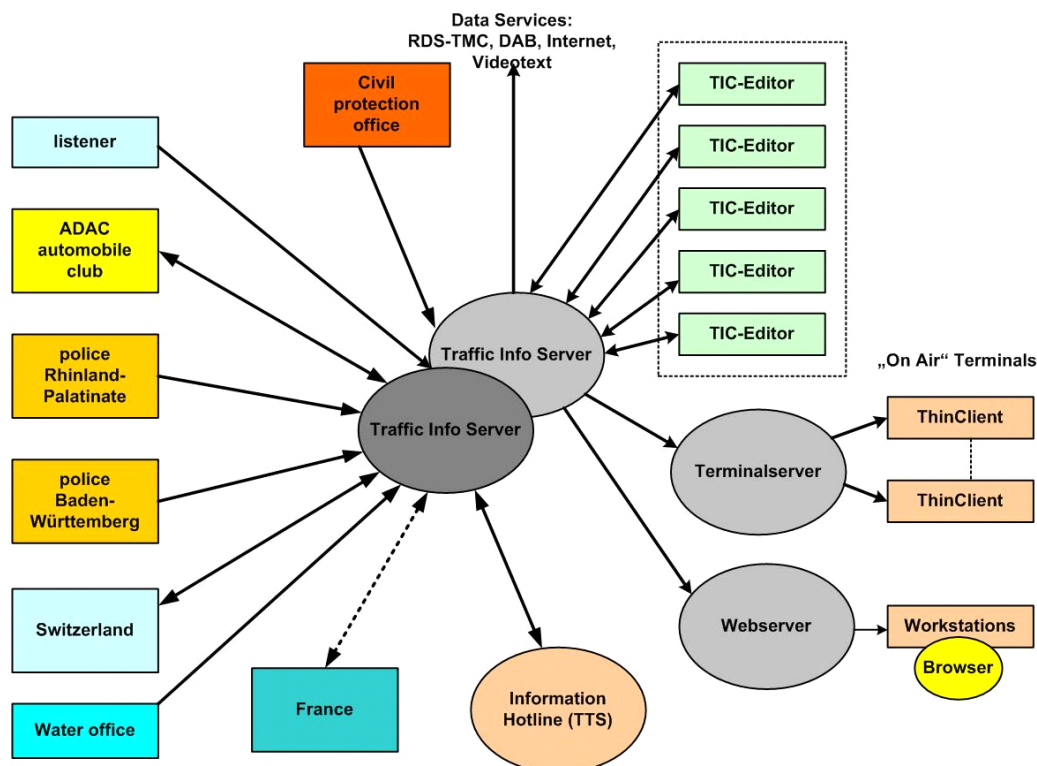


Figure 2: Functional overview