

International broadcast & media briefs

A monthly summary of web-based news

July 2003

Europe

Television revision with BBC

Children studying for their GCSE's will be able to do so through their television sets after the BBC decided to extend its online Bitesize service to interactive TV. Bitesize offers 16 GCSE topics, a revision toolkit, revision advice, study skills and presentation tips. Source: broadcastnow.co.uk

Children who 'can't live without' constant TV

Television has become the "background noise" for a generation of children who no longer regard radio as required listening. Source: www.guardian.co.uk

ITC launches Internet workshops

The Independent Television Commission (ITC) is launching nationwide media literacy workshops aimed at equipping teachers, care workers and those involved with young people aged 10 to 15 with the knowledge to protect children from harmful material online. More: www.itc.org.uk

Viewers call for more visibility of disabled people on TV

In new research, 79% of television viewers said they would not mind if a disabled person read the main evening news bulletin. *Disabling Prejudice* examines attitudes towards disability and its representation on television. More: www.itc.org.uk

Murdoch faces Channel Five 'public interest' test

Rupert Murdoch would face a special "public interest" test if he bids for channel Five under a proposal introduced in Parliament. More: www.independent.co.uk

Free-to-air digital television decoders price falling

The cost of decoders for the Freeview digital terrestrial service is falling, with the launch of a cut-price set-top box. The adaptors, due in shops in July, cut the lowest price from £99 to £60. Source: www.independent.co.uk

Hauppauge adds PVR functionality to PC-based Freeview

TV-on-PC specialist, Hauppauge, has added PVR functionality to its 'DEC2000-t', a device which allows end-users to watch Freeview on their computers. It retails for £129.99. Source: www.itvt.com

New MHEG profile

The Digital TV Group has published an update of the MHEG-5 UK Profile. It offers improved interoperability, functionality and ease of authoring. Source: www.broadbandtvnews.com

EMI profits high despite music sales drop

EMI reported an annual profit of £319m (\$493m) even though its music sales followed the worldwide trend and fell by nearly 13%. The company blamed music piracy for the dip. Source: economist.com

US

Ibiquity publicizes HD Radio 'success' stories

Ibiquity Digital is collecting success stories about its technology from stations that are now transmitting both a digital and analog signal. "According to a number of recent reports from converting stations, which are available at www.ibiquity.com/hdradio/SuccessStories.htm, broadcasters spanning diverse markets on both the AM and FM band are excited about their experiences with HD Radio technology," a company release states. Source: www.rwonline.com

US Federal Trade Commission seeks more authority to fight spam

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission asked Congress on Wednesday for additional authority to fight the unwanted Internet 'spam' that now accounts for up to half of all e-mail traffic. In testimony before two congressional subcommittees, FTC commissioners urged lawmakers to extend telemarketing regulations to the Internet, loosen disclosure laws, and allow the agency to better cooperate with other countries to track down marketers who send out millions of deceptive online pitches daily. "We are losing the battle, which is why it's going to take a multifaceted approach," FTC Chairman Timothy Muris told the Senate competition subcommittee. "I have never seen a consumer-protection problem this difficult." Source: www.totaltele.com

US Senator prepares digital-copyright bill

Senator Sam Brownback is preparing a bill that could shatter the shaky congressional truce between the entertainment and technology industries. The bill would limit some of the devices movie studios and recording companies use to prevent copying of their products. It would also make it difficult to track down those who trade songs and movies online. Source: www.totaltele.com

DOJ chronicles Internet-crime crackdown

'Operation E-Con', the Department of Justice's effort to stop Internet crime, has resulted in 130 people being arrested and over \$17 million in contraband being seized. Source: broadcastingcable.com

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Sirius more than doubles subscribers in Q1 2003

Satellite radio broadcaster Sirius said it more than doubled its subscribers in the first quarter of this year to approximately 68,000, meeting an important target for the second company to offer nationwide satellite radio service. This represents a 127 percent increase over its end-of-year 2002 figure.

Source: www.satnews.com

Protests ignored as US relaxes ownership rules

US officials loosened decades-old media ownership rules amid protests that deregulation would lead to too much power in too few hands. Source: broadcastnow.co.uk

FCC to try, try again

The Federal Communications Commission May 28 will try to auction 256 new licenses that did not sell in September, when the agency originally put frequencies currently used for channels 54, 55 and 59 on the block. The channels, using frequencies reclaimed from broadcasters, make up the so-called C and D blocks of the 700-megahertz band. Other portions of the 700-MHz band – channels 52, 53, 56-58 and 60-69 – will be sold later. The government is reclaiming channels on the 700-MHz band as part of its effort to convert broadcasters to digital transmissions, then offer up their old analog channels for new uses.

Source: broadcastingcable.com

More HD Olympics?

NBC Cable is contemplating creating a high-definition service for coverage of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games. "The cost of doing the Olympics in HD is a huge hurdle," NBC Cable president David Zaslav said. "But given the amount of demand from satellite and cable distributors, we're looking real hard at green-lighting an effort." Viewers could watch the 2002 Winter Games in HD, but coverage was delayed one day. Source: broadcastingcable.com

FCC releases white paper on unlicensed spectrum

The FCC has released "Unlicensed and Unshackled: A Joint OSP-OET White Paper on Unlicensed Devices and Their Regulatory Issues.", which considers all aspects of wireless devices which do not require a license. The market for these devices is experiencing unprecedented, double-digit growth. More: www.fcc.gov

US electronic media and entertainment

US consumer expenditure on electronic media and entertainment passed the \$100 billion mark in 2002. Further growth is expected to come from digital TV, next generation games consoles and the continuing rise of DVD. Source: www.informamedia.com/usmedia

Navigating the 'wasteland'

A new media-watchdog group has launched a Web site to provide parents with information about the appropriateness of content for children. The site, www.common sense media.org offers reviews of TV shows, books, movies, music and video games so that parents can get a better sense of what the content contains in terms of sexual, violent or adult material. Source: broadcastingcable.com

Group says duopolies 'diss' children's programming

Children Now have issued a report that says consolidation of television markets diminishes programming aimed at children. The study found a "dramatic" decrease in children's TV in Los Angeles following the creation of duopolies by NBC and Fox.

Source: broadcastingcable.com

Asia

Japan 3G users to increase eightfold by 2007 - IDC

Users of a fledgling third-generation (3G) mobile phone service in Japan, which offers video conferencing and speedy access to the Web, are likely to reach 69 million in 2007, IDC Japan said in a research note. That would be up from about eight million at the end of April, or over 700 percent. Source: www.totaltele.com

PCCW gets thumbs up for U.K. 3.5-GHz auction

Hong-Kong's dominant fixed-line provider PCCW is through the pre-qualifying round for the U.K.'s auction of 15 metropolitan and regional fixed wireless licences in the 3.5-gigahertz band.

Source: totaltele.com

