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Radio mics

A Guide to Radio Microphones

There two types of radio mics, analogue or digital. Analogue radio mics are either FM (cheap and not very good—not recommended) or UHF—this is the majority of systems. Digital mics use the Wifi band and good ones are very expensive.

1) UHF—Two channels are available: channel 70, which is free, and channel 38, which is paid for. Ofcom recently sold off the remainder of channel 69 which is now starting to cause interference from mobile phone masts situated close to churches.

2) Channel 70 (863-865 MHz), as a guide, it's recommended not to have more than 4 handhelds or belt packs (lapel or headband). This channel is prone to interference from mobile phone masts and you should not use In Ear Monitoring (IEM) as you will get interference. For a small church however, channel 70 is the best option.

3) Channel 38 (606-614 MHz) is a paid for service but you can have up to 32 handheld or belt packs plus IEMs. The cost for a system is £75 for one year or £135 for two years. For mid to large churches with a band using IEMs, channel 38 is the best to go for.

4) Digital—This is a growing market and several systems are now available. They do have the advantage of no licence and you can use up to ten channels. The cost of a good system is yet to match those of channel 70 and 38. Also you will need to have the receivers close to where the transmitters are being used, ie, on stage. You can also get interference from mobile phones or Wifi network hubs or repeaters if too close.

5) Any competent installer will have a radio frequency analyser which will cover Channel 70 and 38 plus the Wifi spectrum. This should form part of a survey for radio mics. If there is any interference an analyser is the only way to find the problem.

