Internet Radio: WebSDR

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I've mentioned here that I have a love for radio. I love tuning around the band to see what's out there. Shortwave is great for that, but it used to be better. A lot of shortwave stations beaming to America shut down because we have so much internet access now. But there were some old favorites I remember: Radio Moscow and Radio Pyunyang were always good for a propaganda-induced laugh ("Our Dear Leader....").

Now there are mostly internet radio stations, where you can click to one station, then click to the next. It's just not the same as bandscanning. Not the sense of discovery, of exploration.

But now there is.

A type of radio has been developed over the last decade, software-defined radios. These are radios that use a USB stick to receive from an antenna, then send the data to a computer, where a program does the tuning and selection of modulation (AM, FM, sideband, etc) and we can listen to that. And they have web servers built into them.

The single best example is in the Netherlands (all links open in a new window, so try them!), and this radio tunes everything form 0 MHz to 30 MHz, so it's the ultimate in WebSDR radios. I like 198 KHz, the BBC longwave service in English. It's a nice station to tune the language-rich stations of Europe (many more transmitters than in America).

Other examples don't use the custom hardware used above, but use several off-the-shelf USB sticks. An example from northern Utah has many different services, each tuning in a two megahertz bandwidth.

Many of these are set up for ham radio bands, so that will be of little interest to the casual bandscanner.

Here is the page where all WebSDR radios are linked. Scroll to the bottom for a map of where the receivers are located if you want to tune something local.

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