

# International broadcast & media briefs

A monthly summary of web-based news

## Asia

### **PanAmSat opens DTH platform in Australia**

Satellite operator PanAmSat has announced that its subsidiary, PanAmSat Asia, has acquired several business assets from the receivers of Australian pay-TV provider, TARBS World TV Australia Pty Ltd (TARBS). The agreement includes the subscriber list, intellectual property and subscriber-installed equipment of TARBS.

Concurrently, PanAmSat announced that PanGlobal TV had opened for business as Australia's new multi-ethnic Direct-To-Home (DTH) platform. PanGlobal TV offers Arabic, Serbian and Russian channels and is capable of reaching all homes formerly served by TARBS. Additional channels are planning to join the platform shortly.

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

## UK

### **Burns panel calls for new BBC watchdog**

The government should set up a new independent body to oversee the BBC's accountability and advise on how much public funding it should get, the charter review panel led by Lord Burns has said. The panel, appointed to advise media secretary Tessa Jowell, said the so-called Public Service Broadcasting Commission (PSBC) would be tasked with ensuring that the BBC's Charter obligations were met and that it catered for all licence payers. The Board of Governors would still remain, it suggested, but would focus on corporate governance matters, the appointment of the director general and championing the BBC.

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

## Europe

### **French digital launch ready for March 1**

France's long-awaited DTT service will get underway as scheduled on March 1. At a press conference in Paris Dominique Baudis, President of regulator CSA, said that 15 free to air channels would be available compared to the seven currently available on the French terrestrial system. 35% of the population would receive the service at launch. Pay-TV broadcasts will commence on September 1 by which time DTT will be available to 50% of the population.

Source: Broadband TV News, 27 January 2005

### **MPEG-4 v. MPEG-2**

At the start of the Christmas holiday the French Prime Minister announced that the MPEG-4 compression standard would be used for Pay TV services in France. This would free-up space to allow more regional programming as well as DVB-H and HDTV services to be implemented. This once again complicates the situation in France. Free-to-air DTT services using MPEG-2 were pre-launched on the 17th January 2005. The transmissions from the Eiffel Tower will allow any initial problems to be overcome before the full planned launch on the 31st March 2005.

Pay-TV services were initially scheduled for launch in September 2005 but the new need for STB's that can handle MPEG-2 and MPEG-4 and the possible technical complication of a mixture of compression systems in the same multiplex are expected to delay this launch until Spring 2006. France will use 8k with 64QAM modulation in Bands 4 & 5.

Source: [www.dvb.org](http://www.dvb.org)

## New Zealand

### **NZ's Prime TV plugs into Australia's Two Way TV services**

Australia's Two Way TV (TWTV) has signed a three-year deal to provide interactive services to Prime TV New Zealand, The Australian News has reported. Prime TV will use TWTV's Simcast technology, which takes SMS messages and quickly compiles the data into graphs for broadcast on TV.

TWTV Australia gained the rights to the technology in September when TWTV UK bought the Simcast company. TWTV expects to rake in a US\$613,593 profit over the lifespan of the agreement. It will also consider rolling out the technology throughout Asia. Prime TV plans to use the technology on its new current affairs programme from next month.

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

### **BBC re-launches Internet radio player**

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has announced that it is to re-launch its internet Radio Player to make almost every BBC Radio programme available live and on-demand for seven days after broadcast.

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

## US

### **FCC Gives Channel-Choosers More Time**

TV stations have an extra 14 days to begin picking their permanent digital-TV channels. The Federal Communications Commission Tuesday extended the deadline for the first round of digital channel selections until February 10.

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

### **Advertisers Team Up for Food Fight**

Major ad trade groups and food marketers have teamed up to fend off restrictions on food marketing aimed at kids. As scientists and doctors debate whether TV ads are contributing to rising obesity rates in children, the Alliance for American Advertising aims to be the industry's counter to activists' claims that TV spots selling Pop-Tarts and Cap'n Crunch are fattening up kids. In addition to arguing against restrictions, the group will get the word out about food makers' efforts to make children's food healthier and to self-police advertising.

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