

## Associated Press Collaborates With Super Hi-Fi to Produce Streaming Newscasts

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Thursday, September 20, 2018



Fans of the Associated Press' daily global news headlines will soon have a new way to keep up with them, thanks to a partnership with Westwood-based audio artificial intelligence firm Super Hi-Fi announced Sept. 19.

AI-enabled text-to-audio software developed by Super Hi-Fi will combine with a customer content license issued by the AP to “produce highly polished, perfectly transitioned news sequences placed expertly between songs” embedded in music streaming services. Subscribers will soon be able to access AP headlines from smart speakers as well as custom or curated playlists, and can customize how often they want headlines to play.

A 2018 study on smart speakers and podcasts from Edison Media Research Inc. concluded that to date, 18 percent of Americans (an estimated 51 million) report owning at least one smart speaker, a figure increased from just 7 percent a year prior.

According to Edison, smart speaker growth is faster than early adoption of the smartphone, which showed 4 percent growth in a comparable timeframe.

The Pew Research Center also estimates that online radio is soon to eclipse traditional AM/FM programming, and that 44 percent of American cell phone owners reported listening to online radio in the car via a phone, an increase from 6 percent in 2010. Terrestrial radio listenership among Americans age 12 and older is slowly declining, down 2 percent from 2009.

“The digital music landscape is on the verge of major growth and innovation in an unexpected place: the space between the songs, and we are incredibly excited to offer AP reporting as an extension of the innovative services we’re delivering to music experience providers around the globe,” said Super Hi-Fi founder Zack Zalon. Super Hi-Fi has already integrated the AP headlines into AI and is working to introduce the AP content to various music streaming firms, Zalon said.

“It’s a vision of how we think music and streaming services will be in the future,” he said. Super Hi-Fi was incorporated in March 2018, but the company became commercially available in August 2018.

The AP collaboration is “step two” for Super Hi-Fi, which announced in August 2018 that it would allow iHeartMedia Inc.’s iHeartRadio to use the software to mimic DJ-produced playlists without the typical “dead space” between songs. “We’re powering all of their music transitions and audio leveling,” Zalon said. “When you listen to a playlist on iHeart’s music service, it’ll be a smooth tapestry of a music experience, and that’s how we are using AI to create fully produced experiences on a very individualized basis,” he added.