

# TuneIn radio app starts \$8 tier with MLB, soccer, audiobooks

August 25 2015, by Ryan Nakashima

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This undated photo provided by TuneIn shows a mobile photo with a TuneIn app interface. TuneIn, the app that gives users free access to thousands of live radio stations around the world, is launching an \$8-a-month premium subscription

service that throws in ad-free listening, audiobooks and live play-by-play coverage of Major League Baseball and soccer from the Premier League and the Bundesliga. The offer launches in the U.S. on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2015, as well as in Canada. (TuneIn via AP)

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The seemingly disparate offer caters to listeners who have varied tastes, says TuneIn CEO John Donham. That could be news in the morning, music at night, live sports whenever a good game is on, and a good book for long commutes.

"It turns out people want more than just one thing," he says.

The package is meant to emulate the kind of mix one gets from satellite radio giant Sirius XM: premium sports, talk shows and commercial-free music. "We're out to build a worldwide version of that," Donham says.

The offer launches in the U.S. on Tuesday, as well as in Canada, where it'll cost 9 Canadian dollars a month, and in the U.K., where it'll be 6 pounds a month.

The offer adds 40,000 audiobooks from HarperCollins, Penguin Random House and Scholastic to the few dozen public-domain books already in the app. New titles include Cheryl Strayed's "Wild," Sheryl Sandberg's "Lean In" and George R.R. Martin's "A Game of Thrones."

Ad-free listening is initially tailored to 600 Internet radio stations. Terrestrial radio stations in the U.S. and abroad are planned to be added in the next few months, Donham says.

When a DJ cuts to a commercial break, TuneIn knows how long an ad break will be, and for paying subscribers, it will insert a song of roughly the right length that would fit the station's genre. Plugging the ad break of terrestrial stations with a song is a technical problem that will take a little more time to work out, he says.

Launching a paid tier in addition to its free ad-supported service is born from the desire to add more content to the site that cannot be paid for simply with ads, Donham says, adding that reducing the number of ads played could actually help push prices up.

"If you reduce the number of ads by 10 percent, the value of each ad would go up," he says.

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