

10 things you need to know about...



Hybrid TV

1 What is Hybrid TV, or HBB as it is sometimes called?

It is a device or service that uses two networks (broadcast and broadband) for data and application delivery. Typical hybrid devices are Internet-connected TV sets and set-top-boxes, PCs with broadcast tuners and mobile phones with broadcast receivers. The EBU has published a set of Hybrid TV principles. (http://www.ebu.ch/CMSImages/en/leg_pp_HBB_EBUprinciples_150411_tcm6-71787.pdf)

2 What is the difference between Hybrid TV and systems like "SmartTV"?

Many consumer electronics companies offer Internet-connected TV sets and set-top-boxes. There are various names for these vendor-specific solutions such as SmarTV, NetTV. These solutions typically only use the Internet connection on the device, offering content-based apps in addition. There is thus a separate between these services and linear broadcast TV services.

Many Broadcasters are advocating solutions that seek to combine the functionalities of both broadcast and broadband tuners in a device to offer a seamless experience to the consumer. Each delivery mechanism has benefits, and pitfalls with the marriage of the two yielding an optimum experience for certain types of content.

3 Hybrid is an important opportunity for public service broadcasters to seize!

With extensive online offerings, public services broadcasters should seize the opportunities of Hybrid TV. In many cases, public services broadcasters' online services are amongst the most popular local online content in their respective territories. Match this to strong linear offerings and, with the correct strategy, public services broadcasters can greatly enhance the viewing experience.

4 There are many (too many) hybrid TV open standards out there

For the linear broadcast world, there's DVB, but the systems behind in an interactive world are more complex, leading to a proliferation of technologies and standards.

Is this proliferation helping the success of Hybrid TV? Different market conditions in different countries have given rise to different approaches, leading to the use of different standards. MHEG-5 in the UK, DVB's MHP in Italy and HbbTV in Germany, France and elsewhere.



5 HbbTV is on air in Germany and France, and soon in countries such as Netherlands, Spain, and others

HbbTV was developed by the HbbTV group, using systems from the DVB Project and Open IPTV Forum standards as bases. Standardized by ETSI, it has been pioneered by the public services broadcasters in Germany (ARD, ZDF) and in France (France Télévision). It promises to be popular in other European countries. For more information see HbbTV.org.

6 MHP hybrid TV is on air in Italy – a country with a long history in interactive television

Developed by the DVB Project around 2000, MHP is a Java based middleware system originally designed for telephone line interactive channels. High speed Internet now means that the potential of MHP can be realized. Interactive TV was seen as a core element for the launch of digital terrestrial television in Italy, and MHP was at the centre of this offering.

7 UK has hybrid services on air using MHEG-5, and there are plans to launch YouView in 2012

The UK is the pioneer in Interactive television, with MHEG-5 included in all the digital terrestrial television consumer equipment sold in the UK. YouView, a joint venture with a number of partners including free-to-air broadcasters and Internet service providers in the UK, is set for launch in 2012. Combining elements from different, web-based, technologies into a sophisticated offer, it promises to provide substantial enhancements over current linear and interactive systems.

8 EBU believes that harmonization of standards is a pre-requisite for successful hybrid TV

Hybrid TV's success is not yet assured, and the public offering needs to be based on simple principles of finding content, consistent with the independent Internet TV system, and many believe this pattern should not be repeated when the broadcasters offer their services to the consumer.

9 With the opportunities of Hybrid TV come pitfalls, which broadcasters and other industry stakeholders should take into account

*Find out more from the EBU Hybrid TV principles
(http://www.ebu.ch/CMSimages/en/leg_pp_HBB_EBUprinciples_150411_tcm6-71787.pdf)*

10 EBU is involved in an ambitious, European-wide, Hybrid TV project aimed at collaborative application development leading to a launch of services in 2012

For more information, please consult tech.ebu.ch