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→ RADIO STAR RISING

In his glass-walled command center overlooking New York City, billionaire David Margolese watches on a 14-foot screen as twin satellites, launched last year from a Kazakhstan cosmodrome, circle the globe. But Margolese isn't planning to take over the world — just the nation's airwaves.

His company, Sirius Radio (www.siriusradio.com), one of two digital radio outfits licensed by the FCC, uses satellites and terrestrial transmitters to deliver 100 channels of static- and commercial-free programming, coast to coast. The cost? Just \$10 per month. Service begins early this year, after a third satellite enters orbit. DJs, live bands, and celebrity hosts (such as Sting and MC Lyte) will pump out music, talk, sports, news, and comedy. Radios able to receive the three-band AM/FM/SAT signal are a feature in many 2001 Ford, BMW, and Mercedes-Benz cars. Consumers can also purchase compatible car stereos made by Alpine, Clarion, or Pioneer.

And listeners won't be subjected to commercial breaks or fundraising drives — call it "antiradio," says Margolese. "You won't hear the annoying stuff."

— Charles Graeber

