

International broadcast & media briefs

A monthly summary of web-based news

Europe

ECCA 2005: Cable restructure paying off

Years of investment and restructuring have finally paid off for the European cable industry, according to new research. The research showed that where cable operators have rolled out triple play services, broadband Internet penetration is up to three times higher, and telephone service is cheaper. Digital television services and the impending launch of video on demand services are making the cable proposition more attractive to the consumer.

Source: www.broadbandtvnews.co.uk

Ministerial conference on mass media policy

The 7th Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy (Kiev, 10–11 March 2005) identified priority areas for audiovisual and media policies in Europe: the freedom and independence of the media; the safety and security of journalists during crises; safeguards against negative effects of media concentration on media pluralism; the role of independent public service broadcasting; the protection of minors and the need for positive measures.

Source: www.ebu.ch

D-Day for digital terrestrial television in France

Initially, 35 per cent of the population will receive 14 free-to-air digital terrestrial television channels, coverage is to increase to 50 per cent by September and to 85 per cent in 2007. Some 70,000 set-decoders have been sold in the two weeks before the launch.

Source: European Broadcasting Union www.ebu.ch

Ofcom awards first community radio licence

Ofcom has awarded the first not-for-profit community radio licence to a consortium based in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. Community radio is a new sector of radio and will become the third tier, designed to complement the mix of services already provided by the BBC and commercial radio sectors.

More: www.broadcastnow.co.uk

BBC bans Army news footage

The BBC has said it will no longer use news packages from an armed forces service. Spinwatch, which monitors bias and impartiality in European news, said the source of the report from Iraq had not been made clear to viewers. Spinwatch wants to see tougher rules on what it has labelled 'fake news'.

Source: www.broadcastnow.co.uk

Digital TV reaches 59 percent of UK households

By 31 December 2004 digital television penetration was estimated to have reached almost 60 per cent of UK households, at 59.4 per cent, up from 55.9 per cent at 30 September 2004.

More www.ofcom.org.uk

Website offers 'free' Sky channels

BSkyB is investigating a website that is offering a selection of its subscription channels, including the Playboy Channel, for free. For a one-off payment for £2.50 or £4.99 the site claims that it can

provide customers with information on how to freely access Sky TV adult channels, Sky box office channels, sports channels from around the world including pay-per-view boxing events.

More: www.broadcastnow.co.uk

New Zealand

OneDigital launches in NZ

Aegis-owned Interactive agency OneDigital is launching in New Zealand with the aim of becoming the market's 'champion of digital'. OneDigital will launch its services through Carat New Zealand, also part of the Aegis Group, and will partner with Terebyte in a strategic alliance to share clients and split projects between the two companies.

More www.adnews.com.au

US

MGM deal

A Sony Corp.-led consortium has the European Commission's OK to buy Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc., clearing its final hurdle to purchasing the company and its library of 4000-plus films and 10,000-plus television shows from Kirk Kerkorian's Tracinda Corp.

More www.broadcastingcable.com

TiVo investors give standing ovation to Comcast deal

TiVo the digital video recorder pioneer unveiled its first deal to provide its television-recording service to a major cable operator. Comcast(CMCSA), which has 21.5 million basic subscribers, agreed to offer TiVo's software and programming guide as a premium DVR service in most of its markets by late 2006.

More: www.usatoday.com

Viacom, a big media group which owns many familiar television and radio properties in America (such as MTV Networks), announced that it is considering splitting itself into two public companies in an effort to boost its share price.

Source: www.economist.com

New technology

AgileTV trial voice-activated TV navigation technology for cable

A voice-activated television navigation service is being trialed by Comcast and Time Warner Cable in Philadelphia. The systems allows cable subscribers to give voice commands to their EPG.

More www.itvt.com

French consortium pilots DVB-H

The consortium will launch a pilot project using the DVB-H mobile broadcast standard. The nine-month trial is scheduled to begin in the second quarter of 2005 using a sample of 500 trialists. Canal will provide television content, SFR the telephone service, Nokia the handsets and Towercast the broadcasting facilities. The pilot project will work alongside the 3G mobile technology.

Source: Broadband TV News, 10 March 2005 ☞