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MHP @ ibc 2000

42 leading broadcast, telecoms and IT organisations combine to promote new Multimedia Home Platform (MHP) Interactive TV Standard

Amsterdam, September 4, 2000: - More than forty of the world's leading equipment manufacturers, research organisations and regulatory bodies from the broadcast, telecommunications and IT industries have combined to develop a new open standard in interactive TV (iTV). As a result, the Multimedia Home Platform (MHP) consolidates the previously fragmented and closed digital TV sector into a single, open marketplace with free competition. Thanks to this common software interface, smaller companies will find it easier to enter the iTV market with innovative applications.

This year's IBC will see many of these companies - both large and small - coming together to showcase ingenious new MHP compatible iTV applications, designed to operate on the new generation of digital receivers in 2001. As well as previews of some of these products and services on the DVB Project Office Booth (1.164) and Institut für Rundfunktechnik / IRT stand (10.251), many manufacturers and system developers will be featuring applications on the stands. These range from electronic program guides to interactive sports TV, new concepts in personalized advertising, games and home shopping systems. Also, a MHP tutorial will provide background information on this ground-breaking technology in the form of a workshop.

Single open platform opens up the world of interactive TV

Ever since the introduction of digital TV systems, many organisations have been striving to add value to the television viewing experience by making it interactive. With some of the greatest minds in the broadcast, telecommunications and IT industries working in this area, the potential for a whole new kind of entertainment experience soon became evident. However, a fragmented market, with different suppliers using proprietary platforms, meant that the consumer would need a stack of set top boxes as big as a HiFi system to enjoy the full range of services.

MHP overcomes this challenge by providing a single common platform for the provision of multiple interactive services from different sources. Also, the enabling technology used in this innovative carrier system is so advanced as to accommodate the inevitable future development of yet more sophisticated products and services.

In addition, MHP enables the broadcasters to create multimedia content and interactive services, which are customized to its respectives programme profiles and represent a significant added value to the users compared to the traditional TV programmes.

Nokia, Panasonic, Philips and Sony Europe have jointly set-up an open consortium with the goal of specifying and developing the necessary tests to ensure conformity and interoperability amongst all digital receivers in the market. The first phase of the programme, the specification of the test suite, is already completed and will be introduced to the DVB project. This group is open for additional participants.

MHP tutorial at IBC

To explain the background to MHP, a tutorial taking place on September 11th (10 - 12am, Room O) will provide IBC visitors with an opportunity to look deeper into the technical details of MHP ahead of the big run on the new technology. The tutorial will include presentations on MHP application development with DVB Java. The economic prerequisites for MHP and its technical specifications will be covered in this workshop, as well as questions of testing and system interoperability.

The companies and organisations actively working at developing the MHP platform include:

ARD
Bertelsmann Broadband Group
BetaResearch
Canal-Plus Technologies
Deutsche Telekom
Deutsche TV-Plattform
DVB
EBU - European Broadcast Union
Fantastic
FUN - Free Universe Network
GMD - German National Research Center for Information Technology
Grundig
I-D Media
Institut für Nachrichtentechnik/TU-BS
Institut für Rundfunktechnik/IRT
Landesanstalt für Rundfunk (LfR)
Loewe
Mediagate
Nine Network Australia
Nokia
NTL
OpenTV
ORF
Panasonic
Philips
Pioneer
PowerTV
QuBiz
RTL New Media
Samsung
S&T
Scientific Atlanta
SES/Astra
Singapore Broadcasting Authority
Sony
Sun
Telenor
Televisio de Catalunya
Teracom
WDR
YLE
Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF)