

EBU – Recommendation R127



Television in a Hybrid Broadcast/Broadband Environment

Status: Recommendation

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Television in a Hybrid Broadcast/Broadband Environment

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Keywords: Broadcast, Broadband, hybrid television receiver.

This recommendation is designed to encourage interoperability and consistency in the development of hybrid broadcast/broadband consumer television receivers.

The EBU recommends that EBU Members must foster, in cooperation with the industry and standardization bodies, the development of hybrid broadcast/broadband technical platforms with the necessary technical commonality to ensure the development of a European-wide consumer market, thereby bringing the lowest costs and highest quality to the European consumer. In order to achieve this goal, the EBU will establish a Task Force, which includes relevant industry representation.

Background

Domestic broadband, the increased take-up of IPTV, and the popularity of 'WebTV' services offered over the open Internet are changing the media delivery landscape. Whilst this is happening at different speeds in different European countries, a common approach is needed to foster service and equipment interoperability.

EBU Members recognize that they can serve their public service mission well by offering rich multimedia content to the public via broadband channels. There are further opportunities for serving the public by associating broadband content with broadcast media content (hybrid broadcast/broadband). These opportunities include, for example, richer Electronic Program Guides (EPGs), past programmes "on demand" ('catch-up TV'), access to archives, interactivity, communities, and web access. For those PSBs who provide publicity, new forms of advertising may also be available.

The availability of digital television receivers and other consumer electronics (CE) devices that also allow broadband access to Internet in the framework of subscription-based "walled garden" services, or portals controlled by manufacturers, may not best serve the public interest for choice and value of content.

A number of European broadcasters are involved in the development of individual or national technical platforms (for hybrid broadband/broadband) that risk being incompatible with each other. The European public interest would best be served by interoperable systems.

Interactive-TV services that are provided over digital broadcast television channels have been less

widely taken up by broadcasters and the public than anticipated when they were developed. Incompatible systems in different European countries might have contributed to this situation, and such incompatibility is to be avoided in hybrid broadcast/broadband systems.

It is fair and reasonable that consumers should enjoy PSB 'rich-media' delivered over hybrid broadcast-broadband networks in the same way they consume broadcast-only content. They should be able to do so without organizations that have not contributed to the production process capitalizing on the process.

The EBU and its Members need to analyze the European and national regulatory frameworks, taking action where appropriate, to ensure that third parties associate their broadband services with EBU Member's programmes only when authorized. For example, PSBs should retain editorial control of all content associated with their programmes (e.g. EPGs, surrounding text and rich multimedia, advertising and banners, picture-in-picture, interactive applications).