

IPTV NEWS

SkyStream delivers MovieBeam

Skystream, the video delivery solutions provider has revealed that movies on-demand provider, MovieBeam is using its zBand content delivery platform to deliver the latest Hollywood movies to customers in most major metropolitan areas in the US. zBand, the push video-on-demand software platform has more than 30 deployments worldwide, ingests, packages, schedules and delivers movies to MovieBeam customers across the country.

All-digital networks

The new Motorola DV1700 set-top box is being promoted as the means for cable operators with DVB-compliant networks to finally digitise their entire systems. The broadcast-only set-top includes a 100+ MIPS processor and is compatible with multiple CA systems including Motorola MediaCipher. It supports EPGs, interactive TV middleware and one-way iTV applications.

WM9 to be standardised

Microsoft is submitting the compression technology used in its respected Windows Media Video 9 codec to the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers' (SMPTE) C24 Technical Committee for consideration as an openly available international standard. The goal, says the company, is to enable other companies "to easily and independently develop their own interoperable products."

Telcos must tailor IPTV to local markets

European telecoms operators must develop strategies tailored to local markets if IPTV-television over broadband-is to be a revenue earner rather than simply a product differentiator, according to Telco TV: European market opportunities and operator strategies, a new report from Analysys, the global advisers on telecoms, IT and media.

Entriq to power ProSiebenSat

Entriq, a provider of all-in-one pay media solutions which aim to manage, protect, monetize and deliver multimedia content to broadband, mobile and IPTV devices worldwide, has announced that it has been selected by SevenOne Intermedia, ProSiebenSat.1-Group's Multimedia Company, to enable its soon to be launched maxdome full end-to-end, Video on Demand portal.

IPTVWorld Forum 2006 predicts a promising future for IPTV

There was only one word on the lips of delegates, exhibitors and journalists that attended this year's IPTVWorld Forum at London Olympia: convergence. Companies, technologies and standards are all currently in the middle of a furore which has become the IPTV industry.

The queues that plagued the start of the event on day one showed just how much interest in the sector has snowballed over the past year alone. Its hardly surprising then that in an industry with so many players producing so many similar technologies that we should now start to see some consolidation. Jeremy Thorp CEO of CA software vendor, Latens said "IPTV is slowly taking off, the tech people are getting the most

excited. There are a lot of operators who don't have experience in Pay-TV World technology has been catching up. You need quality of service to broadcast TV until then its not going to happen."

It is clear from this year's IPTVWorld Forum that there is still a long way to go before IPTV is ready for the mass adoption we so often hear about.

Technologically speaking IPTV is still very much in its infancy as David Holt, Nortel's Senior Manager of Triple Play Solutions EMEA, pointed out. He said IPTV would not happen until upstream and downstreams are more symmetrical. "Uploading is key to IPTV, we need the speed to be the same both ways," he said.

Some believe the industry to

be well on its way towards mass adoption of IPTV. David Price vice president of Harmonic and board member of the MPEG Industry Forum said he thought the worst was over for the IPTV industry and described the current state of play as a "fascinating period" for the sector. "Most of the challenges [the industry] faced are behind us now. This damn is going to burst," he predicted.

This certainly seems to be the belief of much of the industry as this year's show proved. As France Telecom look poised to launch IPTV in Spain, UK and Holland, fresh from its success with MaLigne TV and the German IPTV market is starting to warm up, things are looking promising for what was once a pie in the sky fairytale.

Transcoders are key to IPTV says SkyStream

SkyStream has cited transcoders as "critical" to IPTV at this year's IPTVWorld Forum, at London Olympia. The company hit out at vendors who argued against the benefits of transcoders for IPTV.

The conversion of MPEG-2 to MPEG-4 was a hot topic at this year's show and SkyStream said during the development of IPTV headend solutions it recognized transcoding (the process of converting MPEG-2 content to MPEG-4) as a key technology component that would enable service providers to bring IPTV to the masses.

"With a finite amount of access bandwidth to their subscribers, carriers have recourse to the bandwidth efficient MPEG-4 AVC that enables them to upgrade their service offerings without costly

network modifications," said a spokesman for the company. With the majority of broadcast and VOD content continuing to be available only in the pervasive MPEG-2 format, service providers need conversion solutions that meet their business and technical needs, the company warned.

The conventional way to accomplish this conversion is to use separate pieces of equipment to first decode the video MPEG-2 stream into uncompressed video and then encode this stream into the MPEG-4 AVC format. Although this technique achieves the desired goal, it consumes a large amount of rack space and power, increases system complexity and cost, and reduces reliability, according to SkyStream. "The integrity of the video stream is

degraded through this process and critical information, such as teletext and subtitling, is irretrievably lost," he added.

SkyStream integrates all of the necessary decode-encode functionality into a single module that plugs into the SkyStream Mediaplex and iPlex platforms. This module is the transcoder. "By performing all of the required functions in the digital domain SkyStream is able to provide high-quality transcoding without losing any of the video stream integrity as well as retaining all teletext and subtitling features," he said.

By providing "full-scale transcoding" in the Mediaplex and iPlex platforms, SkyStream says it enables service providers to meet the needs of the network while retaining the quality, density and cost-control.