

# FORUM

**D**elivering a keynote speech at the IPTV World Forum, Glenn Hall, media anthropologist at HP, was in iconoclastic mood. "The BBC will no longer be a brand," he asserted, and saw the ubiquity of video-enabled media devices eventually leading to a new Olympic sport: "Smashing the TV set."

Peter Kerckhoff, SVP at T-Online, was clear in his belief that telcos were best positioned for the IPTV market, and advised potential entrants that there was premium content available other than Hollywood. He discounted piracy fears: "Not if you're careful and you do your checks." Dom Stasi, CTO of TVN Entertainment, reinforced this position. "The ability to trace the origins of illegal content has become increasingly important," he predicted that all content would be watermark embedded.

Twentieth Century Fox's Aubrey Schneggenburger stressed the importance of the user interface as the best marketing tool, and recommended that video-on-demand be seen not as a last resort, but as a habit.

**SPEND VALUE.** Andy Birchall, chairman of on demand specialist ODG, warned that it was not possible to import other models. "HBO and Showtime have a higher value with cable companies than is the case in the UK," he observed. Subscription VOD (SVoD) should become a de facto 'must carry' for operators.



## Two London-based events gave industry players the chance to address the latest issues

# Conference round-up

"It's a means of emphasising the spend value. Get people familiar with the system," he recommended. Steve McKay, CEO at Entone, suggested it was important to balance storage costs versus streaming bandwidth. "VoD streaming capacity is a tipping point. Moore's law is in effect." In the future, 'on demand' would be regarded as 'just television.'

Gavin McLauchlan, at Microsoft's TV division, outlined the company's involvement in supporting network operators, with discrete products for the broadband cable and telco sectors. He said that "at present, TV's potential is limited, but tomorrow, it is unlimited. IPTV would be a driving force in bringing that about." He added; "'triple play' was the wrong goal. A seamless single play should be the endgame."

ANT's Ivan Verbesselt positioned the IPTV Electronic Service Guide (ESG) as 'The Gateway to Your World'. He pointed out that different

digital delivery media often had little crossover. The IPTV age would see the arrival of the 'prosumer' who would expect a consistent end-user experience. "Innovation often resides in the straightforward. Transparent navigation across IP and DVB would be a start," he suggested.

**EXCLUSIVE CONTENT.** Meanwhile, content and triple play issues exercised the minds of panellists in an industry overview discussion at 21st Century Communications World Forum. Michael Rahier, president and COO of Alcatel's fixed communications group, chairing the 'Is Exclusive Content the Only Way to Succeed in Triple Play', panel suggested that IPTV would add three dimensions to the TV experience: communication, community and personal channels. He suggested that the TV and mobile revolution space was still open for telcos. New opportunities included sponsored channels. He recommended transformation at three levels: business, service and network.

Wim Steenhaut, executive project director in charge of Belgacom's IPTV project, said it was necessary for telcos to show they are serious about entering the market. "That's what we did in securing the Belgian top football league rights," he advised. He said that the service should go beyond the PVR experience and the offering should be competitive in terms of price. "We offer more for less than cable."

## surrounding next-generation networks and content delivery solutions. *Euromedia* reports from the IPTV World Forum and 21st Century Communications World Forum.

Stuart Waite from Tamblin noted that it was possible to create exclusivity via interactive TV solutions, and stressed its importance to telcos. "BT sees it as a key customer proposition," he said. Other recommendations included "Play to the platform's strengths," and "Remember it's TV." He suggested that just because it was possible to put web content on an IPTV server didn't mean you should. "Don't forget the basics, such as competitions, voting and quizzes."

McKinsey and Co.'s Jacques Bughin warned that a technology platform in itself didn't create a business model, but he accepted that as far as IPTV was concerned, there were certain

things that only it could do. Differentiation of the platform offering was important, and he suggested that it was an answer for the 'long tail'. Other opportunities were likely to emerge, such as IP video publishing. "The new playing field offers a much better framework and strategic development for telcos," he concluded.

