

the channel

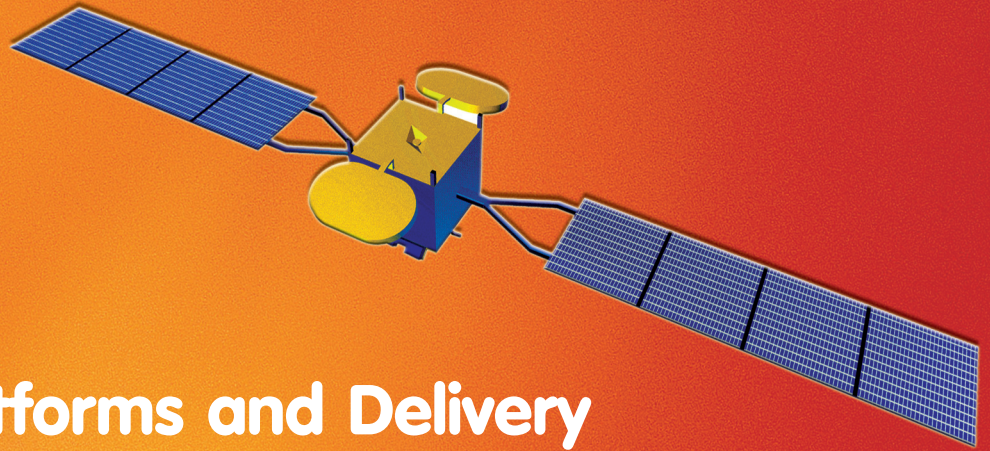
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for International
Broadcasting

the definitive news source for the international broadcasting industry

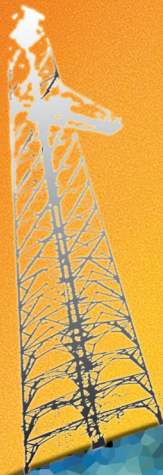
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Transmission, Platforms and Delivery



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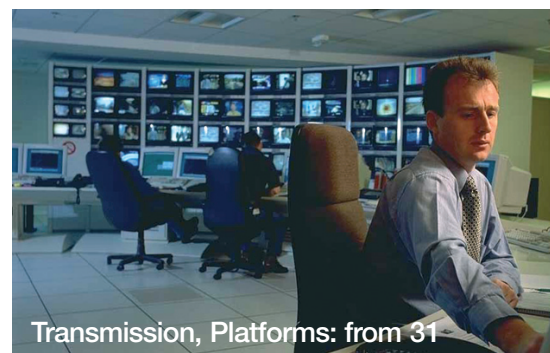
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TDF acquires Finnish transmission firm

French broadcasting transmission company **Télédiffusion de France** (TDF) has completed the acquisition of 41 per cent of **Digita**, the Finnish national broadcasting transmission company taking TDF's holding to 90 per cent following its initial purchase of 49 per cent in the Finnish company in July 2001. The price of the transaction was €133 million. The purchase of Digita is TDF's largest overseas investment. The company says it sees the Finnish market as promising, particularly in view of the emerging DTT and mobile Internet sectors. Digita is the main broadcaster of the four leading Finnish channels (YLE1, YLE2, MTV3 and Nelonen) and is a significant player in DTT, launched in Finland in August 2001, now reaching over 70 per cent of the population. Digita also accounts for 50 per cent of the radio broadcasting market. It operates 200 transmission sites, 40 of which are high powered. Digita employs 380 people, and achieved a turnover in 2001 of €81 million and Ebitda of around €40 million.

New Zealand pay-tv moves into profit

New Zealand's only pay television operator **Sky TV** made the first profit in its 13 year history, helped partly by a high New Zealand dollar. The company made a net profit of €355,000 compared with a loss of €15.8 million a year ago. Total revenues of €207 million were up by 13.6 per cent over the previous year. Sky TV CEO John Fellet said: "Even without the full benefit of the recent appreciation of the New Zealand dollar, Sky has continued to improve its position by negotiating better programming arrangements with movie distributors". Subscriber revenue in Sky TV - two-thirds owned by the Rupert Murdoch controlled **Independent Newspapers** - grew by 15.9 per cent, advertising revenue rose by 18.8 per cent to €10.3 million and commercial revenues grew 13.8 per cent to €12 million. Sky's subscriber base reached a new high of 542,891, a gain of 39,642 subscribers over the previous year. International channels on the Sky New Zealand system include BBC World, CNBC, CNNI, Discovery and Cartoon Network.

More US pay-TV subscribers

EchoStar Communications reported its Q2 financial results and unveiled that its DISH Network satellite service added some 270,000 net new subscribers in the period. DISH Network had approximately 8.8 million subscribers as of June 30. DISH Network carries a range of international channels in English and other languages.

TV targets the Middle East

The US House of Representatives has approved the creation of a US-funded Middle East TV network. House International Relations Committee Chairman Henry Hyde said that the new network will "greatly contribute to an enhancement of our efforts to combat the misinformation and propaganda that contribute to the rising anti-American sentiment in the region."

Funding for the network will come out of the US\$1.3bn allocated to international broadcasting. Congressional officials said it would broadcast 24 hours a day, delivering a mix of news and entertainment. However, there could be delays in getting the green light since the proposal forms part of a US\$30bn foreign aid bill which still has to pass the Senate.

That's by no means a foregone conclusion, as the Senate disagrees with the Bush administration's decision to drop a measure supporting the UN Population Fund, and so may block the passage of the bill.

Meanwhile in an interview with London-based newspaper Al-Sharq al-Awsat, Director of BBC World Service Mark Byford was asked if the service was planning to launch an Arabic television channel. Byford replied: "We have BBC World, which is an English-language channel. Therefore, we are present in the three media in the Middle East. However, we have to admit that the importance of television is on the increase, as it has become an essential medium for conveying information in all parts of the Arab world. But we do not have any clear plan for the time being. Naturally, the situation depends on the means available."



Henry Hyde

Burmese hungry for news, radio sales soar

Large numbers of Burmese, hungry for news and entertainment, are tuning in to Rangoon's City FM and several foreign broadcasts available via shortwave radio, reports exiles' newspaper *Irrawaddy*.

"Since the 30 May ambush on Aung San Suu Kyi and the subsequent detention of opposition leaders, many Burmese want to know what's going on in the country and the whereabouts of Suu Kyi. Burmese citizens want to know how the international community is reacting to Burma. Stories by overseas Burmese and regional experts on the impact of US sanctions, Asean's concern over Suu Kyi and the ongoing debate on factionalism within the regime draw many grateful listeners."

Former opposition party member Myo Myint said, "When I stroll down the street in Rangoon in the early morning I can hear news because almost every house is listening to the BBC or RFA." However, he said, tea shops in Rangoon usually feature TV and radio cassette players but do not dare play news aloud, fearing a reaction from authorities. Listening to shortwave radio is not illegal in Burma but citizens know that the government does not approve of the activity."

French watchdog growls at Egypt

Egypt public TV channel ESC has caused a major international uproar for its programme *Horseman without a Horse*, a serial inspired by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The CSA, the French broadcasting regulator, authorised the Egyptian channel to broadcast via satellite in France and in other European Union countries. Now the CSA has upbraided the channel for the programme, saying "Despite its fictional nature, this serial could constitute an offence of incitement to racial hatred and would be liable to disturb public order."

The CSA adds that at the end of July it sent a letter to the Egyptian authorities in charge of the channel and decided to summon the channel's representative in France to a hearing which will take place at the end of the summer break. The issue was raised in November and December 2002 by several organisations, including the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, private individuals and a French deputy (member of Parliament).

Murdoch completes his Italian job



Sky, the international satellite TV network owned by media magnate Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, has launched its predicted new service in Italy. Sky Italia was created from a merger between Stream Television, jointly owned by News Corp and Telecom Italia, and the Telepiu network, which Murdoch's media empire recently acquired from Vivendi Universal/Canal Plus.

Sky Italia will offer more channels than the previous Stream and Telepiu services combined, as well as a dedicated news channel, Sky TG24. Sky Italia is 80.1 per cent owned by News Corp, with the remaining 19.9 per cent held by Telecom Italia. Murdoch said in June that he hoped to quickly attract three million

Italian customers, and aimed to win over 10 million.

Although News Corp will take a loss for the creation of Sky Italia, the TV-to-newspapers media giant sees strong growth ahead. International channels carried on the service include AIB member CNBC Europe, as well as Bloomberg TV, CNN International, Sky News, MTV, Discovery Channel and National Geographic.

Europe's first terrestrial all-digital city

Berlin has become the first area in Europe to abandon analogue terrestrial TV transmissions. The region's terrestrial TV services are now available on digital platforms only. Since most household TV sets are still designed for analogue reception, many viewers have had to invest in set-top decoders.



Hooray, I'm all digital

According to the Berlin-Brandenburg Media Authority, 150,000 of the 170,000 households who depended on the analogue service had bought the set-top boxes ahead of the 4 August changeover. Set top boxes are relatively cheap in the city - just €99. 27 channels of content are available on seven multiplexes. BBC World - part of AIB member BBC Global News - is the only international channel carried on the Berlin digital service.

In a separate development, Berlin's DVB-T system is the world's first offering Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound. Commercial broadcaster ProSieben has launched Dolby Digital 5.1 on its terrestrial service, complementing the existing Dolby service the channel operates on satellite.

Next year the federal states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and North Rhine-Westphalia will also introduce digital terrestrial TV. The German parliament has decided that analogue broadcasting should be completely phased out by 2010.

Meanwhile, NHK, Japan's public broadcaster, along with private TV broadcasters and the telecom ministry, has decided to bring forward the start of terrestrial digital TV broadcasts in the nation's non-metropolitan districts from late 2006. The three metropolitan areas surrounding Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya have agreed to start full broadcasts in December this year.

In other districts, the broadcasters and ministry agreed to start in 2004, the lengthy process of adjusting the existing TV sets in households to prevent interference of existing analogue broadcasting signals, which would otherwise occur after the start of digital broadcasts.

Spain goes to Britain

Spanish public broadcaster TVE Internacional will be available to viewers in the UK and Ireland from October. RTVE has signed an agreement with BSkyB, for distribution of TVE Internacional to its UK and Irish digital subscribers. TVE Internacional will be the first channel in Spanish and the second non-English-speaking channel available after French TV5. TVE Internacional will be included in the basic package.

Microsoft builds TV business

Microsoft TV is consolidating its position in the Latin American TV marketplace. Cablevision Mexico has commercially launched Microsoft TV Interactive Programme Guide (IPG) following a deployment process that converted all digital cable subscribers from the previous guide to Microsoft TV IPG in a single evening.

Mexico's largest multiple service operator Megacable and Cablevision Monterrey have announced that they will adopt Microsoft TV IPG and Microsoft TV Advanced later in 2003.

Indian TV channels to grow

Zee Telefilms, India's largest private broadcaster, plans four new city-centric independent 24-hour channels. The cities chosen for the launch are Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

"The Delhi project is on the anvil. But the rest of the three would be formalised only if the Delhi experiment is successful. The content will be exclusively local. Besides locally-produced entertainment programmes, the channel will cover local events and will produce local news bulletins," said a Zee spokesperson quoted in the Indian press.

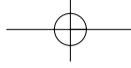
Zee has applied to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for a business news channel.

Zee, through its distribution alliance with Turner International - Zee Turner India - is expected to launch four new channels including two business channels - Bloomberg and CNN Finance - the old Turner Classic Movies or TCM channel and a second kids channel from Australia.

ChannelNewsAsia chooses AsiaSat

AsiaSat and Singapore-based MCN International have signed a lease agreement to broadcast Channel NewsAsia digitally across Asia. On September 1, Channel NewsAsia - produced by Singapore's MediaCorp - will switch its Asian distribution to Asiasat 3S, replacing the existing Palapa C2 and APSTAR IIR services.

Channel NewsAsia claims 14.5 million homes and hotels in 19 territories across Asia.



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Vivendi: time running short

Debt-laden French group Vivendi is trying to sell off its US media assets, but there seems to be an ever-decreasing number of takers. Liberty Media, NBC, Viacom, and a consortium led by Edgar Bronfman are still in the running. However, time is passing, and perhaps Vivendi has pitched the price too high. In this case, a strategic partner may have to be found, which may possibly be US network NBC.



With deadlines being passed, the Bronfman consortium and Liberty Media were thought to be planning updated offers for Vivendi Universal Entertainment, the holding company for the group's movie, theme park and cable television assets. Vivendi was also continuing talks with NBC about a possible merger with VUE which would leave the French group as a minority shareholder.

Vivendi is thought to view a deal with NBC as the company's best hope of exiting the US media business without being forced to sell out at a discount. However, NBC's proposal does not include any up-front cash payment to Vivendi against the Bronfman proposal which includes \$8 billion in cash. .

Vivendi aims to sell \$18.3 billion of assets, and to get \$8 billion from sales this year, but may be unable to reach its targets. If cash is not forthcoming, some sort of mixed deal may have to be agreed. As this edition of *The Channel* went to press, the Vivendi board was meeting in Paris to consider the offers.

Russian TV grows in the USA

The Russian World TV channel has extended its broadcasts on the MHz Networks free-to-air channel from one to six hours a day. Russian World programmes are aimed at the Russian community in the United States and includes news, talk and game shows, educational, sports and children's programmes, cartoons, feature films and documentaries sourced from Russian domestic channels and other content providers.

Launched in 2002, MHz is available in Washington DC as well as in Virginia and Maryland. MHz programming is also carried on the Dish and DIRECTV satellite systems. MHz also carries programming from international broadcasters including BBC World, Deutsche Welle, RAI, ANI and ERT. The service, run on a public broadcasting basis, models itself loosely on the SBS TV channel in Australia, serving expatriates in the USA.



The Kremlin goes to America

The Russo-US project aims to inform the US people about developments in Russia and the CIS and make the broadcasts available to TV audiences in Washington and its suburbs where, according to the channel's operators, around 100,000 Russian-speaking people live at present. Some programmes will have English subtitles making the channel more popular, broadening the TV audiences by approximately 1.5 million people.

President and chief producer of the Russian World Channel, Vladimir Ananich, has emphasised that the financial and editorial politics of the new television project were independent of the state. A representative of Russia's embassy in the United States declared that the new project was welcomed by the Russian government.

In a separate development Ascent Media Network Services and satellite operator Intelsat are to deliver Channel One Russia Worldwide Network (formerly known as Public Russian Television, or "ORT") from Moscow into the United States.

The Russian TV channel - 51 per cent owned by the Russian government and watched by approximately 200 million people throughout the former Soviet Union - is being distributed to home cable viewers across the United States via International Channel Networks.

Ascent is providing international downlink, programme integration, time delay and server playout for Channel One at its London facility. The signal is transmitted to the company's switching centre in New York where it is routed to Intelsat's GlobalConnexSM infrastructure for delivery.

Pakistan bans Indian TV

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has instructed local cable operators in Pakistan to observe a ban on broadcasting channels from India. PEMRA chairman Mian Javed made the announcement, saying "We have [re]enforced the ban as these channels do not come under the approved eligible list."

The banned channels include general entertainment and movie channels from News Corp's Star India, Sony Pictures, Sony Entertainment Television India and Zee Telefilms, as well as channels from other broadcasters. PEMRA has also imposed a ban on broadcasting Indian DVDs and VCDs over cable networks.

Indian television remains popular with Pakistan viewers, and cable operators had believed that the ban - introduced in December 2001 - was about to be lifted as relations between the two countries improved.

The Cable Operator's Association of Pakistan Chairman Khalid Sheikh has been quoted as saying, "We will suffer a great financial loss as people will discontinue watching cable television when they will not find Indian channels over it."

AsiaSat profits weaker

Asia Satellite Telecommunications Holdings Ltd - better known as **AsiaSat** - has reported a 14.2 per cent fall in first-half net profit.

The company, which rents satellite transponder space to broadcast and telecommunications clients, posted a net profit of HK\$240.1 million in the first six months to June 30 against HK\$279.8 million in the same period last year.

AsiaSat is 68.9 per cent controlled by a joint venture company China International Trust and Investment Corporation and Luxembourg-based SES-Global.

Soaring use of Internet in China

China had 68 million Internet users at the end of June, 8.9 million more than half a year ago, according to statistics from the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC).

China's "netizens" now constitute 5.3 per cent of its 1.3 billion population, said the information centre in its latest assessment of the Internet industry.

Netizens surfing the Internet via telephone accounted for 45.01 per cent of total users, while broadband Internet users reached 9.8 million.

China continues to prevent access to many western Internet sites, particularly those operated by media organisations such as the BBC.

National Geographic goes to Holland

Amsterdam's Digital Media Centre (DMC) is to provide play-out services for National Geographic Channel's Benelux feed covering a number of European territories, including The Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Norway.

Jonathan Try, Vice President Broadcast Operations and Engineering, said: "One of the many strong suits of the DMC is offering multi-language solutions and separate feeds throughout Europe and the Middle East. We are delighted that National Geographic Channel has now also appointed us to take care of their Benelux playout needs, in addition to their Central European feed."

Record UK international station audience

BBC World Service now has the highest ever number of listeners in the UK, according to the industry-ratings organisation, RAJAR. New figures show that 1.5 million people listen to World Service across Britain, up 100,000 from the previous quarter's figures. Alan Booth, BBC World Service's Controller, Marketing, said: "With many more ways to listen, people are finding it easier to tune into the World Service and enjoying the international news and analysis and landmark programmes they find there."

"These figures show how significant listening through television and the internet has become; something that would have been almost unimaginable a few years ago. It's now possible to listen to the World Service in the UK via Freeview [digital terrestrial television], on Sky digital satellite and cable channels, as well as online and via [DAB] digital radio."

3i invests in Jutel

European capital investment house, 3i, has announced a €5m deal to boost Jutel, the Finnish supplier of radio automation systems. The new financing will allow Jutel to accelerate its growth and develop a more international-looking business.

Established in 1984, the company is best known for RadioMan, used by broadcasters worldwide including Swedish Radio, NHK, YLE, Estonian Radio and ERTU.

"The financial investment by 3i Group will be directed into marketing and R&D. This way we can guarantee further growth and strengthen our position in the market", says Jutel's CEO Reijo Kivelä.

"In addition to finances," comments Jutel's new member of the Board, Investment Director Jarkko Virtanen from 3i Finland, "we will bring in our international network of contacts and high level of business knowledge as added value to the deal. We believe that now Jutel has excellent possibilities to grow and develop into the global leader of the field."

Rebroadcasting benefits major broadcasters

There has been a welter of announcements over the past few months of new FM outlets for the BBC and RFI. BBC World Service has now started broadcasting on FM in Dubai, the latest in a network of FM operations in Gulf Co-operation Council States bringing BBC Arabic to its listeners in high quality sound. The new service follows the launch in July of BBC Arabic's FM transmission to listeners in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) capital Abu Dhabi on 90.3 MHz.

Meanwhile Radio France Internationale has opened new FM relay stations in Zambia, Ecuador and Iraq and has signed a range of contracts for the rebroadcasting of programmes in South Africa and Latin America.

And in TV, cable is being exploited. BBC World is now available in Paraguay via Cable Vision Comunicaciones (CVC). Through this new agreement, viewers in Asuncion can now enjoy the channel's range of news, current affairs and lifestyle programming.

Radio Korea International has joined the programme line-up on World Radio Network's satellite channels. Celebrating its 50th anniversary, RKI is placing its English, French German and Russian output on AIB member WRN. Ms Han Hee-Joo, Executive Director of Radio Korea International said: "Radio Korea International is celebrating its Golden Jubilee and in commemoration of this very special year, RKI is diversifying its platforms for the future by launching satellite audio broadcasting in English, French, German and Russian, via World Radio Network."

Science channel shuts UK operation

Einstein TV, a digital broadcaster launched in the UK in 2000, has closed on the Sky platform in Britain. The science and technology channel, headed up by former BBC producer and ITV department head Steven Timmins, is owned by Einstein Group which has now been placed in liquidation. However, the channel's international operations continue and Timmins says "negotiations are continuing for further roll-out of the TV Channel in other European countries, including France, Spain and Portugal, as well as in the Middle East and Asia."



Despite the closure of the full-time UK channel, Einstein TV is still available for several hours a day on Friendly TV, another Sky Digital channel. Einstein Group operates Einstein Consulting, which has provided services to UK broadcasters and to Al-Jazeera TV.

Peace organisations at war

Radio For Peace International (RFPI), which has been operating since 1987 by mutual agreement on the University for Peace campus in El Rodeo, Costa Rica, has been served with an eviction notice from the university. The radio station's access gate was locked with chains and patrolled by armed guards, and the radio station was advised to vacate its facilities in two weeks.

According to General Manager James Latham, the unexplained and legally questionable decision to evict RFPI threatens to silence the voice of peace on international airwaves. "This is more than an eviction, this is about the right to free speech," he said. "What is most shocking and sad is that this action comes from an international peace organisation."

University for Peace, a United Nations-mandated university established in 1980, invited RFPI in 1985 to build and manage its own office and studios on the university's Costa Rica campus. Consequently RFPI constructed studios and transmitters, and has been broadcasting messages of peace and social justice as well as daily United Nations programming. Latham continued "Instead of focusing on how to eliminate a fellow peace organisation, we need to channel our energy toward eliminating war, poverty and hunger."

Talks have taken place, and more are scheduled, with a cut-off date in October.

BBC Monitoring strikes oil

OILspace, a provider of online services for the energy industry, has partnered with BBC Monitoring to enhance the authority and scope of global energy-related news to the 600 international subscribers to OILspace's OILwatch service. A specially filtered energy feed from BBC Monitoring, combined with OILwatch's current news feeds from Dow Jones newswires, Platts and Reuters, now gives OILwatch customers access to essential energy and geo-political news from around the world. This is the first time that BBC Monitoring Energy News will be made available to such a large commercial audience and is offered to all OILwatch real-time news customers at no extra charge.

News from BBC Monitoring is often faster than from agency feeds, which can put energy professionals in an advantageous position. Local reports of pipeline explosions, rumours of coups, terrorist attacks, strikes or political strife in oil producing countries can cause fluctuations in oil prices and share valuation. Hearing this news more swiftly will enable energy professionals to make more competitive commercial decisions.

"We were impressed at the speed with which BBC Monitoring reports key stories from important oil regions such as the Middle East as they break. We know that our customers will value this additional insight into developments in key oil markets. In the near future we hope to offer OILwatch subscribers access to country specific geo-political news from BBC Monitoring for the analyst and risk management communities," said Steve Hellman, CEO of OILspace.

BBC Monitoring provides information about the world's media industry to the Association for International Broadcasting through a partnership agreement.

Euronews on the up in France

EuroNews has doubled its audience share, consolidated its position as the second largest news channel in France, and increased its upmarket viewership. The channel has the biggest increase compared to its two competitors, both national news channels.

EuroNews has also seen considerable growth of upmarket audience share, more than doubling its audience share of this target from 0.3 per cent to 0.7 per cent. EuroNews has strengthened its position as the second most watched of all news channels in France with 548,628 daily viewers (over 15 years old), representing an increase of 14 per cent, and 153,396 upmarket viewers every day, an increase of 27 per cent year on year.

ABC budget cuts

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation has announced budget cuts of US\$17m. The ABC's managing director, Russell Balding, says the cuts are due to the corporation's failure to secure additional funding by the Australian government in the last federal budget. The cuts had been forecast some time ago.

In his statement, Mr Balding says the ABC board has approved management proposals for cuts to programmes and non-programme areas. Included is the already announced cut to digital television services. There will be further reduction in television advertising, schools production, live sport and News and Current Affairs budgets in television and radio. Around 100 positions will be affected, although redundancies will be limited to 20 to 25 jobs, said Russell Balding.

It remains to be seen whether ABC AsiaPacific and Radio Australia will also suffer.

BBC World heads for America

BBC World, the international news and information channel, is reported to be in talks with possible distributors in the United States for carriage on a US platform. Notably the BBC is reported not to be working with Discovery, the operation that distributes BBC America. Initially, US audiences will receive the standard global channel, but in time it is expected that regional programming will be introduced, similar to those on other versions of BBC World.

BBC World news bulletins are currently carried on PBS television, and on BBC America, broadcast on cable networks across the country.

Singapore invites new Pay-TV licence

Singapore's Media Development Authority has launched a tendering process for the island state's second pay-TV licence. Singapore already has a subscription TV operation run by **StarHub Cable Vision**, offering a tiered subscription package.

International news channels on StarHub include BBC World, CNBC Asia and CNN while entertainment and education channels include three Discovery channels, MTV South East Asia, Hallmark, Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon. Additional premium international channels available are Bloomberg/WorldNet, DW-TV, NHK World and TV5. It is understood that SingTel has expressed an interest in the new licence, tenders for which close on 24 September.

Meanwhile, the MDA has launched a consultation programme seeking public and industry comments on whether exclusive carriage agreements between content providers and pay-TV operators need to be regulated. The consultation programme asks what regulatory framework needs to be adopted if regulation is initiated.

High Adventure targets Middle East

The difficult political situation in Liberia has forced the abandonment of plans by High Adventure Ministries (part of AIB member NASB) to set up a short wave station there. Now permission has been received from the Ugandan government to set up the station in Uganda instead. This will enable High Adventure Ministries to resume short wave broadcasts to the Middle East. Three years ago, the organization was forced out of its station on the Israeli/Lebanese border, which had been operating for 30 years, when Israeli troops who had been protecting the area were pulled out.

Rivals clash over new Voice of Peace

A group of entrepreneurs has announced that the Voice of Peace radio, closed in 1993, will start broadcasting again from Ramallah in November. The station says it has been allocated a frequency by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Communications.

The announcement has infuriated those close to the original station's founder, Abie Nathan. The original Voice of Peace (VOP), a non-political humanitarian station, broadcast from a ship outside Israeli territorial waters. Israeli journalist Mike Brand, a friend of Nathan, says the new group has no rights over the VOP name or the station's jingles.

Brand says the new group wants its station to be political, whereas Nathan's supporters are working on a plan which avoids politics and adheres to the format of the old VOP, with a humanitarian slant.

BBC to open archive to public

The BBC plans to open its archive to make what the Corporation describes as a "treasure trove of material" available to everyone. Greg Dyke, the BBC director-general, made the announcement at the Edinburgh International Television Festival on 24 August.

"Up until now this huge resource has remained locked up, inaccessible to the public because there hasn't been an effective mechanism for distribution," said Dyke. "But the digital revolution and broadband are changing all that. For the first time there is an easy and affordable way of making this treasure trove of BBC content available to all."

The BBC Creative Archive would make selected BBC material universally available for private not commercial use in the UK. Outlining the plan to open up the BBC's rich archive, Dyke gave the example of a child using broadband at home, school or in a public library, to access the BBC material to help do their homework and projects. "They search for real moving pictures which would turn their project into an exciting multi-media presentation," Dyke explained. "They download them and, hey presto, they are able to use the BBC material in their presentation for free."

The BBC Creative Archive is just one example of the kind of public value initiatives that would come with the second phase of the digital revolution, Dyke said.

"I believe that we are about to move into a second phase of the digital revolution, a phase which will be more about public than private value; about free, not pay services; about inclusivity, not exclusion. In particular, it will be about how public money can be combined with new digital technologies to transform everyone's lives," he added.

News Xchange gets top names

The EBU-backed news conference, News Xchange, has secured two internationally-renowned speakers for its 2003 Conference. Former World Health Organisation head, Gro Harlem Brundtland, and international investor, George Soros, will be providing high-level input into the two day event taking place in Budapest on 6 and 7 November. The AIB will be at News Xchange.

People

Fox News has announced that Scott Novell is to be the first bureau chief at its European news bureau in London. Novell starts on 8 September and will manage the editorial output from the 15-person team. Novell has worked for Fox for six years, most recently as the New York bureau chief.

Star shines less brightly in India

From *Shruti S*, the AIB's special correspondent in Delhi

On 22 August, the Indian government amended its five-month old policy on foreign direct investment (FDI) in news channels wanting to uplink from India. The new development came in the wake of the controversies kicked off by STAR News, STAR India's news channel controlled by Rupert Murdoch. The earlier guideline had capped the FDI component in a channel's equity at 26 per cent, while the constitution of the Indian partners' stake was not clearly defined. It was, however, made amply clear that the editorial control should rest in the hands of Indians.



STAR News chose to be oblivious to the intention of the guideline, though. Mr. Murdoch for quite some time was seeking to get the editorial reins of STAR News in his hands, if NDTV, the company that was providing content to the channel till March this year, is to be believed. NDTV promoter Dr. Prannoy Roy, a respected journalist with well-established credentials, has been on record that his company decided to part ways with STAR News the day Mr. Murdoch insisted on having a direct control on editorial policies.

Post the break-up with NDTV, STAR News approached the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with a proposal to launch a company called Media Content and Communications Services (MCCS) with a total paid-up capital of only Rs 40 million (around \$850,000). It was proposed that MCCS should provide news content to STAR News. The size of the capital had the media smelling rats in the proposal, particularly in the light of the fact that the channel's senior executives had told the media that they had invested around Rs 1000 million (around \$21 million) in their revamp in March.

To confound the matters further, STAR India, which is a 100 per cent subsidiary of News Corp, proposed to hold 26 per cent equity in MCCS, while distributing the remaining 74 per cent among a motley group of Indian shareholders. Most of these shareholders had connections with STAR India in some way or the other. STAR News' pitch was further queered by Kumarmangalam Birla, one of the most respectable business tycoons in India, who surrendered his proposed stake in MCCS within days of the announcement of his name.

All hell broke loose in the media with the developments. Questions such as where would the new entity source its future investments from and who would support its infrastructural investments were raised. Without losing any time, STAR India revived a shell company called Touch Telecontent and it was declared that the latter would provide infrastructural support to MCCS.

The complications in the matter forced the government to take a tough stance on the issue. STAR India was asked to come clear on allegations of "corporate veils" and "dummy investors". The group clearly couldn't counter the objections raised by the media and the government.

But the entire development did one good to the industry. The government was forced not only to review its media policy but it learnt its lessons too. In its new clarification issued August 22, it clearly spelt that 51 per cent equity in a news channel has to be in the hands of one Indian partner. This 51 per cent will be exclusive of the equity held by banks or financial institutions.

STAR News has been given a month's time to conform to the new norms. The group reportedly is actively in talks with a renowned media house. Results of the talks will not be known for a month, though.



Will the sunrise over Delhi obscure a Star?

The AIB is the trade association for the cross-border broadcasting industry. A not-for-profit organisation with headquarters in London, the AIB works with and on behalf of its members across a range of activities. These include lobbying, providing market intelligence, promotion and public relations, networking and representation.

With a growing international membership covering television and radio broadcasters, satellite companies, transmission providers, consultants, manufacturers and service providers, the AIB brings together the key players in the industry.

The Association
for International
Broadcasting

Serving the international broadcasting industry

For Members For Industry

The Association gathers **intelligence** about the industry on a daily basis, covering programming, services, channel launches, product development and transmission issues. Each month, an **exclusive digest** of this global intelligence is sent to members.

The AIB maintains a unique **database** of information about the international broadcasting sector, and about trends in national and regional broadcasting throughout the world. Members can gain **access** to this information bank as part of their membership benefits.



With an unrivalled range of contacts across the world, the AIB provides **networking** opportunities throughout international broadcasting – from channels to providers of studio equipment, audience measurement to satellite uplinks. Members have exclusive **access** to the AIB's network of contacts.

Members benefit from **discounts** on a variety of services, including conference delegate fees and advertising in AIB publications.

The AIB offers a comprehensive range of **consulting services** for television and radio broadcasters, for transmission and satellite companies, manufacturers, developers and consulting firms.

With a fully qualified database of 10,000 contacts, the AIB's reach into the broadcasting industry is extensive.

The AIB is uniquely placed to provide **in-depth reports and analysis** of a range of international broadcasting markets, and to provide intelligence on developments within **digital broadcasting**.

The AIB can advise on the **development** of long term strategic plans, as well as assist with the development of short term **tactical planning**, which will enable those strategies to be achieved.

Individual projects, such as infrastructure development or network integrity, for example, can be developed and managed to their successful completion with expert advice from AIB consultants.



When it comes to **audience measurement**, of vital importance to TV and radio broadcasters worldwide, the AIB offers an exceptional level of

knowledge and understanding. The AIB offers **management training** in all aspects of broadcast related areas.

The AIB's extensive portfolio of industry leaders and supporters provides the perfect vehicle for marketing services on a regional or global basis.

Specialist **seminars and workshops** are organised on behalf of companies seeking to enter markets, develop products and strategies, or influence potential clients. The AIB ensures that the right speakers and participants are invited. The Association handles all arrangements for the seminar or workshop, including logistics, accommodation and catering, and events take place in Europe, North America or the Asia-Pacific region.

The AIB publishes **The Channel** every quarter. The magazine is distributed to more than 4,000 named individuals in broadcasters and other organisations in over 100 countries. **The Channel** carries features about the industry as well as a round-up of current developments in the sector. Members are invited to contribute 'personal view' articles about a subject of their choice, providing them with an excellent way of communicating concerns, ideas or news to a truly global and highly influential readership.

A monthly **e-newsletter** supplements **The Channel**, providing current news and information about international broadcasting and about the activities of the AIB. Breaking news stories from the sector appear on the AIB **website** which is updated daily and where an archive of the AIB's newsletters is also available.

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Global Broadcasting Guide & AIB Directory

To order use the form on page 17, or visit the AIB online shop at

www.aib.org.uk

Working with Members

The AIB is developing a range of new benefits for its members around the world. Amongst these is a new monthly telephone conference call that all members can join.

"The conference call is a way for all AIB members to stay in touch with each other, sharing news, discussing concerns and explaining where the AIB's efforts are needed," says Simon Spanswick, Chief Executive of the Association. "AIB members are spread right round the world and so the conference call is an important part of the AIB's new communications programme with its members."

At the same time, the AIB is ensuring that its members get better profiling and visibility at events that the Association attends. At IBC, for example, the AIB stand will have promotional material about many of its members - both those that have their own exhibit at IBC and those who aren't taking part. A special postcard has been produced and will be distributed at IBC. This shows the location of all the stands of AIB member companies, and has details of all other members, too, so that visitors to the Amsterdam trade fair can see the entire range of AIB members.

The AIB's senior management is going on the road to meet members around the world. In recent weeks, visits have been made to BT Broadcast Services, SES-Astra, World Radio



AIB at SES-Astra: from left Kerry Stevenson, Director of Communications, Simon Spanswick, Chief Executive, Anver Anderson, Business Development Director, Benedicte Rigault, SES-Astra Marketing

Network, Radio Vlaanderen Internationaal. and VT Merlin Communications. "It's vital that the AIB's staff meets member organisations and gets to understand their concerns," says Anver Anderson, AIB Business Development Director. "The best way to do this is to in face-to-face meetings and explore what members need and want."

Starting towards the end of 2003, the AIB will be organising a series of networking evenings for members in different cities around the world. A specially invited guest will attend each of these evening events and the discussions will cover all aspects of international broadcasting - under Chatham House rules, of course. The first evening networking events will take place in London, Brussels, Prague and Washington DC.

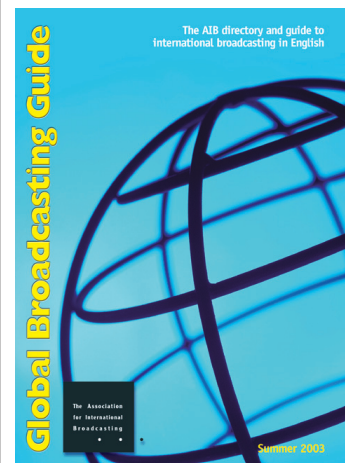
"These initiatives build on the work that the AIB has been undertaking over the past few years," comments Simon Spanswick. "With an increasing number of members and an enlarged staff, the AIB is now able to take on more work that benefits all members, wherever they are in the world."

To find out about the benefits of membership of the Association for International Broadcasting, contact **Anver Anderson**, Business Development Director, at anver.anderson@aib.org.uk, or on +44 (0) 1245 399 965.

Directory and Guide gains rave reviews

The latest edition of the *AIB Directory and Global Broadcasting Guide* has been receiving much acclaim. Compliments come from broadcasters, service providers and consumers.

The Directory and Guide provides comprehensive details about all the AIB's members in a "yellow pages" section, while details of the world's international broadcasters are featured in the "blue pages".



The Guide also has all the information needed to tune into the world's English-language broadcasters - on both television and radio - so wherever you are in the world, you can keep in touch with developments back home, or anywhere else where news is being made.

The AIB Directory and Global Broadcasting Guide is available on subscription - see the order form on page 17 - and will also be on sale at the AIB stand at IBC 2003 - number 9.545.

AIB News

AIB Conference 2004

3rd annual AIB Global Media Business Conference - Prague, Czech Republic, 12-13 May

 **RADIO FREE EUROPE**
RADIO LIBERTY

The AIB's annual **Global Media Business Conference** is the only event in the broadcasting calendar that specifically addresses the issues facing the international broadcasting industry – from audiences to programme formats, delivery to production, public service through commercial. The 2003 Conference took place at the end of April in London, attended by more than 170 delegates from over 20 countries – Canada to New Zealand, Germany to Sweden, South Africa to the UAE.

Only weeks after the cessation of hostilities in Iraq, the AIB's 2003 Conference examined the effect of the war on international news, and the relationship between government and broadcaster – an issue that has become more significant in recent months. The 2004 Conference will revisit this contentious issue and investigate what has happened in the intervening period.

The 2004 Conference will build on the previous AIB conferences, tackling the problems and concerns of the international broadcasting industry including the continuing debate of delivering value to stakeholders. The event will help to define future strategies for all sectors of the industry, with in-depth analysis and impassioned debate.

The AIB is delighted that Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty will be the Official Partner, hosting the conference at its central Prague offices – the former Czech communist parliament building.

With senior decision-makers from international broadcasters, satellite operators, transmission companies, production houses, analysts, consultants, manufacturers and service providers attending the event together with politicians and regulators, the AIB Global Media Business Conference presents an unparalleled networking opportunity. Together with the formal sessions, there will be an extensive social programme in Prague, enabling delegates to get the most out of this major international broadcasting summit.

There's also plenty of time during the conference coffee and lunch breaks to meet and exchange views with other delegates, with speakers, with exhibitors and with sponsors.

Accompanying the Conference will be an exhibition, showcasing the activities of AIB members from around the world and the AIB is launching a series of awards with presentations at the AIB Conference.

More information will be published in The Channel and on the AIB website and in our monthly electronic news bulletin. If you would like us to keep you informed about developments as they happen, if you're interested in registering for advance booking discounts, or for exhibition or sponsorship opportunities, please complete the form below and fax it back to us. Alternatively, e-mail us at register@aib.org.uk.

AIB Conference 2004

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AIB Member and Partner News

Training is everything

After the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, many democratic governments and NGOs began to support media in a multitude of countries. Donors lined up to establish radio and television stations, networks and international stations as well as newspapers and magazines. It is no secret that functioning media helps to “democratise” society. In other words, a free flow of news, information and good entertainment.

Millions are spent in each country to get stations and networks on the air as well as newspapers distributed. In addition, training must take place for the staffs that will be working in the media. Training takes all forms: journalism, technical, management, sales and marketing, elections, gender sensitivity and countless other forms of instruction. The weakest link in all training performed clearly falls into the areas of management, sales and marketing. This is really quite amazing because without management, sales and marketing there can be no sustainable business entity. Donor after donor has chased the journalism side of training and in many countries there has been a duplication of efforts for the same kind of training.

It is now years since the fall of Communism and stations, networks



We’ve escaped, but who’s going to teach us how to work in freedom?

and publications find themselves in a critical position as they try to move forward to self-sustainability. Most are unable to “go it alone” at the present time. They continue to need the support of donors and government to help in running their properties and paying their salaries. At the same time, many NGOs and government organisations are down-sizing and have already left after years of in country residence. If there was a proper time for training management and owners, it is now!

InterMedia has found through our work that management training must take a completely different form in post Communist countries. Staffs must be taught how to market and sell in a difficult economic environment. They must be taught to establish associations, networks, cross media sales and other areas that are not taught in the “normal” Western world.

InterMedia has recently enlisted a group of top consultants to help the company in its Media Training Seminars worldwide. InterMedia customises its training seminars to meet the specific needs of a participant’s country, region and markets focusing on:

- Preparation of sales and marketing materials
- Forecasting revenue and building sales plans
- Production of presentation kits
- Sales and station promotions
- The application and usage of research
- Cross media opportunities

- Rate cards and pricing
- Staffing, training and recruiting sales persons

Now in addition to its own staff, InterMedia has experts available to help implement programmes/training in: syndication and domestic production, network operations, business plans, infrastructure rebuilding/start-ups, feasibility studies, programming and promotion.

InterMedia’s geographic expertise spans over 120 countries in the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans, Central & Eastern Europe, CIS, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. With the continued strain on economic markets worldwide, InterMedia is available to help international media survive and excel with some of the best advisors on long-term sustainability and success.

For further information, contact **Dennis R. Israel**, InterMedia Survey Institute
 1401 New York Avenue, NW 10th Floor, Washington D.C. 20005 USA
 T +1 202 434 9332 E israeld@intermedia.org

Media friends – here today, gone tomorrow

This month radio, television, press and photojournalists from around the world will have the chance to trace old colleagues with the launch of www.mediabuddies.com, the first reunion website exclusively for media people. In addition to journalists, Mediabuddies’ membership is only open for advertising, public relations and marketing executives, researchers and corporate designers, whether or not they are staff, freelance or retired.

The site has been founded by David Davis, former International President of Medialink Worldwide, the broadcast public relations company, after he had failed to trace any former colleagues from his first reporter’s job on a weekly newspaper in Surrey, England. Davis says: “Media people live in a world of their own. A world in which you meet many people, get to know some but where real friendships are hard to come by and certainly more problematical to keep. That’s the downside of an anti-social lifestyle that can change course with a single telephone call. You are faced with a future life of fleeting relationships whether you are a reporter on a trade magazine, a roving foreign correspondent for a major TV news network, or an account handler in an advertising or public relations agency.”

In his search, Davis first tried telephone calls and then the Internet. He recalls: “I quickly hit a brick wall and as my desire for answers grew, it dawned on me how much the different facets of the media world are inter-related and the number of people who had played a part in my career began to quadruple. My list of grew geometrically into print & broadcast journalists, PR executives, news photographers, corporate spokespeople and advertising specialists. Then I realised that my situation could be multiplied thousands of times and there was a vast global population of ‘lost’ friends and contacts”

First reaction to MediaBuddies has been swift and encouraging. Even before the site became fully active, more than 500 media people had registered as Founder Members from North America, United Kingdom and 8 other countries around the world. Annual membership is £10 and in addition to the search & contact service, Mediabuddies can enjoy sharing stories and memories at The Forum while an Assignments Directory has been created for freelancers only to offer their services

<http://mediabuddies.com>

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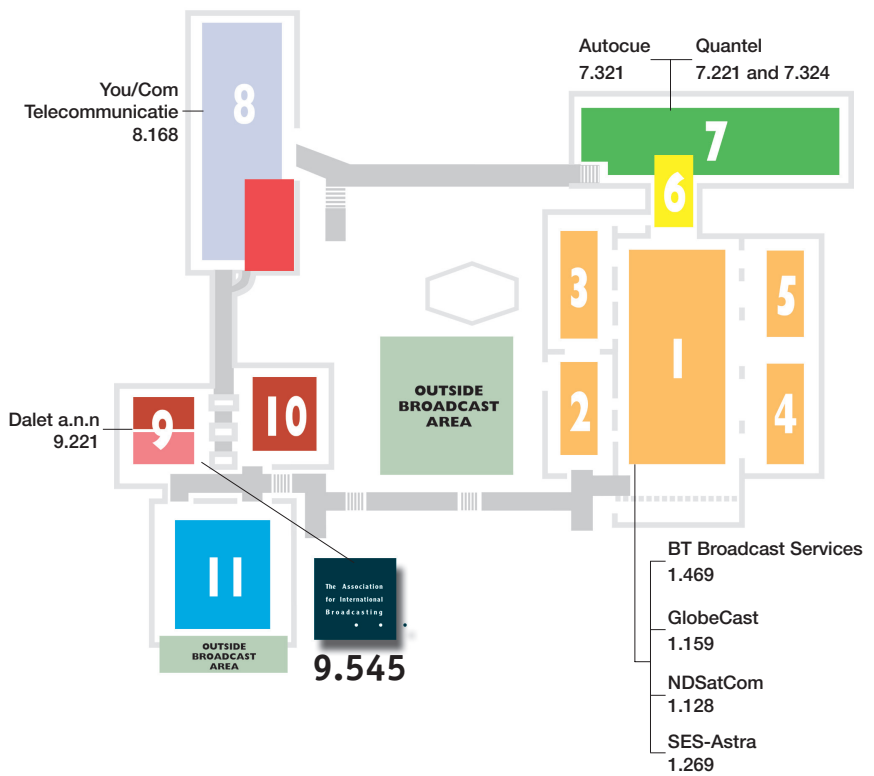
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- National Association of Shortwave Broadcasters
- Radio Canada International
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- Radio Miami International

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AIB Order Form

The AIB provides a range of publications relating to international broadcasting, from its own magazine through to reference works. You can use this form to place an order, ticking the boxes against the products you want, or log on and use the AIB's online book store at www.aib.org.uk.

The Channel

The AIB's quarterly magazine with news from the international broadcasting industry together with in-depth features, analysis and comment. Delivered straight to your door every three months.

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Written by Alan Heil, former Deputy Director of the VoA. See book review in this edition of *The Channel*.

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The annual listeners guide to all short wave broadcasting in every language - 594 pages.

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World Radio TV Handbook 2003

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Didn't we say that before...

Mervyn Hall looks at the state of broadcast news and how the annual News World conference will tackle the issues facing the industry

I seem to say it every year, but this really has been an extraordinary time for the news business. Never has a major conflict been so heavily trailed; never has a major conflict been so closely monitored.

The combination of a new approach to the media from the military, a eager willingness on the part of the broadcasters to break new ground and the arrival of technology to make that happen led to the Iraq War being covered in a way that was, for once, genuinely groundbreaking. You could regard this as the first "fly on the wall" conflict and this development led to the creation of a raft of new issues and problems for both the authorities and the media itself.

News World is in its ninth year, and it is the first working with our new partners from the Banff Television Foundation, organisers of the internationally acclaimed Banff Television Festival. This new relationship gives News World a new and wider vision, and never has there been a greater need for the news industry to get together to share its experiences and lessons, some of them necessarily hard learned.

It will be a sad News World. An unprecedented number of journalists have died as a direct result of the conflict, throwing into ugly focus the reality that pushing the boundaries of coverage can come with a terrible price. I'll bet that every single participant at News World 2003 will have lost a friend, colleague or acquaintance.

This year then, News World is unashamedly focussed on the Iraq War for its discussions, but where to start? And what to do in what, (at least to the News World programme team), looks like three very short days!



The opening day is devoted to **The News World Inquiry**. Chaired by the former Secretary of State for Defence in the UK, Michael Portillo, whose experience of Government and now with a growing career in the media will be invaluable. He will head a panel which will include legal and media expertise but which will also call on various other contributors as the subject changes through the day. The inquiry opens by investigating the embedding reporters with the services. Journalists and crews were actively encouraged to get "Up Close and Personal" with the members of their assigned units. This

undoubtedly produced some absorbing broadcasting with viewers getting live coverage closer to the action than ever before. But was this really a good thing? Did it throw any real light on what was happening and why or did it just produce more dramatic pictures that did nothing for the context of the action? There were also criticisms that reporters got too close to the soldiers in their assigned unit and began to regard them as colleagues. Did this colour the reporting?

The Inquiry then moves on to look at the Coalition's news centre and the distribution of information that it managed. In contrast to some of the criticisms of embedding, did this generate an unnecessary degree of suspicion?

After lunch, **The Inquiry** turns its attention to the use of the torrent of material that was generated by those in the field. Just how did newsrooms cope and did the new breed of electronic newsroom make life easier? While it's true that the 24 news channels thrived in the immediacy and the volume of material, were most of the viewers who were going about their daily lives as normal, tempted back to the old fashioned nightly news bulletin for their briefings?

The Inquiry also looks at the way in which pooling worked. Embedding led directly to a greater degree of pooled material being shown across all outlets. One reporter has resigned having filed a report containing false claims so while broadcast executives may be happy to take responsibility for their own staff, how do they manage when it's a rival's correspondent they have to trust?

Day Two moves away from Iraq for a while and in the session "Brand it like Beckham" examines the growing trend for celebrity and show business news in mainstream news bulletins.

Another fashionable subject for broadcast news is Health. The Sars story may have been short-lived but it created a huge reaction worldwide. No one is still quite sure whether this was justified or not and the media has some questions to answer about how responsibly it deals with complicated and emotional issues like health and medicine.

After lunch on Day Two it's back to Iraq business with "Forget the Tanks, Did the Kit Work?", an investigation of the technology that made the coverage so intimate and immediate. Everything from cameras, sound equipment, personal communications and transmission will be examined with the users and manufacturers going head-to-head.

The final day traditionally broadens the agenda and this year News World looks at two constantly contentious issues that have

relevance well beyond Iraq. The first session calls into question the need for impartiality in broadcast news. With at least one senior news executive openly questioning the traditional understanding of journalistic impartiality, we'll be hearing the defence of the old way, and some thoughts of a new path to tread. We'll hear from some who think that the explosion in news sources means that, just like newspapers, broadcasters should now be allowed to take polarised positions on major issues - even political - because consumers now have enough choice to find a broadcaster supporting the alternative point of view.

Continuing the spirit of questioning the unquestioned, News World also re-examines one of journalism's basic tenets....The Right to Know. Will journalists and the politicians ever agree on keeping secrets?

The final session is the traditional **News World Debate**. This year it takes as its theme the relationship (if there is one) between Islam and the West and the way in which both are represented in the other's Media. What many perceive as the growing divide between both cultures seems increasingly to generate issues that, while the facts may appear the same, are entirely opposed when reported in the East and the West.

News World 2003 will have all its regular events. The Mo Amin Award is once again supported by Reuters and the programme for younger journalists and students, **The Next Generation**, will again produce Masterclasses and debates.

Finally, News World 2003 is delighted to play host to one of the living legends of TV News, Walter Cronkite, who will receive the **News World Lifetime Achievement Award** at a special ceremony in Dublin.

Cronkite will also take the stage for a question and answer session as his contribution to the conference debate. As one of the most experienced broadcasters around, his observations on the Iraq War, the coverage, subsequent political controversies and the current state of journalism will be compelling.

News World 2003 is also accompanied by its traditional exhibition with a wide range of hardware manufacturers and other service companies showing their wares.

In 2002, more than 450 broadcasters, journalists and politicians gathered in Dublin for some of the most stimulating debate of the year. 2003 promises to be even better.

Mervyn Hall is Event Director for News World 2003. The event opens at The Burlington Hotel, Dublin on October 21 and continues until October 23. Full information is online at www.newsworld.org. The AIB is attending.

The United States and the World: two-way communication urgently needed

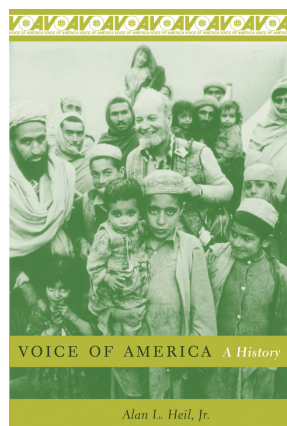
Two new books demonstrate the need for the US to communicate, and to listen to the rest of the world, says Tom Walters

Voice of America, A History: Alan Heil, Jr.
 Columbia University Press: 538 pages \$37.50 (cloth)

News from Abroad: Donald R. Shanor
 Columbia University Press: 247 pages \$24.50 (paper) \$62.50 (cloth)

Alan Heil, a regular correspondent for *The Channel*, was formerly Deputy Director of the Voice of America, having been also a foreign correspondent and in charge of the news output. He follows keenly the contemporary international broadcasting scene, and has now produced *Voice of America, A History*. And what a comprehensive and helpful history it is, from the beginnings just after Pearl Harbour in 1942, through to the multimedia, independent VOA of today, heard in more than 50 languages by more than 90 million people.

As a study of the often-agonising progress of one of the world's great international broadcasters, Alan Heil's book is wonderfully



wide-ranging, written with an insider's insights, and an illuminating and rewarding read. It is the story of a struggle. The renowned correspondent Edward R. Morrow once called on all journalists to offer "an honest mirror of events in world, to report without fear or favour" and this, says Heil, has been what "The Voice" has always attempted to do.

The tough years of World War II were followed by the witch-hunts of the McCarthy era, which almost succeeded in muffling the Voice. But VoA emerged and under successive directors built a global network, with a Charter to guide it, stressing accuracy, objectivity and comprehensiveness. There were still those who claimed that this represented far too great a freedom for the VoA, and that the broadcaster must be more tightly controlled by government. This is an ongoing argument faced by all broadcasters, especially those who broadcast across frontiers, and whose output is unfamiliar or unknown within the home country.

Heil chronicles how listeners not only in high places, but also in the most obscure and trouble-torn locations, became avid listeners. Ronald Reagan wanted the VoA to be "The Voice of Truth", and the station's



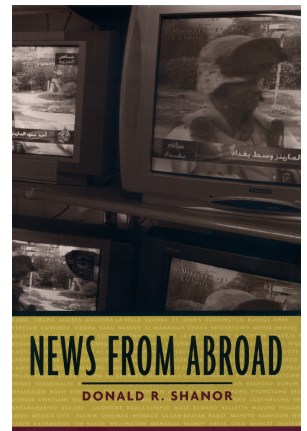
journalists have constantly had to fight to retain their objectivity, and not to become tools of a propaganda machine. This approach has paid huge dividends, building trust and a high reputation among the audience. Today, "The Voice" is independent, with the Broadcasting Board of Governors standing between it and government interference.

Alan Heil chronicles the moves into multimedia, with all the possibilities that this brings. He somewhat ruefully notes the standalone Radio Sawa and Radio Farda, which attempt a direct contact with youth audiences without VOA banner. He also feels that the present support network provided by the International Broadcasting Bureau, while taking much of the administrative burden, is too remote and unresponsive to broadcasting needs.

But Alan Heil proudly states that still "The Voice represents the nation's broadcaster of record to the world", with a more than 60-year record that makes it an indispensable part of life to so many people in so many countries.

The problems that have beset The Voice over the years have partly been due to isolationism. Few citizens of the USA know of the need for the VOA to tell the world about their country. And conversely 9/11 came as a tremendous shock, because fewer and fewer had any knowledge of events in other countries.

This is the burden of Donald R. Shanor's books **News from Abroad**. Shanor is a print journalist, who started as a foreign correspondent in the days of "trench coat journalism". But his thoughts can also be very helpful to today's broadcasters. He notes with alarm that the percentage of foreign journalism has actually fallen in recent years from 25% to 8% just before 9/11. Not wonder that event came as such a shock.



Shanor argues that even with the instant and high-quality communications of today, newspapers must maintain on-the-spot networks of journalists around the world, and that the US audience must be kept better informed about impending disasters and threats. The United States should return to "the relative abundance of foreign news that characterised most of its modern history."

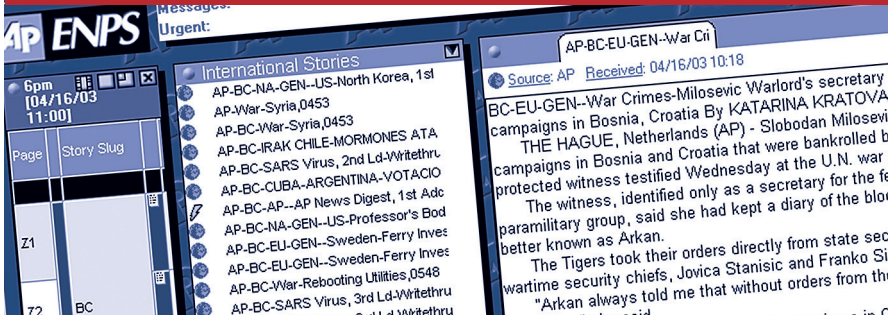
Both books are a call to arms to all journalists to ensure and increase the two-way flow of news from and to the United States. Communication between citizens of all countries is absolutely essential in the modern world.

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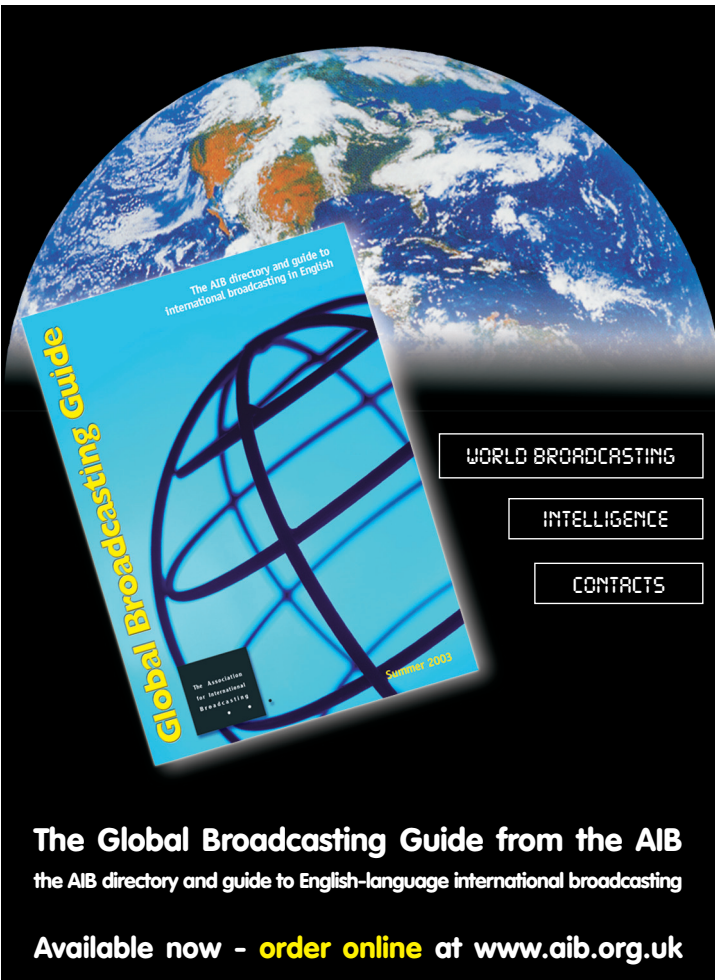
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Who'll be making the news tomorrow?

The world of satellite news gathering systems is changing, says **Paul McGhee**. Can broadcasters afford not to keep up to date?

The annual IBC technology-fest in Amsterdam is approaching again. Companies around the world are refining their new product offerings, printing their new brochures and putting on their best faces to impress you. Will any of their new gadgets and software really change your life in the next year, or will you be wearing out your feet in the concrete halls of the RAI pursuing dreams again?



The solution's here, somewhere

In the current climate, most new service offerings aim to reduce costs and improve efficiency for existing players first and only half-heartedly approach the expansion of the overall market. Despite digitisation, the Internet, broadband networks, file servers, fire-wire and many other innovations, the basic structure of the news gathering industry has really changed very little in the last decade. If anything, it has been consolidated into an ever-decreasing elite of large companies who use or provide SNG services on a regular basis and a much larger number of small broadcasters who rarely or never do. And although there has been a proliferation of 24 hour news channels, most of these are from the same large stables. Could this be about to change?

There is some evidence that many technologies proudly displayed at previous IBCs are now becoming sufficiently mature for them to start making waves and to enable small broadcasters to gather news and create

news-centred programmes on a much larger scale.

BT's SatNet system, for example, based on a proprietary small terminal is now being widely promoted. Based at BT's Madley earth station in England, BT's European hub has the ability to automatically book and schedule ad-hoc, European satellite capacity provided by Eutelsat on Atlantic Bird 2. The system aims to cut costs for existing broadcasters, but Kate Sweeney, Head of Occasional Services Sales, BT Broadcast Services, says: "BT SatNet not only revolutionizes the way that live news can be transmitted by reducing mobile uplinking costs and increasing flexibility for broadcasters, but also promotes satellite technology to other industry sectors as a viable business solution for remote communications." In short, ordinary enterprise customers will use it too.

One of the major selling points of the SatNet system is that it automates a process which used to be both manual and dependent on trained technicians (complete with their travel costs, expense accounts, salaries, hospital bills and pension schemes). Instead of a limited elite of trained news-gatherers, we can see the potential for much wider use of SNG by all kinds of entities that need to send pictures and data remotely.

Will we therefore see individual enterprises putting up their SatNet terminals and broadcasting their 'news' directly to their stakeholders via satellite? It seems unlikely that this would happen in the traditional 'newsgathering' fashion on the kinds of satellites which have dedicated occasional use capacity and mostly have a limited installed base of downlink antennas.

After all, a company that wants to reach shareholders, analysts, staff and the media

needs to do it to a critical mass of widely available receivers – such as internet-enabled computers, phones and set-top boxes, and no satellite operator can yet offer that kind of network. For PR companies just getting their video news releases of a company's annual results to all the necessary specialist media outlets is still a manual and time-consuming effort.

But another development showcased by BT recently may be the missing link. The company has invested heavily in a Digital Content Management System which it is beta-testing with selected customers such as Carlton and ITN and will be marketing under the name MediaREEL. This comprises a vast file-server complex on which broadcasters, and subsequently enterprises, can store their content for re-encoding, editing, scheduling and streaming out to a variety of networks, from low-bit-rate streams to mobile phones to full broadcast quality channels to consumer satellites.

The power of the system derives from being co-located with their principle switching system in the BT Tower through



The content looks good from here

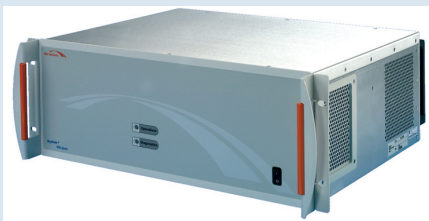
which the vast majority of the video content in the UK passes. Potentially, any news or sports feed that comes through the Tower can be accessed, tagged with meta-data, cut into bite-sized chunks and made immediately available to a G3 phone service provider to deliver as a premium service to its clients.

So the combination of small terminals, capable of being deployed by non-specialists, with large-scale storage and repurposing facilities to make the content available to mass-market networks in consumer-friendly bites could start to make the news industry much larger.

How far could this go? What about the individual consumer - are we all news gatherers now, with our digital cameras, camcorders and new-found talent for blogging? How much would you pay to uplink your wedding to a satellite, beam it to a content hub and have Auntie Mabel receive it on her mobile phone in Australia? •50 an hour? •100 an hour? It might soon be not only possible, but widespread.

Well perhaps we will not all want to keep a portable uplink terminal along with all the other junk in our garage just for those few occasions when we are newsworthy. But a professional wedding photographer or small local video studio operator might well find one to be part of his normal kit in the next few years. And compared to the small number of large broadcasters and agencies that currently use SNG, this could be a very large market indeed, and could open up the use of satellites for use by enterprises and conceivably consumers worldwide.

While most of the small terminal developments such as SatNet, or Tandberg's new DSNG unit are still relatively expensive units aimed at the battle-hardened professional newshound, some are looking ahead to this wider market. ND SatCom has its eyes firmly on the enterprise market with



Silver is the new black

its SkyWAN platform which delivers video and data over IP as a 'broadband media contribution solution'. But all this can still seem like relatively small and incremental technical improvement in a small pond. Is anyone looking at the really big picture?

One man who should know what he's doing is Misko Popovic, formerly of Intelsat and New Skies and a highly experienced



Misko Popovich

engineering manager involved with newsgathering and the ISOG establishment for many years. His start-up company in the Netherlands, The People's Network, has a grand vision for using consumer technology to uplink to satellites.

The two-way broadband technology DVB-RCS has been developed over the last few years to enable interactive television and direct broadband connectivity to places beyond the reach of ADSL networks. It works through an intelligent hub controlling large numbers of subscribers who each send a fairly small signal up to the satellite and receive a fairly large one back. This is the typical pattern for broadband internet browsing and is also, in a more extreme sense, the pattern for interactive television where only a few outbound bytes need to be sent from a viewer to interact with a TV programme.

However, the DVB-RCS system allows for up to 2 Mbps to be sent from a remote terminal - plenty of bandwidth for a decent signal in any of the MPEG flavours. The actual uplink bit rate depends upon the size of the antenna and its 'outdoor unit' amplifier, but any terminal operating to the 'open-standard' DVB-RCS protocol is likely to be more in the price range of a very small enterprise than any of the proprietary systems on the market.

There are several companies offering remote broadband internet services using DVB-RCS in Europe now and achieving price premiums over normal broadband.. However, this is likely to be a volatile and competitive market in which the operators offer nothing except remote accessibility to distinguish themselves from terrestrial broadband. Once demand is established in any

remote area, the telcos will find it cost-effective to wire them. The satellite-based operators need some further added value.

"Using DVB-RCS for video transmission solves a lot of problems at once" says Misko. "It could give the broadband operators a real added value product that terrestrial networks can't easily compete with. It can make use of spare bandwidth in the multiplex and can work with the peaks and troughs of Internet traffic for non-urgent transmissions. The terminal can be something the smallest of broadcasters could afford and using this system could bring a lot more fresh material to the screens - local news and events that wouldn't normally justify a crew and a satellite booking. You could even use a DVB-RCS terminal to create an additional fixed uplink site -say for a very remote studio for a few hundred Euros a year. One day they could even be on street corners like phone booths and you could plug in your camcorder and broadcast across Europe."

Misko's vision is beginning to attract backing. The People's Network BV was recently chosen as one of the successful bidders in a call for new projects by the European Space Agency and he is linking up with other Dutch companies to refine the concept and the terminal design.

One way or another, a lot more people will be using satellites to broadcast in the next few years. That must be good news for an industry battered by consolidation and recession.



Paul McGhee has worked in the satellite television and satellite operating industries for twenty years and runs a creative and product development consultancy in Cambridge, UK.

By invitation

Africa Watch Televi



George Twumasi, chairman of the African Public Broadcasting Foundation, and vice-chairman of AIB member African Broadcasting Network, explains that the myth of Africa being a radio-only continent is simply untrue

Africa is the world's last untapped television market. For broadcasters who discover how to meet the needs of the audience and build infrastructure, it could become one of the most important development areas.

There is already a massive and growing demand for programming of all kinds, including, sport, entertainment, and public service. There are almost 500m Africans in sub-Saharan Africa, around half under the age of 25. Current television advertising revenues outside South Africa are around \$400m and both logic and the performance of developing television markets elsewhere dictate that the figure will grow towards the \$1bn mark over the next five years.

Latest evidence produced for the African Public Broadcasting Foundation by Graham Mytton, the former head of BBC World Service research and one of the world's leading experts on broadcasting in Africa, shows that, despite poverty, television has already spread much further than

most people would guess (see table right).

Television services, however, remain mostly poor. Against this background, it is vital to create models for development of broadcasting and programme operations that are based on private-public partnership - that marry the expertise and resources of broadcasters and manufacturers with development funds. In that way, there will be the injection of capital and the generation of expertise that will lead to robust and sustainable business models.

In addition it will reinforce the fledgling African production industry and bring to the continent for the first time high quality programmes made for Africa by Africans. Strong effort is needed to kick-start this development and underpin it with the necessary funding. In this context, many agencies are being slow to wake up.

This is a golden opportunity not only to create a robust broadcast industry, but also to generate the sort of public service broadcasting that the

continent has hitherto been deprived of. Through it, there is the potential to spread knowledge that will help in the reduction of poverty.



Who's going to give me knowledge?

Good television, more than any other medium, has the power to change lives. It is a shame that some development agencies – such as the Department for International Development in the UK - do not yet seem to have caught up with the

ns Do sion



Zambia National data shows that 35% of homes have a television set and 40% tune in at some point in the week.

Nigeria. In some cities and towns access to television is as high as 90%. In other areas it is 30% and in rural areas, between 10-15% of all households. In outlying rural areas it is between 10% and 15%, though the reach is double that at 30%.

Niger In the capital city, the weekly reach of both radio and television is more or less the same - at around 90%.

Malawi Although television was introduced only five years ago, it is estimated that it already reaches 20% of the population and is growing fast.

Angola Because of the security situation, accurate data are available for only the main cities. In Luanda over 80% of homes have television, in Benguela 40%, and Lubango, 90%. This shows that television in Africa is often a communal activity - with people watching on other people's sets or at bars, cafes etc.

Mozambique In the main cities there is a similar pattern as in Angola. in Maputo, the weekly reach of television is over 90%.

Kenya TV Africa, the broadcasting company, has estimated that the number of sets had grown from 550,000 in 1995 to more than 2.5m now, suggesting a reach of in excess of 50% of the entire population of 31.6m (on an average of six viewers per set).

Overall A survey commissioned by the EU in 1996¹ suggested that by then, the total number of television receivers had grown to 67m. No recent equivalent figures are available, but it is fair to assume, on the basis of the growth in Kenya, that the total has reached at least 100m, with many sets viewed on a community basis.

massive potential of television as development communications medium. They recently wrote to me that the development of television was not a recipient of development funds because "most Africans are rural and do not have access to TV". The evidence from Graham Mytton and others suggest that is at best only partly true and that the picture is changing fast.

Of course, as things stand at the moment, the extremely poor do not – except in urban areas – have the chance to watch television (although even in small villages there are often communal viewing areas). But those who do watch are precisely the sections of society who have the power to change it, from senior politicians to petty bureaucrats.

Good public service broadcasting – covering topics such as conflict resolution, sustainable economic development and health - will give them the ideas and the knowledge to affect that change. Those that will ultimately benefit most live in rural areas.

¹ p5. Television and Democracy in Africa, by Professor George Weddell of Manchester University, and Professor Jean Andre Tudesq, of the University of Bordeaux.

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Consumers benefit from technology – can broadcasters keep pace?



The consumer electronics industry is colossal, with more than US\$300 billion spent each year by people who want the latest gadgets to keep them entertained at home and, increasingly, on the move. Average consumers in the developed world have a staggering choice of more than 20,000 different CD products, with an additional 3,500 new products launched annually. Every two years, the world of consumer electronics goes to Berlin, for the Internationale Funkausstellung – or IFA – trade fair that’s often the launching point for the newest devices and for leading edge technology.

IFA took place in Berlin at the end of August, displaying the latest trends, equipment and applications. With over 20 halls of displays, ranging from immense, complex and show business-like exhibits from the major manufacturers down to the tiniest booths occupied by small-scale manufacturers, IFA demonstrates that this is a business that, despite the collapse in the economies of many countries in recent years, gives all the impressions of continuing to enjoy success. Perhaps it’s because overall the whole industry is tied up in selling dreams to consumers.



I didn't know there was so much in it

The trends in this year’s show were definitely towards innovation for viewing and listening. On display was a considerable

range of flat screen televisions which until recently have been regarded as expensive and exotic. From now on, however, flat screens are mass market products. Prices have fallen and there is now a range of set sizes from those suitable for the bedroom or kitchen (with a 38cm screen) through to home-cinema size devices with 150 cm (60 inch) displays. Watch digital television or a DVD with these devices and you’ll certainly be enthralled – provided the content’s worthwhile, that is.

The first prototypes and high-end products for portable reception of digital terrestrial television (DVB-T) were on show, ranging from PCMCIA card receivers for notebook PCs to portable integrated DVB-T television sets. And forget about the portable TV receiver needing to have a power lead. On display from Sharp was a TV set with an in-built lithium-ion battery that allows the user to watch TV or a DVD anywhere, even if there’s no mains electricity. Up to three hours of viewing is possible – more than enough for even the longest instalment of *Lord of the Rings*.

Back in the fixed market, the move towards the Multimedia Home Platform (MHP) – unveiled a couple of years ago at the broadcasting trade fair IBC – was demonstrated with a range of set top boxes and TV sets which have the MHP protocols as standard. MHP allows compatibility for interactive functions of TV broadcasting, avoiding proprietary systems that have resulted in different digital TV platforms having varying levels of interactivity, or significant interoperability difficulties.

Networking the home may sound far fetched and unnecessary, but at IFA the idea of allowing different devices around the house

to see holiday pictures, TV recordings, DVDs or to listen to MP3 files stored on a computer was definitely on the cards. Wireless LAN is believed by many to be the solution to the home networking problems – after all, few of us want the hassle of installing network cables from our living rooms to our bedrooms via the kitchen, bathroom and study...

Wireless LAN interfaces for home cinema systems, DVD players, hard disk video recorders and a new breed of special media receivers – which decode virtually any form of multimedia content from radio to digital TV – will be available by the end of 2003, breaking down the barriers between consumer electronics and information technology.

Innovative satellite antennae will be of particular interest to the international broadcasting industry – anything that reduces the barriers to reception of satellite TV and radio is helpful in broadening the appeal of international channels. A small German company, IMC, demonstrated an A4-size antenna that can even work through glass. Simply set it up facing south, switch the antenna on and within a minute or so it finds the Astra satellite at 19.2° east. Clever stuff.

There is no doubt that the consumer will embrace all these new ideas, perhaps not all of them immediately, but certainly over time many of these devices will become commonplace. This means that every high-tech consumer will have more choice than ever before of what he or she wants to listen to or watch. For broadcasters, this is a wake-up call on two fronts: firstly make compelling, interesting and unmissable content, secondly make sure that you let consumers know that it’s there for them.



AIB Interview

Simon Spanswick

AIB Chief Executive

KS: Simon, how did the AIB come about?

SS: The AIB was formed in 1996 after a number of international broadcasters became concerned that there was no organisation that specifically addressed their needs. International broadcasting faces a different range of issues to those of domestic radio and television and the senior management felt that the best way forward was to support a trade body that could serve their particular interests, whether it was promotional activity or market intelligence. The AIB started in a small way, initially focused on international radio operators, but in the past four years has broadened its horizons significantly, covering television, satellite, manufacturers and service providers.

KS: How did you come to be involved in broadcasting?

SS: I had been interested in broadcasting since my childhood – one of my earliest ambitions was to be a television continuity announcer (or “voice behind the clock” as I remember describing it as an eight-year old). Then came an interest in international broadcasting, spurred on, bizarrely, by a copy of *Moscow News*. My parents brought a copy of the paper from an exhibition they’d been to and leafing through it I stumbled across the frequencies for Radio Moscow. Knowing that the radio in the kitchen had short wave, I tried tuning in. There was an initial thrill with discovering I could listen to broadcasts from afar and I began to explore the dial, finding more and more interesting stations to listen to. I decided that I wanted to have a career in broadcasting, although my first job was in a bank. However, I started contributing as a freelance to the *Waveguide* programme on BBC World Service. This delved into the world of international broadcasting, dealing with everything from sunspot numbers to reviews of new radio receivers. Then I was offered a job with BBC Monitoring and so I left the world of finance for broadcasting!

KS: You were at the BBC for more than ten years. What responsibilities did you have at the organisation?

SS: I spent a little under two years at Monitoring – which listens to and watches the world’s radio and television broadcasts – before moving to Corporate Affairs. In 1991 I joined the World Service’s small team that was preparing for the 1992 World Administrative Radio Conference, or WARC. At WARC, fundamental decisions are taken on the allocation of frequencies and the BBC’s mission was to ensure that there was no reduction in the short wave broadcasting bands, and at the same time that new frequencies were allocated for direct satellite

sound broadcasting. All member countries of the International Telecommunication Union squeezed their delegations into a rather too-small conference centre outside Malaga in southern Spain in February to thrash out hundreds of different frequency issues. It was my introduction first-hand to international politics, because although it sounds as though frequency allocation is straightforward and technical, it’s not. Countries collaborate over some issues to ensure other groupings’ ambitions are thwarted, and then they all change side over a different range of problems. The behind-the-scenes meetings in corridors and over coffee were some of the most interesting things to observe!



HRH the Duke of Edinburgh visiting a BBC event in 1994, hosted by Simon Spanswick

After WARC, I moved to the team of six people working on the BBC World Service funding document that has to be submitted to Britain’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office every three years. Our group had to research and write the effective business plan for World Service, covering everything from programme output planned for the three years to prioritising target areas, from transmission to audience research, marketing to personnel. I managed to keep on broadcasting, too, as I’d become the full-time presenter of *Waveguide* and we expanded the programme both in length and the range of subjects so that it covered the whole of the broadcast media.

KS: And after the BBC?

SS: I joined World Radio Network as Director of Corporate Affairs. WRN repackages international radio programmes from around the world onto 24 hour-a-day networks, and provides transmission services to broadcasters. I worked on raising the company’s profile both in the UK and abroad and on bringing together collaborative projects. We developed a successful application to the European Commission for funding to launch a pan-European radio network. We also brought together Britain’s Roke Manor Research, Loughborough University and Roberts Radio in a joint project to develop the world’s first portable DAB digital radio receiver and work on low-bit rate audio over DAB. This was part-

funded by Britain’s Department of Trade and Industry. In 2000, I was appointed launch director of a start-up that launched London’s second DAB digital radio multiplex, looking after everything from contracts with transmission and content companies to marketing via on air advertisements to outdoor poster sites!

KS: What are the key differences between commercial and public service broadcasting?

SS: These two sectors have quite markedly different characteristics. Public broadcasting has, on the whole, remarkably good funding that allows more time to be spent on getting things right, and making the very best programmes. Commercial broadcasting has far tighter budgets, but the luxury of freedom from many of the restraints that public service broadcasting has to endure.

KS: You’ve been leading the AIB full-time for a couple of years now. Why do you think the industry needs the AIB when there is such a range of other trade associations?

SS: As I explained earlier, the needs of international broadcasters and the industries that support it are distinct from national broadcasters. Very often budgets are different – international broadcasters have much less money to play with than their domestic cousins – and so that immediately creates a pressure. However, working together in an organisation like the AIB allows the pooling of resources. We provide market intelligence to members that specifically focuses on the issues facing international broadcasting. We represent members – and I’m particularly thinking of our broadcaster members here – at events which they otherwise couldn’t afford to attend. And we lobby on their behalf.

KS: You’ve mentioned broadcasters a lot. What about the other categories of membership? How do they benefit?

SS: We have members across every sector of the industry, from giants like SES-Astra through to small manufacturing concerns such as You/Com. Each of these organisations has different needs, but at the same time they have similar needs. Every AIB member wants to know what’s going on across the sector and we provide that intelligence and information. Most members want to be able to get easy, high-level access to other member organisations and being part of the AIB “club” makes that straightforward. Everyone working at the AIB recognises the different needs of different members and works hard to make sure that the right service is provided to the right category.

Simon Spanswick is Chief Executive of the Association for International Broadcasting. As the AIB - publisher of *The Channel* - embarks on a new stage in its development, **Kerry Stevenson** has been talking to Simon about the organisation and how it fits into the industry.

KS: The AIB launched an annual conference a couple of years ago. Why is this needed at a time when there are so many media-related conferences around the world?

SS: Once more this is about serving the members and meeting the needs of this particular segment of the media industry. There has never been a regularly-staged conference that covers all aspects of international broadcasting. The AIB Global Media Business Conference is the only event that looks at international radio, international television, international audience research, international delivery, international transmission – and I’ve used the word international repeatedly there on purpose. The AIB is the only organisation that covers this sector, and our conference is the only one that investigates and probes international broadcasting.

KS: Is the Global Media Business Conference getting larger or smaller?

SS: It’s definitely growing. This year’s conference had more delegates and had more speakers than our initial event in 2002. And next year’s conference will, we are quite convinced, continue the trend and be larger still. We’re delighted that Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty will host the conference in Prague. RFE/RL are a member of the AIB, and they’re based in the former Czech Parliament building in central Prague. The irony of this is clear – we’ll be having a major meeting of international broadcasters in the very building where undoubtedly the jamming of many of those same broadcasters was discussed and rubber-stamped! However, we’ll be looking forward in our 2004 Conference rather than backwards as the AIB and its members are much more concerned with securing the future.

KS: What are the particular issues facing international broadcasting today?

SS: I believe that the key issues are budgets, platforms and marketing. All are interlinked and the reason I say this is that budgets are being squeezed across the board. Few of the AIB’s broadcaster members benefit from positive budget settlements. Most have been forced to trim their activities as their funds have been cut. This affects our manufacturer and service provider members who have smaller order books, which in turn can impact on investment in technological development. It’s a vicious circle. Then there is the issue of platforms. As readers will see from this edition of *The Channel*, broadcasters are now faced with a bewildering number of platforms that they need – or indeed have – to use to ensure that they reach all their potential audience or

audiences. That costs money and when budgets are being reduced, then there are real problems. How do you maintain universal access if you’re a public service broadcaster? How do you demonstrate the return on multiple platform carriage if you’re a commercial channel? Finally, there is marketing. But it shouldn’t really be described as ‘finally’, as it’s a vital component in any broadcaster’s armoury, or indeed manufacturer, service provider or transmission company. Unless you go out there and tell people that your service exists, and that it’s worth them spending their time consuming it, how are you going to grow your audience or customer base? Yet it seems to me that in international broadcasting so much of this is left to chance. Few international broadcasters devote much resource to marketing and this ought to be one of the things to be changed.

KS: You mentioned platforms. What about DAB and DRM for international radio? Are they important?

SS: All new mainstream technology is important, and DAB and DRM are examples of this. Both offer benefits to the consumer – better sound quality, more robust reception. And now that they are coming together to co-operate to ensure a wide roll-out of the technologies and receivers, that’s good for all concerned. However, few international broadcasters have pursued distribution on DAB which is a shame. As I said earlier, it’s important that international radio broadcasters market their service and that goes as much within the domestic environment as it does in the target markets. If, as a broadcaster, you can demonstrate to your domestic stakeholders what you’re doing globally, you’re more likely to gain support for your work. Use DAB to ensure that you have a voice at home as well as abroad.

Meanwhile DRM offers amazing potential for international broadcasters, and for domestic stations that are currently on long and medium wave. But we need to see lots of DRM transmission, not just a patchy selection, and we need to see lots of low cost receivers. Remember that in Africa and Asia, incomes are tiny, and yet there are tens of millions of people who want to listen to the radio. We’ve got to find a way of ensuring that they get the improvements in sound quality that most of us take for granted.

KS: The AIB magazine, *The Channel*, is getting bigger and it’s getting more positive feedback. What is it about the publication that makes it attractive?

SS: I think that we’re immensely lucky in the AIB to have a magazine that reaches so many people in so many countries. However, it’s been touch and go as publishing trade magazines

has not been a good business to be in over the past couple of years. Luckily, we’ve had the support of several very loyal advertisers who’ve recognised that what we’ve got is something different. I think the success of *The Channel* is that it’s the only magazine that looks at international broadcasting in any detail on a regular basis, so it has a unique selling point. There’s nothing else like it out there, and we’re now publishing the largest editions we’ve ever been able to. It’s also a shop window for AIB members. We feature news and articles by our members, so it’s another marketing tool for them, another benefit of AIB membership.

KS: How do you see the AIB developing in the next year and beyond?

SS: I see the Association expanding, with many more members joining and we’ll be offering more services. We’re restructuring our membership packages, expanding from one level of membership to three. This will help underpin the financial stability of the Association, and allow us to concentrate on giving the members significant benefits. We certainly will not be favouring one category of member over another – as far as we’re concerned, the smallest member is as important as the largest, and the needs of the smallest member will be served in exactly the same way as any other member.

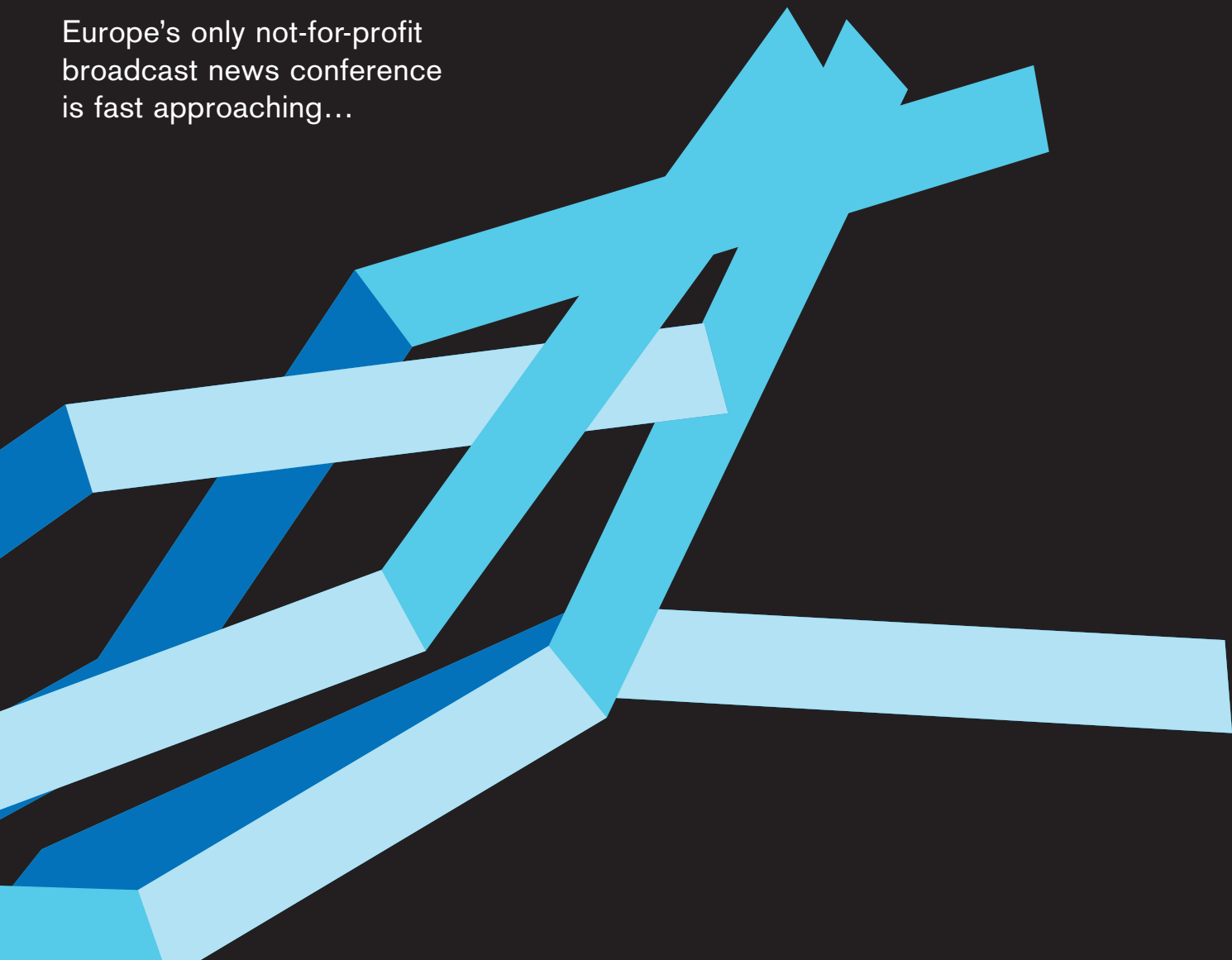
As with any trade association, the more members there are, the more benefits each member accrues. Our target is to expand the membership to at least 60 organisations by this time next year and we’re on course to achieve that. We’re also keen to expand the geographic distribution of members. Currently a majority of our members are based in North America or in northern Europe. With the opening of our office in the Asia-Pacific region, and intensified activity in Africa and the Middle East, we expect to see a broader international spread of members.

Of course, we need our members’ support, too. We need to know what they want, what we can do for them. We’re instigating a monthly phone conference among members to explore the issues that they face, and to allow the exchange of ideas. We’re starting a series of member networking dinners in different cities around the world. And we’re developing and improving our market intelligence all the time. These are all tangible benefits of membership, along with what I sometimes describe as “unseen” benefits – such as when AIB staff attend events and mention AIB members in conversation. It’s all part of the service the AIB provides, and I know that more companies will be benefiting from these over the coming months.

KS: Simon, thank you very much.

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Transmission, Platforms and Delivery

Choosing which platform to use is fundamental to every broadcaster and each year the choice gets bigger. In this special feature, *The Channel* examines the issues and highlights the choices to be made.

Delivering content is one of the greatest challenges facing international broadcasters. Today there are more platforms than ever before and thus more ways of reaching audiences than could be imagined even, perhaps, ten years ago.

Radio broadcasters have long relied on short wave or medium wave to beam their programmes to audiences worldwide. Today, the problems that plagued many broadcasters – jamming of frequencies by governments – have largely disappeared (with one or two notable exceptions). But radio audiences have deserted scratchy, noisy, interference-prone medium and short wave bands and tuned their radio sets to FM, with better sound quality and, as deregulation of the airwaves has occurred around the world, to more stations offering more choice of content that's predominantly locally produced.

Engineers have struck back, though, developing new technological solutions that could be the salvation of the AM bands. Digital Radio Mondiale, or DRM, is the prime candidate to breath life back to broadcasting below 30MHz (that means the long, medium and short wave bands). In this section of *The Channel*, AIB member VT Merlin Communications explores what DRM means and what it offers both broadcasters and listeners. DRM provides the opportunity to broadcast "FM-like" sound to listeners and the system is now a real, functioning platform, albeit that currently no consumer radio receivers exist. Given the uphill struggle that DAB Digital Radio – the other terrestrial radio system that's been on the air officially for more than eight years – has endured, will DRM be able to accelerate the acceptance of the technology by consumers and indeed the companies that manufacture radio sets?

Excluding the issue of receivers for the time being, the DRM business case looks attractive. Broadcasters on the long, medium and short wave bands have invested hundreds of millions of pounds in the transmitters and antennas and a majority of these still have many years' life in them. DRM enables existing transmission infrastructure to be used in the digital environment, without the need to invest in new transmission plant. While there is a cost for modification, this is modest in comparison with starting afresh with new equipment. There is a further upside, as Peter Jackson of VT Merlin Communications explains in his article. Broadcasters retain ownership of the transmission infrastructure. There are no "gatekeepers" who can hold a broadcaster to ransom – and that's an important consideration for international radio stations which broadcast to areas of the world where their programming is not necessarily welcome.

Despite the attractiveness of DRM, broadcasters cannot afford to rely on a single means of getting their output to audiences – and major organisations like the BBC's World Service (part of BBC Global News, another AIB member) now need to look at more than 20 distinct platforms for their content distribution. Without embracing each of these, a broadcaster's audience could dwindle rapidly. Consider the position the World Service, along with other major international radio broadcasters, is in. The list of platforms is long. Medium wave for Europe, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent. Short wave for Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America. DAB in the UK. FM in North America, and around 130 cities worldwide. Audio on demand on the Internet. Satellite – digital and analogue – over Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Americas. Cable in cities worldwide. SMS news services. DTT in the UK. The list goes on and as it grows, so do the bills. Every additional platform has a cost attached, and yet few broadcasters can afford not to develop new outlets to reach additional audiences.

In television, the message is much the same. Audiences crave more choice and they seem to be getting it. More than 1,000 TV channels are on the air over Europe, beaming every conceivable genre of programming in a multiplicity of languages. From channels serving expatriates from Japan, Sri Lanka, India or China to entertainment from household names like Discovery and MTV – it's all there, but not necessarily easily accessible to every audience. And how many viewers actually go through the hundreds of channels on an EPG? Anecdotal evidence suggests few do, with a majority of viewers sticking with the well known broadcasting brands near the top of the list. Naturally, audiences now expect to be able to access additional channel-related content on the web, with some of the content that they've seen available for download, too.

The rights issues here are significant and it's not surprising that some companies have taken to developing their own channels that they control entirely. Disney and Hallmark are examples of this approach and it seems that there are benefits in owning the content and the distribution mechanism. But what it all boils down to is getting the viewer to tune to your channel, and for that a considerable marketing effort is needed. Walk around any major city in Europe and you see billboards advertising television broadcasters – conventional terrestrial channels as well as satellite-based channels. In the mega-channel world, building the brand is a vital component of any strategy to ensure viewers tune to your output rather than that of your competitors.

There is no doubt that each component of the broadcasting industry – from content producer to delivery platform owner – is inextricably linked. Satellite operators and transmission companies would be nothing without the broadcasters. There has been aggressive selling of capacity in the satellite arena and the move to digital transmission has meant that supply has in some areas exceeded demand. This has resulted in consolidation in the sector – SES-Global, owner of AIB member SES-Astra, has become the current industry leader through the acquisition 18 months ago of Americom. Americom was the satellite division of General Electric and as a result of the deal, that company has a 20.1 per cent voting interest in SES-Global. SES-Global also has a stake in AsiaSat, providing services to the Asia-Pacific region.

Elsewhere in the industry, PanAmSat could be a take-over target. Speaking to the London *Financial Times* recently Romain Bausch, CEO of SES-Global, suggested that "PanAmSat will be acquired by Intelsat or by financial investors." For the financial community, the thought of free-flowing revenues generated by the broadcast and telecommunications business that are core to the satellite industry looks attractive. Bausch, in the same *Financial Times* article, said "It takes three years to build and launch [a satellite] but then you have an average 15 years in space to earn money. The investment is repaid after four or five years."

The successful satellite operators achieve enormous free flow of cash – in the case of SES-Global, the net operating cash flow is around €1 billion, although the net profit last year – as a result of the Americom deal – was only €205 million. That is still a healthy position to be in, and profits are likely to increase rather than decline over the coming years. That's good for all broadcasters and the rest of the industry and probably not a bad thing for consumers. All they need to do is remember which position between 1 and 1000 on the EPG their favourite channels are.



Transmission, Pla

Transmission and delivery are fundamental to the survival and growth of broadcasters need the help of experts to ensure their programmes reach their audience.

This directory provides selected data on a range of players in the industry -

Terrestrial transmission

Broadcasting Center Europe

Operates long, medium and short wave transmitters providing coverage to much of Europe. Transmits RTL programming to Luxembourg, France and Germany. Involved in DRM transmission. Based in Luxembourg.

Crown Castle International

Formed from the former BBC Transmission, Crown Castle provides UK transmission for the BBC's Home Services, plus a range of commercial stations on AM and FM, as well as DAB Digital Radio. Owns, with the BBC and BSkyB, the Freeview DTT platform in the UK. Based in the UK.

ntl:

The UK-based transmission company, operating the commercial television network together with radio for a majority of the UK's commercial radio stations. Also operates a playout and virtual studio centre in west London and uplink facilities in the UK. Based in the UK and Singapore



Sentech

The largest signal distributor in Africa, operating radio, television and satellite services for SABC, M-Net, CNN and the BBC within and across the continent. Based in South Africa.

TDF

Operates the national transmission network in France covering radio and television. Also operates the short wave transmitters used by Radio France Internationale. Involved in DAB, DRM and DVB. Based in France.

T-Systems Media&Broadcast

Provides radio and television broadcasting infrastructure within Germany, plus short wave facilities for Deutsche Welle and other international radio stations. Involved in DAB, DRM and DVB. Based in Germany.

VT Merlin Communications

AIB Member

Provides broadcasting facilities on short and medium wave to BBC World Service and a range of other international broadcasters. Operates the BBC's overseas transmitting stations and offers a transmission brokerage service to broadcasters worldwide.

20 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3ES, UK
T + 44 20 7969 0000

www.vtplc.com/merlin

WRMI

AIB Member

Based in Florida, USA, WRMI operates a short wave transmitter that allows broadcasters to reach large parts of the Americas. WRMI provides a complete and cost-effective service to broadcasters needing to target this region.

175 Fontainebleau Blvd., Suite 1N4,
Miami, Florida 33172 USA
T +1 305 559 9764

www.wrmi.net

WRN

AIB Member

WRN Transmission provides broadcasters with bespoke, innovative solutions for worldwide audio distribution via satellite (digital and analogue), terrestrial relay (FM, AM and SW transmissions), IP/Internet, ISDN and fibre connectivity.

Wyvil Court, Wyvil Road, London SW8 2TG, UK
T +44 20 7896 9000

www.wrn.org

Satellite delivery

Amos

Amos 1 at 4° west covers central eastern Europe and the Middle East; Amos 2, at the same orbital position, provides coverage of the Middle East and Europe, plus the east coast of the USA.

Arabsat

Satellites covering the Middle East and western Europe - Arabsat 2A, 2C, 2D and 3A at 26° east, 2B at 30.5° east.

AsiaSat

AsiaSat operates three satellites - AsiaSat 2 at 100.5° east, 3S at 105.5° east and 4 at 122° east covering Asia, the Middle East and Australasia. Part owned by SES-Global.

EurAsiaSat

Operates Eurasiasat-1, also known as Turksat-2A. Principal coverage is Central Asia, Middle East, Europe.

Europe*Star

Europe*Star 1 at 45° east with coverage of Europe, Middle East, southern Africa, India and SE Asia; Europe*Star B at 47.5° east providing services in Europe.

Eutelsat

Operates 16 geostationary satellites and four inclined-orbit satellites with almost global coverage.



Inmarsat

Originally established to provide maritime communications services, Inmarsat today provides communications for the broadcast industry, in particular SNG and low-bit rate video feeds.

Insat

The provider of satellite services to India, with seven operational satellites providing coverage of the sub-continent and surrounding region.

Intelsat

Operating more than 20 satellites with almost global coverage.

InterSputnik

Three satellites providing coverage of the entire FSU, plus the Middle East, north-east Africa, China and parts of Asia.

Loral Space & Communications

Currently in Chapter 11 in the USA, but continuing to operate services from its Telstar fleet that is being purchased by Intelsat.

Measat

A Malaysian operator with two current satellites providing coverage of Asia and the Pacific.

Platforms and Delivery

of every broadcaster. With an increasing range of platforms and technologies,
 to their audiences.

more detailed information is available from **AIB Consulting**.

New Skies Satellites

Operates six satellites offering coverage of Asia, trans-Atlantic, Europe, Africa, Middle East and Latin America. Also provides connectivity between the Pacific Rim and North America.

Nilesat

Egyptian operator, with two satellites covering the Middle East and North Africa.

Optus

Australian operator with four satellites offering coverage of the Australasian region.

PanAmSat

Operates 23 satellites under the Galaxy, PAS, Horizons and SBS brands. Coverage of every continent and used by broadcasters worldwide.

SES-Americom

Part of the SES-Global company, SES-Americom currently operates 18 satellites under the AAP, AMC, G-Star, Satcom, Sirius, Spacenet and TDRS names. A further six AMC satellites are scheduled for launch.

SES-Astra

AIB Member

From its headquarters in Luxembourg, SES-Astra is the European leader in DTH, delivering around 1100 TV and radio services to some 92 million European homes, including a unique audience reach in major markets such as Germany, France and the UK. The current fleet comprises 13 satellites.

SES-Astra SA, Chateau de Betzdorf, L-6815 Betzdorf, Luxembourg

T +352 710 7251

www.ses-astra.com

Sirius Satellite System

Operates three satellites providing DTH and other services principally to the Nordic region: Sirius W and Sirius 3 at 5° east and Sirius 2 at 4.8° east.

Telesat

A pioneer in satellite communications, with the world's first commercial domestic comms satellite launched in 1972. Today, Telesat operates three satellites covering North America and parts of central America.

Thaicom

Based in Thailand, Thaicom operates three satellites that provide principal coverage of south-east Asia, and a global beam covering much of Africa, Europe, the FSU and Australia.

WorldSpace

The pioneer of satellite radio with two operational satellites covering Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

Uplink facilities

APV

Uplink facilities in Hong Kong and Singapore and mobile service in the Asia region.

Atlanta International Teleport

AIT currently delivers communications links to the US, Europe, Central and South America, Africa and the Caribbean. AIT transmits to NewSkies, Intelsat, SatMex and PanAmSat.

BT Broadcast Services

AIB Member

BT Broadcast Services provides leading-edge video, audio and data transmission solutions for broadcasters and content owners. BT Broadcast Services offers a fully integrated and managed global digital fibre and satellite network and a worldwide fixed and mobile uplink infrastructure.

BT Broadcast Services

T +44 20 7843 3100

www.broadcast.bt.com

GlobeCast

AIB Member

A subsidiary of France Telecom, GlobeCast is a global leader in satellite transmission services for professional broadcast, enterprise multimedia and Internet content delivery. GlobeCast has 16 offices and teleports across Europe, America, Asia, Australia, Middle East and Africa and a fleet of 50 mobile transmission and production trucks.

200 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8XZ, UK

T +44 20 7430 4400

www.globecast.com

Kingston inmedia

Kingston inmedia operates teleports for broadcasters and corporates, as well as SNG and production trucks.

ND SatCom

AIB Member

ND SatCom is a leading global supplier of satellite-based broadcast solutions, including uplink - mobile and fixed - and SNG trucks. ND SatCom has been active in the field of TV groundstations for many

years and offers a range of successful products, from small, compact uplink and downlink stations to large systems with antennas of up to 13 m in diameter.

PO Box, 88039 Friedrichshafen, Germany

T +49 7545 939 0

www.ndsatcom.com

NPR Satellite Services

Offers satellite uplinking facility for audio and video principally to public radio stations in the USA.

ntl:

Provides uplink facilities, plus mobile uplink and production trucks.

Purple Turtle Communications

South Africa-based company providing mobile and fixed uplink facilities.

RR Satellite Communications

RR Satellite Communications is a provider of uplink, downlink and turnaround services via flyaway and transportable systems, Rehovot and Tel Aviv teleports with dishes for C-Band and Ku-Band (2.4m to 12m)

SISlink

Europe's largest independent satellite uplink provider, with more than 40 satellite uplinks across Europe.

World Radio Network

AIB Member

Provides uplink facilities for broadcasters - see main entry under Terrestrial Transmission.

The Association
for International
Broadcasting

• • •

This directory of transmission and uplink facilities has been compiled by the AIB from its extensive database that covers all aspects of broadcasting, transmission and delivery.

Through its Consulting Division, the AIB provides a range of data and reports on the sector, drawing on the AIB's in-house resources and a range of experts world-wide.

To discuss how AIB Consulting can help you formulate strategies and evaluate markets, contact:
consulting@aib.org.uk
 or telephone +44 (0) 20 8297 3993.



Masts at VT Merlin Communications
Rampisham transmitting station in
south-west England, now beaming
digital short wave transmissions



AM'S SALVATION?

Hundreds of millions of people tune to the short, medium and long wave radio broadcasts every day. But how long will their loyalty remain true to this oldest form of broadcasting? Perhaps the salvation will be Digital Radio Mondiale, now on the air for real.

Peter Jackson of AIB Member, VT Merlin Communications, suggests it's definitely the way forward.

Merlin (or VT Merlin as it has now become) was, along with 19 other organisations with direct interests in international broadcasting, one of the group that formed the DRM (Digital Radio Mondiale) Consortium in April 1998 in Guangzhou, China. Some five years later the consortium has swelled to over 80 Members representing 30 countries and has developed and standardised a new digital transmission system for use in the long, medium and short wave bands, in the process revolutionising the quality of radio broadcasts delivered in these bands.

For a transmission provider, which depends heavily on the revenue from transmitting radio broadcasts in the MW and SW bands, the attractions of a technology like that of DRM are obvious. Unlike most previous digital terrestrial broadcasting systems, it is possible to adapt existing analogue transmission equipment to carry the new digital signals without losing the existing analogue facility. Where the transmitter is still relatively young this is a significant advantage, as the cost of a new high power SW or MW transmitter is considerable (•0.5 to •1million). The ability to adapt existing analogue transmitters was also crucial in speeding up the system development by allowing extensive field-testing from a very early programme stage.

DRM on the air

The DRM system has now successfully moved from the test transmission stage to scheduled broadcasts from a number of the world's leading international broadcasters. This occurred during the recent WRC-03 conference in Geneva where delegates from the Administrations of dozens of countries were able to experience live broadcasts from a dozen or more different transmitters sites located in widely spread locations around the world (see *The Channel*, July 2003). Details of DRM transmissions appear in the AIB's *Global Broadcasting Guide* (see order form on page 13).

Within VT Merlin considerable investment has already been made into the field-testing stages of DRM transmissions and now into scheduled transmissions. This has so far involved the conversion of two 500kW Marconi transmitters at Rampisham (in

south-west England) which provide daily DRM short wave transmissions for a number of international broadcasters, and the purchase and installation of a new 200kW Nautel MW transmitter at the Orfordness medium wave site (on Britain's east coast), which provides several hours per day of DRM transmissions into western Europe on 1296kHz. Work is also continuing on the adaptation of a third 500kW Marconi short wave transmitter at Rampisham. However this can only be the early stage of what will be a long-term programme of investment in transmitter conversion or provision and in the infrastructure, which will be needed to support a fully integrated DRM transmission system across sites spanning the world.

The introduction of a digital transmission system for international broadcasting in the MW and SW bands has profound implications not just for the transmitters and receivers but also for the transmission chain and the monitoring and control of the transmission chain. The introduction of a system which can support audio quality close to FM mono on SW and FM stereo on MW means that the quality of studio production needs to be equivalent at least to that for FM and that distribution to the transmitters must also reflect this. Otherwise listeners will not fully benefit from the performance improvement, over analogue transmission, of which the system is capable.

The introduction of the DRM system also provides the opportunity to transmit a limited amount of data to the listener along with the audio. This data can be associated with the transmitted programme, such as an electronic programme guide (EPG) carrying details on current and future programme content together with transmission frequencies and schedules, or other dissociated data, such as weather forecasts, for example. All of this data must be assembled at the head-end and integrated into the DRM multiplexes so that it is transmitted on the correct transmitters at the right time. This is not something that has previously been a characteristic of MW or SW broadcasting and its introduction will require care and attention to detail if it is to enhance, rather than detract from, the listeners' experience.

Why the need?

Of course it could be asked why so much effort is going into updating what to some might seem an old fashioned and outdated technology. This can be answered by looking at the unique

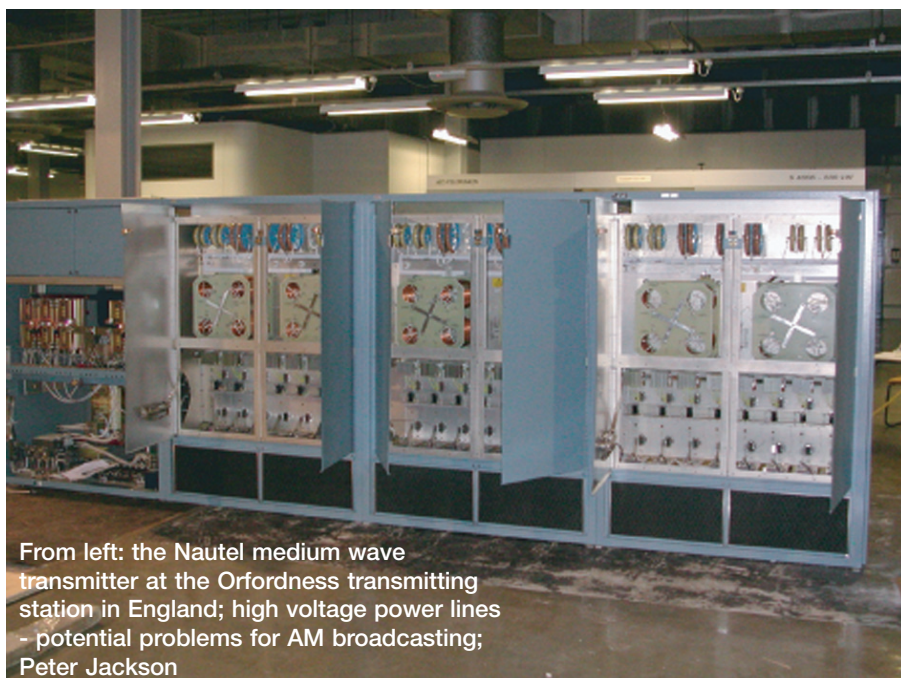
properties of SW, MW and LW broadcasting which cannot all be provided by competitors such as the Internet or a satellite delivery system.

Firstly, transmissions in these bands can provide coverage over large geographical areas at a relatively low capital outlay and with low risk and high security. The transmissions can also be received both within buildings on portable receivers and in moving vehicles. Because both the transmission frequencies used and the data rate transmitted are low, the power requirements of the receivers can also be modest, leading to useful battery lifetimes and therefore reasonable economy. The transmitter plant can also be easily maintained as it is all terrestrially based.

The cost of reaching listeners via radio transmission is largely fixed and therefore the cost per listener declines the greater the number of listeners. In many cases it will prove possible to convert existing transmitters to carry DRM transmissions so that the incremental cost of adding the capability, at least at the introductory stage, is quite modest. Several hundreds of millions of people in the world are accustomed to receiving news and information via small low cost portable AM radio sets and the number of such radio sets sold to date runs to well over one billion. This means that there is a huge potential market for receiver manufacturers to tap if they can produce DRM capable receivers at an attractive price. If so the difference in quality between the current analogue services and the DRM digital services is immediately obvious to listeners and provides a big incentive to trade up to a new DRM capable receiver.

Market forces

However, any strategic analysis needs to examine what might prevent DRM succeeding in the market place and replacing the current analogue AM transmission system. Certainly the price of consumer receivers will be crucial but current work to develop a first generation chip or chip set is well advanced and this should lead to first consumer receivers appearing on the market in late 2004 or early 2005 with costs declining as further generations of chips lead to lower receiver prices. Also crucial will be the number of DRM broadcast available on air to attract listeners into making an investment in a new receiver. It is worth noting that both the number of broadcasters and the length of transmissions are increasing and these should reach an



From left: the Nautel medium wave transmitter at the Orfordness transmitting station in England; high voltage power lines - potential problems for AM broadcasting; Peter Jackson



attractive level by the time that the first receivers become available. Broadcasters and transmission operators also have advanced plans for making the investment in transmission plant which will enable this progressive increase in broadcasting hours in the years ahead. So it would seem that the wind is set fair for a successful outcome. However plans being implemented by electricity utility companies in some countries, in particular Europe and the US, could ultimately lead to the ending of broadcasting, or at least the ability to receive broadcasts, in most of the AM bands in these countries.

Power lines cloud the future

A number of power utility companies in Europe and the U.S.A. are proposing to use their existing cable distribution systems to provide broadband Internet services to existing customers. They propose to do this by providing a high-speed data connection to the Internet at a point near to consumers' homes. They would then provide a connection between this point and the consumer by superimposing a high-level high speed data signal onto the existing power distribution cabling, often at the local substation. This distributed signal has a spectrum which continues up into the SW bands. This provides the subscribers' homes with a permanent connection to the Internet.

Because the power cable is not designed as a communications cable and has a high level signal (the mains supply) already on it, it requires a high level signal to be superimposed if the data signal is to be successfully retrieved, some distance away, at the customer's home. Also due to the poor communications characteristic of power cables, particularly at higher frequencies up towards 15 or 20 MHz (i.e. into the SW bands), there is a considerable level of radiated signal close to the cable. There is extensive signal radiation from the street cable, if not buried, and from the domestic cable, which is used as the means of Internet distribution to the connected PC(s).

As a consequence signals are radiated from these power cables within the SW broadcast bands and other bands such as the aeronautical and amateur radio bands) at a level which can render reception close to the home and inside the home of very poor or unusable quality. In other words the system pollutes the radio frequency (RF) spectrum to a level well above the normal background level. Unfortunately, for the power company, operating

PLC/PLT systems at signal levels where this pollution does not occur renders them incapable of providing satisfactory Internet service.

However this pollution problem has so far not been sufficient deterrent to change the minds of the utility companies. National standards are already being set in some European countries, which will allow these signals to cause significant pollution to the SW RF spectrum. Nevertheless some of the power utilities are even calling for these existing limits to be revised upwards, as their systems do not yet work entirely reliably.

Within the European Union, the European Commission has decided to call for submissions from experts in the field before making a determination on whether these systems should benefit from existing or more relaxed standards. Indeed the question is being raised in the EC as to whether it is worth sacrificing reception and use of the AM bands in order to allow the rollout of PLC/PLT systems to increase competition and accelerate European broadband Internet use. This in turn raises questions as to the obligations of European Administrations under the ITU to protect this spectrum. As all these Administrations have agreed to abide by what is, in effect, a treaty on spectrum use it would set a dangerous precedent if the EC were to overrule the continued obligations for protecting the spectrum for which its Member countries had signed up.

Notwithstanding the imminent danger posed by PLC developments, all the pieces of the DRM jigsaw are in place, or close to being in place, which should see the successful introduction of DRM services to the mass market. The expected availability of first consumer receivers towards the end of 2004 will provide the real test of whether DRM is a system destined to succeed and keep alive broadcasting in the AM bands for another fifty years. If so the future of the international transmission business should be assured for companies like VT Merlin Communications.

Web links

www.drm.org

www.vtplc.com/merlin



Costing the earth...and Sky



You've secured your space segment, put your uplink facility in place, and have the digital playout gently humming. **Julian Clover** looks at the hidden costs behind satellite broadcasting.

Look through the various satellite guides that list the available channels and a few things might catch your eye. There is the curious situation that sees broadcasters that are available free to air on some platforms, including other satellites, encoding their signals. Then there are the broadcasters who transmit different versions of the same channel from a single satellite position.



Am I looking the right way?

For the German language broadcasters on Astra there is a simple answer with the big entertainment channels, RTL Television, Sat 1 and Pro7 all looking to the neighbouring markets of Austria and Switzerland to bring in additional advertising revenues. The majority of the

schedule will follow that of the parent channel, though occasionally rights issues will see the absence of a bought-in series, or an early evening news magazine as a sop to the regulator. In the early days of RTL Television's Swiss feed, the licensing authorities forbid the channel from running any locally originated programming. The result was that RTL was able to secure advertising revenue with little investment in the market.

Modern satellites are capable of simultaneously covering wide geographical areas while restricting a handful of transponders to a tight beam. It's one of these beams on the Astra 2D satellite that has enabled the BBC to drop encryption from its UK domestic services. The policy has been largely successful, but has left Scottish football fans high and dry, because BBC Scotland's deal with the Scottish Premier League is restricted to Scotland itself for all but the 'Old Firm' derby matches between Rangers and Celtic. The rights south of the border belong to the pay-per-view operator Setanta Sport. Broadcasters such as Turner Classic Movies can keep many of its feeds in the clear because all of the movies come from the Turner Broadcasting library. The BBC may begin to wish it was in the same position.

Satellite platforms will often group themselves together in a particular part of the band, even if their transmissions are encrypted, making reception of some international channels difficult. Reception equipment may often be optimised for a particular part of the band. After all why should a broadcaster help the viewer spend time watching services other than its own? The Dutch platform Canal Digitaal, recently purchased from the Canal+ Group by cable operator UPC, runs its channels in the upper reaches of the Ku-band. It may later be convenient that the UPC Direct service to Central and Eastern Europe sits nearby. At the other end of the scale are the Digital+ channels transmitting to Spain.

Since its summer merger Digital+, formed through the combination of Canal Satellite Digital and Via Digital, has been dual illuminating from the Astra and Hispasat satellites. Such a situation is commonplace to give time for both operator and subscribers to get used to the new landscape. Digital+ has committed to an 18-month period during which the dual illumination will continue. If 18 months sounds a long time then remember the political considerations that are at play. Hispasat is the 'Spanish satellite' broadcasting not just to Spain and Portugal, but also



Spanish-speaking Latin America. The loss of its key tenant would be as much a blow to national pride as the bank balances.

Fiscal concerns are very much in the mind of Digital+, which has its minds on the profits its predecessors were never able to achieve. According to the Spanish newspaper *Expansion* most of the contracts between Hispasat lapses in the last quarter of this year. Even a renewal would not necessarily be binding because the original commitment was made by Telefonica itself rather than its digital platform. The Astra contract still has five years to run and cancellation would result in Digital+ being liable for €300 million compensation to SES-Astra.

700,000 subscribers currently receive the Hispasat signal, compared to the 1.5 million who tune in through the Astra satellites, a simple decision one might think, particularly when the estimated €100 million cost of repositioning the dishes from Astra to Hispasat is taken into consideration.

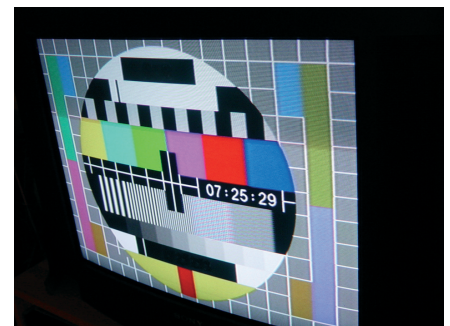
Spain is not the only country where the merger of two satellite platforms has led to a potential reduction in the amount of satellite capacity taken by a platform operator. The launch of Sky Italia, though the

merger of Tele+ with Stream and subsequent takeover by News Corp, was less hazardous because both operators were positioned on the Eutelsat Hotbird. Poland's struggling pay-TV market still has two platforms competing, but the folding of Wizja TV into Cyfra+ was relatively straightforward, if only due to the few subscribers held by the UPC-owned platform Wizja before the merger.

Even if the satellites are as one there are still additional costs that can rack up for the operators. The obvious cost is encryption. Not just the system itself, but also the recommended card replacement, as the technology providers attempt to keep at least one step ahead of the hackers. A recently merged broadcaster might consider running two encryption systems side by side in a process known as Simulcrypt. This saves the broadcaster from having to transmit the same set of pictures more than once, but will add to the amount of bandwidth needed for each channel, putting more pressure on costs.

Cyfra+ still runs two encryption systems more than two years after its merger, carrying the Cryptoworks system it inherited from Wizja, alongside its own MediaGuard system. Sky Italia

finds itself running three encryption systems, Irdeto, MediaGuard and Videoguard, the result of previous ownership structures within the Italian market. Whatever the technical advantages of one system over another, platform operators will inevitably go with the system over which they hold some financial control. In the past new channels have been made available only to subscribers with a particular technical set-up.



Interesting viewing on channel 9874

With all these encryption systems taking up capacity it may be time to look at statistical multiplexing. Today the majority of satellite broadcasters use the technology, which has also found its way into contribution feeds with as many as five channels included. According to Tandberg Television encoder product manager Philip Bird multiplexes can carry up to 16 channels providing greater

Costing the earth...and Sky

opportunities for saving, which can be as much as 30 per cent of capacity. Bird says that another five per cent can probably be squeezed out of existing transmission technologies before R&D time is better spent elsewhere.

Away from the technology, carriage agreements are needed to ensure that your channel appears within the electronic programme guide, and sometimes to help secure a more prominent position within the guide. The number of free-to-air channels available from Astra at 19 degrees East are often thought of as a means to boost subscription packages in certain markets – it may very often be the case that the same channels are just as good a reason not to subscribe in the first place – their appearance within the EPG may be a different matter.

Having a collection of major German broadcasters may not necessarily sell a digital package in France, or vice versa, so a platform operator will probably only choose to strike an agreement with those channels that bring something new to the party. DVB rules mean that every receiver carrying the DVB mark must be obliged to receive every unencrypted signal that is available. Depending on the satellite receiver, these additional channels may be added to the bottom of the list or more likely be

added individually by the subscriber.

In the UK electronic programme guides are regulated by Oftel, one of the many communications regulators, which will fold into Ofcom at the turn of the year. Originally channels were placed in the Sky

not need encryption but did require conditional access, it was able to negotiate space higher up the order for its digital-only channels BBC Three and BBC Four.

Sky is obliged to offer carriage to all comers, though the days of 50p per subscriber carriage fees have long since passed, as increasing subscriber numbers combine with the City's need to see increased per subscriber revenues.

The same goes for a position on the EPG and the accompanying programme information. The regulator approves the charges, but there was concern from smaller TV broadcasters and radio stations late in 2002, when Sky tripled its charges. TV broadcasters are now required to pay £35,000 per year in addition to Sky's conditional access charges, increasing to £75,000 for free-to-air transmissions. Conditional Access charges will be subject to negotiation, as will

interactive services with additional fees payable for pay-per-view transactions, or televoting applications.

Julian Clover is editor of Broadband TV News, a weekly electronic magazine that covers all aspects of satellite TV and interactivity. www.broadbandtvnews.com



So many screens, so little time

Guide EPG on a first come, first served basis, with three-channel spacing to allow spin-off channels to sit alongside their parents. In recent weeks there has been some reshuffling as newly launched radio channels take places previously occupied by their fallen comrades. The higher up the EPG the better, so when the BBC decided it may

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Exponential Potential

Satellite Space Segment Set for Super Digitalisation

It isn't that long ago – certainly less than a decade – that TV signals delivered by satellite required a full transponder to deliver the signal directly to home. Those heady days of entirely analogue delivery, wholly government-owned satellites and 30 metre transmit antennas are rapidly disappearing into the memories of fewer and fewer industry engineers and executives. Thank goodness!

At first, the introduction of digitalisation threw the industry into a bit of a panic. Firstly, satellite operators could now make much better use of the satellite space segment frequencies available to them; with the adoption of the MPEG2 compression standard they could easily accommodate four 9MHz channels within a 36MHz transponder. With rapid improvements in the MPEG2 encoding equipment, this increased twofold to provide eight TV channels in the same amount of space segment. Further, the introduction of statistical multiplexing improved that yield to between ten or even twelve television channels per satellite transponder.

The satellite operators suddenly had much more stock in their warehouse than had previously been anticipated and satellite manufacturers were concerned about future sales in terms of their order book. The search for more televisual content had begun. So we saw – and still see – the proliferation of the narrow-interest or niche-market TV channels developing; shopping, holiday, additional sporting information, historical and geographical channels, et al.. The price of a TV channel on a satellite transponder reduced in price sufficiently to allow access to those TV broadcasters for whom the price barriers of entry had previously been far too high into the market.

Using the same techniques, the digitisation of the satellite space segment meant that private data networks could be managed cost effectively by corporates and enterprise business alike.

The MPEG2 encoding and compression standard has served the industry – and the consumer – extraordinarily well. It has supported our digits, carried our conditional access information, secured the set-top-box as a household item and allowed us to interact with our TV sets as never before.

In order to get the industry this far, there has been an inordinate effort by the satellite engineering community to appropriately “groom” each transponder on every satellite, to accommodate the digital channels. This has been undertaken to minimize wastage of valuable space segment frequencies available for commercialisation by the operator. Some have performed this rather better than others; and there is still some way to go before there is an absolute analogue cut-off date for satellite delivered

services – even though some TV channels have called time on their own analogue services.



Lots more capacity in the digital environment

There is no doubt that the increased space segment capacity availability versus the increase in channel content has been a hard-fought balancing act and has certainly taken its toll in transponder revenue in recent years – especially since the dot.com bubble burst. This year reported revenues for fixed satellite service operators reduced 6% according to Euroconsults’ 10th edition of the World Satellite Communications & Broadcasting market Survey. The balancing act is certainly responsible for a number of mergers and acquisitions throughout the industry, such as SES-Global (GE Americom and partnership with AsiaSat), Intelsat (with its recent Loral satellite procurement), Eutelsat (acquisition of the Steliat satellite, now AB3) amongst others.

To date, the satellite operators have largely held their own. They have maintained and increased their customer base and manage satellite procurement to meet their ongoing needs. I asked a number of representatives for their insight into the current – and future – situation.

Sabrina Cubbon, General Manager, Marketing at AsiaSat, “Over 97% of the television services on AsiaSat are now digital, we therefore do not expect the ongoing process of digitalisation would have a significant impact on our future revenue. Customers who have transformed from analogue to digital transmission use its existing capacity to launch more channels. New players are able to launch new services at a lower entry cost as digitalisation allows them to lease less capacity for regional coverage on a hot bird. Though the global transponder market is yet to recover, we are optimistic in the long term, in particular the C-band Asian market where supply is still limited. With its ubiquitous reach and wide coverage, satellite-based solutions are the most ideal for the diverse Asia Pacific region.”

Eutelsat's Regional Director for Scandinavia and Asia, Jan Grondrup-Vivanco comments that, "Back in 1995 or so, we [the global satellite industry] were only looking at around 1,000 satellite TV channels worldwide. Today we

[the satellite operators] provide delivery platforms for over 10,000 channels globally. Digitisation has made getting on air down significantly more cost-effective and opened up important new markets in niche areas, such as ethnic and local broadcasters as well as educational establishments.



Does this give us more capacity?

Eutelsat has always kept pace with development and strives to utilize digital techniques as fully as possible for the future. You can see this with the introduction of Eutelsat's OpenSky service, which moves us towards the MPEG4 delivery mechanism. Also, with Eutelsat's Skyplex operating in the Ka-Band, smaller broadcasters are able to enjoy the benefits of onboard satellite multiplexing which allow transmission from their own facilities directly to the satellite. This drives down delivery costs further. We have always been flexible in our approach to increasing channel needs and we have a firm fix on future developments"

The most recently launched satellites are often very high-powered and better prepared for the latest modulation techniques – such as 8PSK and 16QAM.

"New Skies has built a reputation for the delivery of high quality digital platform services which cover roughly 80% of the world's population. Linearizers in the transponders of our new satellites allow for higher order digital modulation and more efficient use of the frequency spectrum. This in turn allows for more cost-effective video contribution and distribution. In addition to optimizing our satellite transponder designs for digital transmissions, we focus equally on ensuring our own teleports, as well as the facilities of our partner teleports, are engineered for high quality digital transmissions." said Chris Schram, VP, Network Engineering and Operations.

But, as before, when the industry was poised on the cusp of analogue to digital migration, I believe it is once again poised between digitalisation and "super-digitalisation". The scenario is about to be repeated. And I suspect that as the last

changeover has occurred in rather less than a decade, the new changeover may happen in even a shorter time-frame.

As MPEG2 and QPSK modulation have served the industry well, improving delivery techniques (compression and modulation), markets and content, the industry is set once again to face an exponential gearshift. Consider this; MPEG4 compression with QPSK modulation can – today - deliver a suitable video (or data) channel at 400kbps. This increases the transponder channel yield from 12 channels per transponder to around 110! MPEG4 with 8PSK modulation could yield around 170 channels at the same data rate. Already with us, are satellite networks utilizing 16QAM modulation, achieved by using the latest high-powered, linearized transponders. This really put the proverbial cat amongst the pigeons. Each transponder now has the potential of carrying upwards of 300 video/data channels. These are not future technologies - they are here and now!

Once again, we will (must) see the entry barrier price levels being significantly reduced, allowing even smaller niche markets to become connected! The potential for religious, ethnic, political, sporting information, educational, regional, local and perhaps even "individual" channels may well be the prospects on the horizon. Perhaps the platform for a real family channel is not too far off in the future – sounds a bit off the wall I know, but many of us already sit in our houses watching people sitting in theirs for weeks on end. OK, I accept that that is perhaps a niche too far, but the technology is *already* available to take our beloved industry to its next natural phase. What we really need is the imagination in content provision which goes beyond the repeats of "I love Lucy" and really brings out the possibilities for a real global village. We should perhaps think in terms of expanding our connectivity rather than just our broadcast ability. As a result, technology means that TV equals Data and broadcast will soon equal duplex. It remains to be seen how quickly *regulation* can keep up – again!

The potential really is exponential – and in a very short timeframe.



Anver Anderson is the AIB's Business Development Director.

Anderson also runs a full service solutions agency for the satellite and broadcast industry.

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Technology brief

Convergence in digital radio

The two terrestrial digital radio systems - Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) and Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) have announced that they will collaborate on the development of their systems, paving the way for what they say will be the digital radios of the future.

At a joint press conference at the Internationale Funkausstellung (IFA) in Berlin on 30 August, the two organisations announced that they have agreed to work together on fostering conditions that are favourable to both systems. DAB is described as the replacement for FM broadcasting, and is implemented in Europe, Canada and parts of Asia. DRM is designed for the long, medium and short wave bands and is on the air in Europe, North America and parts of Asia.

The two organisations suggested that their planned co-operation will pave the way for a new generation of consumer digital radio receivers that will allow listeners to receive any digital terrestrial radio broadcast without having to worry about the underlying transmission system.



“The relationship we have forged with DRM is good news for digital radio broadcasters, manufacturers and, most importantly, listeners,” said Annika Nyberg, President of the WorldDAB Forum. “DRM and its members have a tremendous amount to offer in terms of technology and ideas. This promises to be an exciting chapter in the history of digital radio.”

There has been a history of unease between the two organisations, with some commentators suggesting that DAB and DRM are competitive rather than collaborative. The IFA announcement appears to have changed that.

“Since DRM’s international debut in June of this year, broadcasters are now transmitting live, daily DRM programmes. The next step is for consumers in markets worldwide to have access to DRM’s excellent audio and reception quality,” said DRM Chairman Peter Senger. “DRM is a market-driven system, so we are committed to strategic alliances that will increase listeners’ options across the globe. We are delighted to collaborate with the World DAB Forum.”

DAB transmissions are on the air in much of Europe, although the extent of coverage and range of programmes available varies from country to country. Britain leads the way in DAB, with the most advanced transmission and programme mix, and also the most DAB receiver manufacturers. Currently none of the large-scale CE companies have joined the rush to get DAB sets into the market place.

DRM is on the air from a range of transmitting sites with a number of different broadcasters’ output. Details appear in the AIB Directory and Global Broadcasting Guide, available to order at www.aib.org.uk.

Meanwhile, British radio manufacturer Acoustic Solutions is the latest to announce that it is basing its DAB products on the new RS200 DAB module from RadioScape, an award-winning world leader in the design of innovative DAB solutions. The RS200 is based on Texas Instruments’ advanced baseband technology in the form of the DRE200, which is one of the world’s best selling receiver chips for the Eureka 147 standard.

The RadioScape RS200 module includes DAB, FM and RDS and is priced at under \$40 in volume quantities, enabling digital radio manufacturers to quickly and easily bring feature rich products to market at very competitive prices. RadioScape’s unique Software Defined Radio approach to DAB enables custom features to be added as software to the module to provide product differentiation. Notably the software defined radio approach may provide the solution for the combination of DAB and DRM in a single receiver, since a baseband processor will be able to decode both systems, offering a price advantage against sets that have two separate dedicated chipsets, one for DAB and another for DRM.

Technology brief

You/Com leads the way again

Innovative AIB member You/Com is at the technological forefront once more. The company has produced two new standalone MPEG Audio to DVB-convertors, the XTS and XXTS. The XTS is used for the supply of audio programmes to DVB networks (terrestrial, satellite and CATV). The XTS eliminates the need for a codec, thereby cascading and results in improved sound quality and reduced costs.



Based on questions raised in the market this successful concept has been enhanced. Besides the single or dual channel versions, You/Com has announced the MXTS, a multiple channel version that can handle from 10 up to more than 100 audio programmes. They are combined in a single DVB Transport Stream, which may be added to existing TV services in a DVB multiplexer.

As well as accepting remote MPEG audio signals from digital leased lines (X.21) the MXTS can also be equipped with an internal codec to accept local analogue audio signals. The low processing delay, easy management and very small physical dimensions meet the requirements of customers worldwide with critical applications.

And in another shrewd move, You/Com are to supply at least 10,000 stand-alone Webradios for a group of the sick and elderly who are unable to attend their local church service on Sundays. The Webradio is based on internet technology, but without the need of a PC. It is as simple to operate as an alarm clock and not much larger. The Webradio is the world's first stand-alone unit, which can be operated from the armchair by remote control and can also be remotely managed over the telephone network.



An Ethernet port is available to connect to a cable modem, ADSL or wifi. A power supply and telephone connection are required to be able to operate the Webradio. A display indicates the source that is connected.

Quantel wins Norwegian contract

Norway's public broadcaster NRK has ordered a Quantel generationQ integrated News/Sport production system. The system is centred on four sQServers, each configured with four dynamically switchable i/o ports, and each with 100 hours of broadcast quality (50Mbit) storage and 100 hours of 1.5Mbit browse storage, all locked together under a single Quantel ISA database. The system supports 40 QView desktop browse applications and eight QCut journalist editing applications, with craft editing via eight QEdit Pro workstations, and a QPaintbox Pro for graphics/headline generation. The system will replace NRK's current tape-based operation, with installation and introduction phased over the next year in order to provide a smooth transition for NRK staff.

NRK approached the project with a clear set of requirements for the new system: improved access to media; reduced production time and time-to-air; easy re-use and versioning of material between Oslo headquarters and regional stations; scalability and open connectivity for other media platforms; more cost-efficient production with improved functionality and workflow; and finally a simple progressive user interface that can be easily learnt and used by all production staff.

"2mtv [the Norwegian systems integrator] and Quantel won this contract in the face of stiff competition from 10 other suppliers," says Geir Bordalen, NRK Head of News Technology. "We trialled a number of the editing solutions in-house and the users clearly preferred Quantel as the best user interface with the most feature-relevant workflow. generationQ gives us state-of-the-art integrated ingest, editing and playout capabilities for news and sports. Its common user interface for browse and craft editing is unique, as is its totally integrated system architecture and resulting robustness. Its ability to integrate with our ENPS newsroom system and Omnibus playout automation is also fundamental."

Quantel is a member of the AIB.

Omnibus showcase at IBC

At IBC OmniBus Systems will showcase the first raft of new products based upon the G3 architecture it previewed at last year's show. Based on standard open IT protocols, G3's micro-modular design delivers integrated units of functionality that provide the precise requirements of individual users. This enables broadcasters to control and configure both OmniBus automation and multiple manufacturers' equipment to deliver unprecedented levels of workflow and operational flexibility. Fully compatible with broadcasters' existing OmniBus technology, it also simplifies user interaction significantly and allows OmniBus to deliver solutions rapidly, reliably and cost-effectively.

"G3 reverses completely the current application-based approach where operators need to work through multiple layers to find required information or set up new actions," says Ian Fletcher, OmniBus Systems' chief technical officer. "In this new task-based environment, each user is presented immediately with the required information and control; previously and diverse processes are consolidated into a single managed desktop display."

Leading OmniBus' G3 revolution, the HeadLine package is designed to meet the specific requirements of news and sports production and to integrate with all major newsrooms systems.

The Edit 1000 is a desktop editor using browse resolution video and conforming the result through OmniBus newsroom automation. The Edit 2000 operates at broadcast resolution and includes a number of audio crafting tools such as desktop voiceover. The Edit 3000 is a self-contained

Technology brief

package designed for journalists in the field including DV input card and the ability to deliver completed packages over data networks.

Alongside these products, OmniBus will also announce a number of partnerships with broadcast manufacturers that are keen to adopt G3 technology.

“We have received extremely encouraging feedback from the manufacturers and broadcasters who have seen what we’re doing with G3,” adds Fletcher. “Broadcasters tell us they find it extraordinarily user friendly; they are delighted that it delivers simple and responsive tools to operators that can also be quickly and reliably configured to their precise needs. These two elements have been mutually exclusive in broadcast solutions for too long.”

Omnibus is a member of the AIB.

GlobeCast catches Boomerang

AIB member GlobeCast has won a contract to provide network backhaul and satellite distribution of *Boomerang*, Turner Broadcasting’s classic cartoon channel, to viewers in France via the company’s digital HOT BIRD direct-to-home satellite platform.

The new French-language *Boomerang* is the sister channel of Turner Broadcasting’s *Cartoon Network*, which already broadcasts in French-speaking territories. Broadcast on GlobeCast capacity on HOT BIRD, the channel is packaged as part of the TPS digital DTH bouquet and is included in the TPS EPG on channel 53.

Transmission for the classic cartoon channel originates in London at GlobeCast’s digital media centre at Gray’s Inn Road which delivers the signal via the company’s ATM fibre network to Paris. In Paris, GlobeCast provides digital encoding, monitoring and uplink to proprietary capacity on HOT BIRD.

Delivery of the children’s channel on the Eutelsat HOT BIRD platform extends GlobeCast and Turner Broadcasting’s long-term partnership. GlobeCast already provides channel distribution services for other major Turner Broadcasting channels including CNN and Cartoon Network Poland.

Doordarshan and RTL choose Drake

Drake Electronics will deliver nine comprehensive intercom systems using the 4000 Series II Pico solution and the Refresh range of LCD user panels to India’s national TV network, Doordarshan. The digital intercom systems will be installed in Doordarshan premier production facilities located in state capitals and cities across India including New Delhi, Srinagar, Jaipur, and Bangalore.

The first instalment consists of 32 port standalone Pico Matrices configured for utilising 24 ports including a 5 camera setup. The second will be designed for larger Doordarshan

studio setups, consisting of two Pico matrixes networked together and configured to share common production areas.

The PiCo system has been designed with small studios, OB’s and production facilities in mind. Features include 22 kHz of audio bandwidth and an incredible 32 ports packed into 1RU of rack space. PiCo features an integral LCD user interface with six user definable system maps.

Rapid configuration changes can be made quickly and easily from the front of the frame without connecting a PC. An additional four audio ports are available for general purpose audio applications such as 2-wire belt packs, giving a combined total of 36 ports in 1RU - the highest density digital intercom available on the market.

Drake has also won an order for a 4000 series II Master Matrix intercom system for the French Radio Group – RTL. The system includes a variety of Drake User Panels, some connected with a VeNiX RNIS interface. The 4000 Master Matrix will form the central hub of all the production communications inside RTL’s premises for the 3 different radios of the group: RTL (7 studios), FUN RADIO (2 studios) and RTL2 (2 studios) and also outside communications.

The largest and most expandable system frame, the Master Matrix provides up to 256 ports in a single 9RU frame and is capable of networking potentially up to 3,000 users. The Matrix is ideal for all broadcast applications. Using a range of “hot-pluggable” interface cards, the Master Matrix supports direct connection to the frame without the need for expensive additional patch panels and can incorporate the latest mobile, wireless intercom technology ‘FreeSpeak®’ with the additional of a cell controller card.

New Link for wireless cameras

Link Research is launching its latest digital wireless camera system, the LinkXP2 with reverse camera control, to the European market at IBC as well as its digital Triax solution to carry the digital signals from the LinkXP systems back to the OB vehicle.

The LinkXP wireless camera systems deliver clear, reliable pictures for live broadcast with almost no signal delay - just 40ms, equal to one frame. Link offers professional broadcast-quality DVB4:2:2 video with standard MPEG encoding and diversity antennas that give a robust signal as the cameraman moves around. If the signal should drop, it has instant recovery. The power requirement for the system is below 20 watts.

The LinkXP2 system is supplied as a complete camera back with a Sony BVW-5 interface which makes it compatible with all broadcast cameras. Link has added an LCD control panel to configure the system for different manufacturers’ cameras and new, improved down-converters to reduce interference from other RF signals in close situations. There are now optional power amplifiers which can extend the range of the systems.

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