

HYBRID TELEVISION

Online internet and off-air broadcast TV together in a single service and device: the boundary between the two is disappearing. With Hybrid TV comes a rich entertainment experience with the convenience of broadband and the appeal of high quality broadcast. The EBU is at the centre of industry efforts and helps Members to exploit the possibilities.

BACKGROUND

All agree of the importance of making online content available across as many devices as possible. Tablets are now a popular end-user device for watching broadcast content. Large flat screen TVs now have processing power to enable them to display HDTV or 3DTV and to connect to the internet. Similarly, consumers use games consoles to watch online services like catch-up TV. Broadcasters continue to enjoy healthy audiences for their traditional linear services and have had significant success with online offerings such as video-on-demand and 7-day catch-up TV services. The combination of the opportunities opened up by the new devices and the experience of the broadcasters is a winning one.

TV sets remain at the centre of the media experience in European homes, so providing as rich an experience as possible for those sets needs to be central to a broadcaster's strategy. But that rich experience should allow viewers to enjoy content in a way that suits the shared media context, a context that is quite unlike, for example, media viewed on tablets.

THE CHALLENGE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

Given the importance of the TV set to consumers, broadcasters are not the only ones seeking to exploit the opportunities of internet connected sets. As broadcasters know only too well, media on a large screen remains a lean-back experience, with easy access for all the family, a quality immersive experience, and with all the safeguards associated with family viewing. There are some key challenges for EBU Members:

- *Keep it simple!*
TV is about immersing yourself in content. It's also about ease of access: sit down, switch on, enjoy. Increasingly powerful TV sets encourage the introduction of ever more apps, sophisticated interactions and other distractions. Broadcasters need to stick to the core values of quality and simplicity as they move to exploit the synergies between broadcast and broadband services. TVs shouldn't be confused with other sophisticated connected devices, nor should the consumer be confused.
- *Quality of experience*
Traditional broadcast networks remain the best way of getting high quality content to a large audience. Where they fall short is in the provision of personalized services, which is the strength of broadband networks. But to ask current broadband networks to deliver high quality video reliably to a large screen is to stretch the current infrastructure, especially when network operators seek to monetize any "improvements" in service. The goal of Hybrid TV is to provide

an equally immersive experience via broadcast AND broadband networks. A viewer shouldn't have to accept a drop in quality if the service comes over his broadband network.

- *A safe viewing environment*
On the surface, it's just about having two different pipes into a single device. But there are differences in the rules applied to broadband networks and the highly regulated world of broadcasting. If the viewer can no longer distinguish the pipes through which his content is arriving, how is he to know which rules apply?

As the different stakeholders battle for the viewer's attention, the broadcaster's attractive, high quality and simple propositions need to be stronger than ever. The challenge is to ensure a level playing field.

WHAT IS THE EBU DOING?

The EBU is synonymous with the innovative technological developments that have shaped radio and television over the years. Hybrid TV is a strategic target for the EBU and its Members.

The EBU is a founder of HbbTV, established its legal structure and hosts its administrative office. HbbTV is the standard of choice for hybrid TV systems in France, Germany, Netherlands, the Nordic countries, Poland, Spain, Turkey and as far afield as Australia. EBU Members provide input into the requirements capture and development of the next generation HbbTV systems

The EBU also hosts the DVB Project Office, the developer of the MHP specification which is used for hybrid TV services in Italy, and is the basis for interactive services on cable networks worldwide.

EBU Members in the UK were the pioneers in interactive services using MHEG-5 and are at the forefront of the development and rollout of YouView, an innovative hybrid TV solution based on a managed experience.



HbbTV is the Hybrid TV standard of choice for many European countries; MHP and YouView are used in Italy and the UK respectively.

At European Commission level the EBU continues to inform debates on Network Neutrality and Hybrid TV and has published a set of Hybrid and Connected TV Principles.

An EBU Strategic Programme on TV Services and Platforms provides a focus for Members to share their experiences and work together on improving the Hybrid TV offer. The EBU has also fostered the development of white label applications, developed basic guidelines for the deployment of Hybrid TV and continues to work on improved broadband distribution architectures.

FIND OUT MORE

EBU TV Platforms Group

tech.ebu.ch/tvp

HbbTV

www.hbbtv.org

MHP

www.mhp.org

YouView

www.youview.com