

# International broadcast & media briefs

A monthly summary of web-based news

## Asia

### China's Shenzhen Topway to Use Thales' ITV Service Platform

Broadcast infrastructure company, Thales, says that Chinese cable operator, Shenzhen Topway Video Communication Co. (STVC), has chosen its ITV service platform to support its portfolio of MHP-based ITV applications. STVC plans to offer its customers an ITV portal that will feature a variety of interactive services, including local news, weather info, tourist info, real-estate info, tcommerce apps, educational apps and games.

Source: [itvt] newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 2, 28 September 2004

### India may allow foreign institutional investors in TV news

India's Information and Broadcasting Ministry is considering allowing foreign institutional investors (FII) to invest in television news channels within the overall 26 percent limit set for foreign direct investment (FDI). The ministry will seek cabinet approval before the 31 October 2004 deadline. Ministry officials said the proposal will give flexibility to television news channels, but the combined FDI and FII share must not exceed 26 percent. At present, FIIs are barred.

More: [www.abu.org.my/public/](http://www.abu.org.my/public/)

### NHK-Japan expands terrestrial digital broadcasts

Japan's national broadcaster, NHK, extended its terrestrial digital broadcasts today to two districts outside the metropolitan areas of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, where the service was already available.

More: [www.abu.org.my/public/](http://www.abu.org.my/public/)

## Europe

### News Corp buys Telecom Italia's Sky Italia stake

Australian-based media company News Corp. Tuesday said it paid EUR88 million to buy Telecom Italia SpA's 19.9 per cent stake in satellite television company Sky Italia and take its ownership to 100 per cent. Telecom Italia said it expects to book a EUR31.4 million capital gain from the sale, given its EUR56.6 million book value for the Sky Italia holding. Telecom Italia said the proceeds' impact on its financial accounts would be neutral given write-downs made during the first half of 2004 in relation to Sky Italia. News Corp. is seeking to bring Sky Italia to the break-even point next year.

More: [www.satnews.com/frames.html](http://www.satnews.com/frames.html)

### Sky 'on target' to hit 8 million subs

New research has revealed that Sky chief James Murdoch's plans to have eight million customers by 2005 is on track. Continental Research's autumn 2004 digital television report shows that Sky's customer base is likely to increase by 0.5 million. But the report also finds that Freeview will be the fastest growing platform, set to

add a further 1.4 million customers, taking it up to under 5 million. The research also predicts that up to 525,000 homes will purchase a PVR in the next year, which would mean that Murdoch's aim of getting 25 per cent of the estimated 10 million subscribers by 2010, using Sky+ boxes is a possibility.

Source: [www.broadcastnow.co.uk/](http://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/)

### BT Trials Hybrid Freeview/IP VOD Service

The UK's incumbent telco, BT, is beginning field trials (covering around 400 households) of a service that will provide viewers with linear television channels from the UK's free-to-air digital terrestrial television service, Freeview, through their television antennas, and with VOD content (including movies and television programs) through a broadband Internet connection. Dubbed 'BT Freeview Plus,' the service is based on a hybrid set-top box that incorporates a DTT tuner and a high-speed Internet connection (though no hard drive): the box is expected to cost slightly more than existing Freeview set-top boxes, which currently retail for around £50, and BT is said to be in discussions with a number of companies, including NetGem and SetPal, about manufacturing the box. A number of broadcasters, including the BBC, have given BT permission to use their content for the trial.

Source: [itvt] newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 3, 28 September 2004

### William Hill's ITV Betting Channel to Launch October 6th

Bookmaker, William Hill, launched its new, free-to-view interactive television betting and gaming channel, Channel 425 (named after its location on the Sky EPG), on 6 October. The channel will provide betting on UK greyhound racing and US horseracing, as well as fixed-odds casino-style games from Zone4Play, and virtual horseracing from Vis iTV. It will be operated through a partnership with the Digital Interactive Television Group, and is in fact a revamped version of the latter's iSportsTV channel, designed to take advantage of the name recognition enjoyed by the William Hill brand.

Source: [itvt] newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 3, 28 September 2004

### BBC's Olympics ITV App Sets Records

The BBC says that 8.96 million digital satellite viewers – 58 per cent of the available digital satellite audience – pressed the red button to access the interactive services it rolled out for the Olympics last month, making those services its most-used ITV offering to date (usage figures were more than double those for the ITV application which the BBC rolled out for the Wimbledon tennis tournament earlier this year and which had previously been the BBC's most-used ITV service).

Source: [itvt] newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 3, 28 September 2004

### BBC launches ITV apps for soccer, health, genealogy, 'Little Britain'

Source: [itvt] newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 3, 28 September 2004

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## **A new framework for public service broadcasting**

Ofcom has published the second phase of its statutory review of public service broadcasting, setting out key proposals to maintain and strengthen public service television in the digital age. The Phase 2 Report highlights that the existing analog model of public service broadcasting will not survive the transition to digital and may erode rapidly before 2012. Ofcom proposes a new settlement be put in place in order to secure competition for quality before the old model has completely eroded.

Executive summary: [www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/current/psb2/execsum/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/current/psb2/execsum/)

Complete document: [www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/current/psb2/psb\\_phase2.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/current/psb2/psb_phase2.pdf)

## **Nickelodeon set to take ITV1 kids slot**

ITV1 is close to signing a deal with Nickelodeon UK, which will see the terrestrial broadcaster handing over its weekday afternoon CiTV schedule to the Viacom and BSkyB joint-venture. The deal, which could be concluded in the next few weeks, will see Nickelodeon executives commission and produce the bulk of content for the 105-minute weekday slot.

More: [www.broadcastnow.co.uk/](http://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/)

## **US**

### **UTOPIA to use Minerva's iTV manager platform**

IPTV specialist, Minerva Networks, says that the Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency (UTOPIA) has placed an initial order for its iTV Manager service management platform. UTOPIA, which is collectively owned by 14 Utah cities, is building a fibre-to-the-home network in those cities, over which it plans to offer a DTV service featuring multichannel television, interactive television, VOD, and eventually broadcast-quality video telephony, and always-on video monitoring.

Source: [itvt] newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 2, 28 September 2004

### **Spectrum-reclamation amendment passes**

A compromise spectrum-reclamation amendment requires broadcasters occupying channels 62 – 69 to give up their analog spectrum by 31 December 2007 – earlier than other broadcasters must turn over theirs – but allow them to keep it longer if giving it up would disrupt viewers and no first responders are actively seeking the channel.

More: [www.broadcastingcable.com/](http://www.broadcastingcable.com/)

### **Arbitron, VNU, P&G to use PPM to track consumer purchase behavior**

Arbitron and VNU want to pursue a non-radio use for the Portable People Meter, to track consumer purchase behavior. Both companies, and Procter & Gamble, have agreed to explore possibly developing a new, national marketing research service that collects multimedia and purchase information from a common sample of consumers.

Source: [www.rwonline.com/dailynews/](http://www.rwonline.com/dailynews/)

## **Sanyo Sirius unit to be sold at Wal-Mart**

Sanyo has joined the roster of brands that manufacture receivers for Sirius Satellite Radio. The Sanyo CRSR-10 Plug & Play Sirius system arrives at Wal-Mart stores this month. The CRSR-10 includes the Sirius receiver, mounts, antennas, and car and home power supply options for just below \$150.

Source: [www.rwonline.com/dailynews/](http://www.rwonline.com/dailynews/)

## **Powell to kick off consumer education initiative on DTV transition**

A major initiative headed by the Federal Communications Commission will bring all segments of the television industry together to educate the public on the importance of the digital television transition and how it will affect them in the coming years.

More: [hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DOC-252835A1.doc](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-252835A1.doc)

## **New technology**

### **Open TV set-top box**

Liberty Media-owned ITV middleware and applications provider, OpenTV, has signed a 5-year licensing and porting agreement for its middleware products with set-top box vendor, Scientific-Atlanta. It has also extended its application developers agreement with Scientific-Atlanta for its ProSync (formerly Wink) interactive television service. The middleware deal will allow Scientific-Atlanta for the first time to offer network operators a range of digital receivers that will be fully integrated and tested with OpenTV's Core 1.1 middleware.

Source: [itvt] newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 2, 28 September 2004

### **Microsoft set to ship new version of its MSN TV box**

Microsoft's MSN television division is set to ship a new version of its set top box platform. The new box, which is manufactured by Thomson and which will retail for \$199, is powered by a 733MHz Celeron chip, and features a new design, the Windows CE operating system, a television oriented version of Microsoft's Internet Explorer 6 Web browser, new applications for viewing video and photos, and 802.11b wireless connectivity.

Source: [itvt]newsletter Issue 5.67 Part 2, 28 September 2004

### **ABC Radio makes deal with Mediaguide: will offer monitoring to stations**

ABC Radio Networks and Mediaguide announced a marketing agreement: the network becomes the national sales agent to US radio stations for Mediaguide's StationMonitor music monitoring and reporting services.

Source: [www.rwonline.com/dailynews/](http://www.rwonline.com/dailynews/)

