



Wireless companies fight for flexible mobile TV standards in EU

22 May 2007

Wireless industry leaders Tuesday urged the European Commission to permit competing technologies in the emerging mobile television industry rather than forcing a single technological standard.

Mobile television is video or TV broadcast transmitted over a wireless handheld device.

The European Commission estimates mobile TV will generate global revenue of between EUR4 billion and EUR5 billion by 2009 and believes the rollout will be fastest if a single industry standard called Digital Video Broadcasting for Handhelds technology, or DVB-H, is set.

But industry leaders at a conference in Brussels argued that because mobile television is such a cutting-edge service, only time and a flexible market can tell which type of technology will prove the best.

"Why would you wish at this early stage to insist on any particular standard when we do know that many other possibilities are available?" said Jens Arnbak, chair of tele-information techniques in the electrical engineering department of Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands.

Arnbak was speaking at a regulatory workshop organized by the industry lobby group FLO Forum, which represents more than 70 wireless companies worldwide that use or develop forward link only, or FLO, technology for mobile TV. FLO was created by Qualcomm Inc.

"Consumers aren't that interested in the technology wars," said Kamil Grajski, president of the FLO Forum. Grajski stressed that "consumers benefit from technology neutral regulation" and from competition within the market.

European Telecoms Commissioner Viviane Reding plans to call for the single standard in her proposals this summer. Europe took a big lead over the U.S. in mobile telephone services by instituting a single seamless GSM standard.

Various technologies are being tested aside from the European DVB-H. Qualcomm's FLO platform, known as MediaFLO, has gained much ground in the U.S., while ISDB-T technology is the standard in Japan and Brazil.

These options are a help, not a hindrance, to the emerging industry, according to the business leaders who spoke Tuesday.

"We are very much technology-agnostic - the best is yet to come, and it's still early of course," said Ralph Neff, a senior technical staffer at the NextWave Wireless Inc.'s California-based unit PacketVideo. Neff said that, like most of its peers, his company uses, tests and offers several types of technologies, including FLO and DVB-H.

In the U.S., mobile TV providers are free to do this, but the industry is now worried that Reding's vision will lock them into one standard.

"For me this doesn't reflect the technological neutrality issue," said Cengiz Evci, chief frequency allocation officer for Alcatel Lucent's Wireless Business Group. Evci said the commission should let "market actors decide upon the rollout of mobile TV standards."

The single standard made it easy for Europeans to use their mobile phones throughout the bloc, while differing standards in the U.S. made such roaming difficult.

Reding wants to follow that model with mobile TV. One standard for mobile TV will help overcome the still-fragmented regulatory setup within the E.U., Reding believes.

With national and regional regulators promoting a slew of different technologies throughout the E.U., the industry risks being subjected to different rules in the 27-nation bloc which would delay the rollout of mobile television and could make the service more expensive.

Without the "certainty and predictability" that comes with a single standard, Reding says "it will be impossible to invest with confidence in new innovative technologies."

By Anne Jolis

www.marketwatch.com/news/story/wireless-companies-fight-flexible-mobile/story.aspx?guid=%7BDBAF4510-DB53-4FCA-8D3E-22C88EFC90E7%7D



FLO Forum Campaigns For Tech Neutrality In Europe

22 May 2007

Mobile industry leaders at a regulatory workshop organized by the industry lobby group FLO Forum have spoken out against the EU's plan to mandate DVB-H as the European standard for mobile TV, reports Dow Jones via Cellular News. European Telecoms Commissioner Viviane Reding has said that if the industry doesn't select a standard soon she will, and apparently has plans to call for the single standard in her proposals this summer. The argument is that Europe took a big lead over the US in mobile services by instituting a single GSM standard so users could roam across the continent, and that by providing certainty that mobile TV deployers won't face different rules in each country the roll-out of mobile TV won't be delayed. "Without the "certainty and predictability" that comes with a single standard, Reding says "it will be impossible to invest with confidence in new innovative technologies."

The industry at the FLO Forum say it's too early to determine which standard is the better one..."Cengiz Evci, chief frequency allocation officer for Alcatel Lucent's Wireless Business Group. Evci said the commission should let "market actors decide upon the rollout of mobile TV standards." The other issue is whether the EU, having set a single mobile TV standard across Europe, then takes steps to ensure appropriate spectrum is released in each market for that standard.

By James Quintana Pearce

www.moconews.net/entry/419-flo-forum-campaigns-for-tech-neutrality-in-europe



TIA Nods Approval To Transport Specification

23 May 2007

With this initiative, the Telecommunications Industry Association has extended open standardisation of FLO technology.

The open standardisation of FLO (Forward Link Only) technology for the delivery of mobile multimedia took another step forward today with the approval by the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) of the Forward Link Only Transport Specification. The Transport Specification is being published as TIA-1120 following approval by the TIA's TR-47.1 Engineering Subcommittee.

The standard specifies the framing formats and procedures for the delivery of application service packets securely over the FLO Air Interface, and is another important stepping stone towards the complete open standardisation of FLO technology.

The Transport Specification is the fifth FLO standard published by the TIA and follows the publication by the TIA in October 2006 of three Minimum Performance Standards and the Test Application Protocol for both devices and transmitters, and July 2006's publication of the Air Interface Specification as TIA-1099.

"The FLO Forum's work towards specifying all elements of FLO closely matches the TIA's wish to standardise the technologies required by industry for use in Terrestrial Mobile Multimedia Multicast," said Grant Seiffert, president, TIA. "We commend the Forum's work with TIA in this area and welcome this achievement in FLO technology. Approval of TIA-1120 is another important part of the process of developing a complete set of FLO technology standards, in which the FLO Forum's role has been integral."

"The FLO Forum's membership is wholly committed to a global open standardisation programme and the publication of this, the fifth standard by the TIA, is testament to their dedication, as well as representing another vital move towards the creation of an open and competitive market for FLO technology," added Dr Kamil A. Grajski, president, FLO Forum.

www.efytimes.com/efytimes/fullnews.asp?edid=19189

intomobile

Mobile companies fight for flexible mobile TV standards in Europe

27 May 2007

It's not a secret that European Commission wants to push DVB-H as a mobile TV standard throughout the European Union. That kind of decision would certainly benefit Nokia and other wireless companies, who already invested heavily in this standard. However, one wonders is this the right way to go? For instance, Korean handset manufacturers are already shipping T-DMB handsets to consumers, and as far as we can tell, that technology works.

Now, mobile industry leaders organized by mobile TV industry lobby group FLO Forum at a conference in Brussels argued that, because mobile TV is such a cutting-edge service, only time and a flexible market can tell which type of technology will prove the best.

Jens Arnbak, chair of tele-information techniques in the electrical engineering department of Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands said: "Why would you wish at this early stage to insist on any particular standard when we do know that many other possibilities are available?"

On the other hand, European Telecoms Commissioner Viviane Reding commented that without a single standard, it will be impossible for companies to invest with confidence in new innovative technologies. (via: [marketwatch](#))

www.intomobile.com/2007/05/27/mobile-companies-fight-for-flexible-mobile-tv-standards-in-europe

Europe and South Korea clash over mobile TV

28 May 2007

The European Commission is seeking to push DVB-H (digital video broadcasting-handheld), which has been developed using almost €40m of EU research funds, as the mobile TV standard in the face of the T-DMB format already widely used by the Korean mobile industry.

Earlier this year the European telecoms commissioner Viviane Reding said that if the mobile industry could not agree on a standard she would choose it for them.

Last week the FLO Forum, a group of wireless industry leaders, met in Brussels to discuss global regulation for mobile TV.

FLO Forum Chairman Dr. Kamil Grajski said: "We believe that it is only in a fully competitive and technology-neutral European market that the opportunities and profitable economies which mobile multimedia broadcasting can bring to consumers and business can be guaranteed.

"Today's discussion will help highlight success models for business, regulatory and investment environments for a rapid and widespread mobile broadcasting rollout in Europe."

The DVB-H format is already in use in 17 EU countries, and as such is being touted as the pan-European mobile TV standard. However, the mobile industry has a deadline of this summer for all to agree on a chosen format.

It is approved by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and mobile giants Nokia and Samsung recently announced their plans to work together to deliver the DVB-H standard.

However, Debitel, Germany's third-largest mobile telecoms operator, has adopted the South Korea led format of T-DMB and in the UK the DAB-IP format is used widely.

The South Korean mobile TV market is one of the oldest and better-developed worldwide and as such the T-DMB format cannot be overlooked by the European Commission.

Last week Sharp announced its development of the world's first "dual mode" tuner, which will receive mobile TV in both formats. This tuner has been developed to fit into most mobiles

devices, especially mobile phones, and could be an answer to the mobile TV standard debate.

By Marie Boran

www.siliconrepublic.com/news/news.nv?storyid=single8430

Qualcomm camp lobbies Brussels on mobile TV standard

29 May 2007

MOBILE TV STANDARDS

Qualcomm camp lobbies Brussels on mobile TV standard

DAVID ANDERSON

The FLO Forum, an industry group made up of companies developing mobile broadcast TV services based on technology created by US chip developer Qualcomm, has begun to lobby the European Commission and European regulators against opting for the rival technology standard DVB-H for mobile TV in Europe.

At a meeting held in Brussels on May 22, MaryBeth Selby, CFO of the FLO Forum and a Qualcomm employee, said that rather than favouring one technology over another, the European Commission and regulatory bodies should adopt a technology-neutral approach to mobile TV.

"We want to educate the regulators," she said. "We will continue to push technology neutrality."

Nokia was instrumental in the development of the DVB-H standard, which is the mobile TV standard favoured by European regulators and the European Commission.

The FLO Forum, which consists of media companies, operators and handset and component manufacturers, invited 200 telecoms and broadcast regulators from around Europe and beyond to attend the meeting.

Apart from Qualcomm, the FLO Forum includes the influential players Motorola and PacketVideo, which are developing services based on MediaFLO, a technology licensed to Qualcomm.

The forum has even written to the European commissioner for Information Society and Media, Viviane Reding, to ask her to withdraw her support for a specific technology standard. Reding advocated mandating the DVB-H standard in a speech at the CeBit industry show in March.

She said she was prepared to give "strong support" for DVB-H in order to speed up the rollout of mobile TV in Europe.

The FLO Forum is no stranger to European lobbying. It was involved in a year-long investigation of mobile television standards conducted by the European Mobile Broadcasting Council (EMBC), which represents member-state mobile telecoms operators and broadcasters. That report advocated technology neutrality.

Although the forum says that its members will support

multiple technologies, Qualcomm has made no secret of its desire to penetrate the potentially lucrative European market with MediaFLO. The European Commission forecasts a market worth €20 billion with 200 million mobile TV users by 2015.

It plans to form joint ventures with companies to offer TV services and has already conducted trials with satellite broadcast company BSkyB in the UK.

So far, Qualcomm has managed to stave off competition in the US, says David Chamberlain, principal analyst for wireless at the research firm In-Stat.

It has built a broadcast network through a wholly owned company called MediaFLO USA, which has been chosen to supply wholesale mobile TV services nationwide by two of the largest US carriers, Verizon Wireless and AT&T.

In contrast, Modeo, the DVB-H mobile broadcast affiliate of Crown Castle International, which has set up a trial network in New York City, has yet to announce a single customer.

Several European operators are already engaged in mobile TV projects in Europe. In Italy, 3 launched services about a year ago. 3 Italy creates its own content as well as buying it in and bought Canale 7 for €35 million in 2005. In Germany, Mobiles Fernsehen Deutschland (MFD) launched the mobile TV service Watcha in June 2006 and is working with temporary licences. The service has now been extended to most major German cities.

In the UK, there are pilots in London (with BT Movio) and Oxford (with O2). Canal Plus is working with SFR in France, and in Spain similar pilots are being carried out with Telefonica in Madrid and Barcelona and Vodafone in Seville and Valencia.

DIGITIMES

The mobile TV ecosystem: Q&A with Hamutal Raab and Ronen Jashek of mobile chip designer Siano.

30 May 2007

Mobile TV is a hot topic. Technology standards have been set, spectrum has been allocated and the content is there. However, the industry is fragmented, with different markets supporting different standards and spectrums. Content providers, broadcasters and cellcos are all vying for their share of the market, so questions remain concerning how content will be delivered to users, and what kind of business model will drive the industry.

On May 9, Israel-based mobile chip designer Siano Mobile Silicon hosted a Mobile TV conference in Taipei, Taiwan that was attended by more than 500 industry professionals. With the audience being an interesting mix of government representatives, broadcasters, hardware designers, mobile operators and other industry professionals, it showed that even within the industry itself there are many questions that need answering.

Digitimes had the opportunity during the event to speak with Siano's COO, Hamutal Raab, and director of technical marketing, Ronen Jashek, to hear their thoughts about current developments in the Mobile TV industry and how the industry will evolve over the next few years.

Q: There are a number of ways to receiving mobile TV, including broadcast, unicast (point-to-point) or multicast. With a number of mobile phone operators already having invested in 3G networks, which supports unicast, doesn't it make sense for that to be the standard?

A: (Jashek) Because unicast is a point-to-point system, 3G service operators will face bandwidth issues if they want the service to scale. Unicast is good for 30-second video clips that can be shifted in time so that the server can take advantage of the available bandwidth. However, such a system cannot take advantage of a real-time event, such as the latest soccer match. Once you start getting into larger volumes of people interested in real-time viewing, the network will become strained. This will end up not only affecting the ability of the network to handle video but also its ability to handle simple voice calls.

(Raab) Some mobile operators already provide TV content through streaming of video clips over a cellular network, which is not broadcast. This method has technical limitations of capacity, and the result is typically a single channel, with relatively low quality and a limited

number of recipients at a given moment. Broadcast mobile digital TV aims at a full TV experience, the kind that end users are already familiar with – such as cable or satellite TV – whereby a large number of channels are offered at a high quality and there are no limitations to the number of viewers.

What we are finding is that most people are excited about a mobile TV platform that can support millions of users. This type of mobile TV platform will be a broadcast system.

Q: And what about multicast?

A: (Jashek) Again, multicast will end up placing a strain on the system bandwidth. The current MBMS (Multimedia Broadcast Multicast Service) capacity is limited to 2Mb/sec, while a broadcast system will provide bandwidth of 16-32Mb/sec, which is the bandwidth needed to support about 20 channels. Upgrading any existing cellular network so that it supports MBMS at 15-20Mbps (while not hurting the voice capabilities of the network) requires an investment that is by far larger than building a good mobile TV broadcast system.

We believe video-over-cellular services such as MBMS will continue to exist, but will gradually focus on “on demand” services, while actual mobile TV services will use a broadcast platform.

(Raab) Content will be broadcast to users, but users will be involved in the content, such as in programs that involve voting. And the way to create profits from this is to get more people involved in the service and bundling services to increase the amount of data that is going through the network, but in such a way that it does not strain the system.

Q: But who will build the broadcast infrastructure? Do you expect broadcasters and cellcos to be competitors or partners?

A: (Jashek) Most operators are facing the question of whether they should invest themselves or whether they should partner with a broadcaster to develop the infrastructure. In Italy, Telecom Italia Mobile (TIM) has deployed a mobile TV service where it is the service provider, even though Mediaset (a broadcaster) built the primary broadcast infrastructure. On the other hand, 3-Italia have made their own investment into a DVB-H network, and they enjoy a very good attach rate.

In the US, Qualcomm's subsidiary MediaFLO has solved this dilemma for the operators by building the network itself. The only thing Verizon or Cingular had to do was sign a contract with Qualcomm and offer the service.

Thus, different models exist. The relationship between broadcasters and cellcos will be one of the key issues affecting the success of mobile TV in the future. Most broadcasters already have the spectrum, as well as the content. They are currently using that for analog terrestrial TV, but in the future it will be used for digital mobile TV. However, cellcos already have a network that supports interactive programming. They also have an infrastructure in place for service and billing.

The question is how well can cellcos and broadcasters get along. What TIM has done, is take revenues from its mobile TV service and split it evenly with the broadcaster. In the future, we expect to see a similar type of model where broadcasters focus on broadcast services and operators focus on interacting with the customer.

Q: You mentioned that current analog TV spectrum will be allocated to mobile TV in the future. Can you add more color to that statement and explain how that will affect the development of the mobile TV market?

A: (Jashek) I should note that the development of mobile TV will go hand in hand with the migration of terrestrial analog TV to digital TV. For example, if you look at the DVB standard (DVB-T for terrestrial TV and DVB-H for mobile TV), which will be the DTV standard deployed in the most markets worldwide, currently about 30 countries have DVB-T networks, while another 30 will join in one to three years. Once the DVB-T networks are in place, you will see huge growth in DVB-H support because it does not take much investment to add DVB-H support to a DVB-T network.

Getting back to your specific question, a lot of countries have allocated spectrum to mobile TV on a temporary basis. Once governments start turning off their analog services in 2010, that spectrum will be allocated to mobile TV on a more permanent basis, and you will see a big jump in the size of the market.

We expect to see 120-130 million mobile TV users worldwide by 2010, with DVB-H being the number one platform. By 2012-2013 when more markets switch off their analog services, we expect to see 300-400 million people enjoying broadcast mobile TV.

Q: As you mentioned, DVB-H will be deployed in the most markets, however the global mobile TV market remains fragmented. Can you comment on the implications of how such a fragmented global market might affect the development of mobile TV?

A: (Raab) Obviously, with the huge expected size of the mobile TV market, a lot of different organizations would like to have a piece of the pie. Hence, a number of broadcast mobile TV technologies have been developed. Eventually, economy of scales will not allow more than about four technologies to survive in large volumes. It looks like the partitioning will be geographical.

(Jashek) DVB-H has its stronghold in Europe, where it was originally pushed by local players such as Nokia and Philips, and where DVB-T, the "mother" of DVB-H, has strong momentum. We have no doubt that DVB-H will dominate mobile TV in Europe, and DVB-T will also be supported on some hand-held devices. DVB-H is also expected to be the dominant standard in Southeast Asia – Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia – and the Pacific Rim. In countries with vast rural areas, such as Russia or Canada, we expect that, around 2010-2011, DVB-H will be unified with DVB-SH (the satellite version of DVB-H). This will optimize the coverage with respect to the infrastructure investment required.

MediaFLO seems to be the winner in North America, although we would not be surprised if DVB-H will also be deployed there.

In Japan, as well as Brazil and a couple other South American countries, ISDB-T will dominate. And South Korea will continue with its T-DMB for some time, although being the only nation to have large-scale deployment of this standard will make it difficult for Korea to maintain it for many years. In China, the homegrown standard known as CM-MB (S-TIMI) will be the main platform for mobile TV.

(Raab) Another thing to remember is that not only are the standards fragmented but so is spectrum support.

With the big picture being so unclear, device makers are looking for help to develop a solution that fits as many markets as possible. That's why three years ago Siano came up with the concept of a multi-standard and multi-band mobile TV chip solution.

Our chips currently support the DVB-H/T, DAB and T-DMB standards, as well as covering the VHF, UHF, L1 (1450-1490MHz) and L2 (1660-1680MHz) spectrums. In addition, we will very soon have ISDB-T supported, while CM-MB and MediaFLO are also on our roadmap. We are members of the CM-MB working group, and the FLO Forum.

Q: Why did you first choose to develop the DVB platform as opposed to the MediaFlo platform?

A: (Raab) DVB is an open standard, and the market for DVB (mobile DVB-T, and DVB-H) is the first to ramp up.

Q: So the selling point of your mobile TV chips is your multi-standard support?

A: (Raab) One of the selling points. We also feature extremely low power consumption, and best sensitivity in the market. Siano has been working in the mobile TV industry for several years and we use our expertise in the market to help our customers design better solutions in a shorter time. A solution that supports multiple standards and spectrums is one way. Another way is providing a comprehensive solution that integrates smoothly into the system

Handsets designs come in many flavors, so we currently have a two-chip solution that consists of a tuner (SMS1001) and a demodulator (SMS1002) and a single-chip tuner and demodulator (SMS1010). The single chip solution minimizes PCB area, while the two-chip solution allows for flatter and very thin designs.

In terms of performance, our design algorithms allows for better reception, which means less transmitters are needed in the mobile TV network. And in terms of power management, the Siano solution is 50%-60% more power efficient than the best competition.

We also looked at the market. We saw that mobile TV consumers were not happy about the size of the TV antennas on handsets, so we recently unveiled the world's smallest UHF antenna chip for mobile TV applications. Our mobile TV chip solutions have also been chosen by Intel and Marvell for their mobile TV reference designs.

Q: Who is your foundry partner?

A: (Raab) I can only say that it is a big foundry based in Taiwan and our solution is an all CMOS solution. I can also say that Amkor Technology is our packaging partner. The single-chip 1010 uses BGA packaging, while the two-chip solution uses both BGA (SMS1001) and chip scale packaging (SMS1002).

Q: Several mobile TV trials have been hampered by a lack of handset support, why is that?

A: (Raab) Handset makers need to digest and endorse a new technology – new types of antennas, receiver chips, software, etc. This is not easy. Some of the first few DVB-H phones were bulky, use antennae that were too long (making them unacceptable for most users), and have a reception sensitivity that was not that great.

Siano has placed an emphasis on working with its customers to incorporate the different pieces of the puzzle. As a result, new mobile TV phones will now be much better, which will make a significant contribution to pushing this industry forward.

For example, in Taiwan Siano is working with a number of makers, including Compal Communications, Inventec Appliances, BenQ, Gigabyte Communications, and many others. These makers show quite a lot of innovation and they come up with exciting new models for mobile TV.

www.digitimes.com/bits_chips/a20070529VL201.html

*NewMediaMarkets***Brussels insights industry with mobile mandate plan**

1 June 2007

■ REGULATION EUROPE

**Brussels incites industry
with mobile mandate plan**

By Joe Warner

The European Commission has taken a major step towards mandating a single technology for mobile television by requesting the "full and rapid disclosure" of the intellectual property rights held for the DVB-H standard.

The move, which has caused concern among companies that believe the market should be the arbiter of technology choices, is intended to drive the deployment of mobile television across the European Union. The Commission believes that a common standard is needed and that if the industry cannot agree then Brussels will have to mandate one.

In mid-May the Commission sent a written request for details of the patent owners of the DVB-H standard's various components to the DVB Project, the Geneva-based body for digital broadcasting standards.

The DVB's intellectual property rights (IPR) module is to meet this week to discuss the request. It is understood that a "patent pool" – an association of companies with intellectual property rights relating to a standard – has not yet been created.

The Commission's request follows a speech on May 10 by Viviane Reding, the commissioner for information society and media, in which – for the second time in three months – she advocated DVB-H as the best candidate for a common European standard for mobile television.

Her previous reference was during a speech in March at the CeBit technology fair in Hannover (*NMM* March 23, 2007).

One UK technology executive said that the Commissioner's language on mandating DVB-H was "becoming stronger and much more direct" and that the industry was increasingly concerned that the Commission was sending "confusing messages" by pursuing this line while also maintaining its stance of being technology-neutral.

Reding's directorate is to issue a statement on mobile television which might include mandating DVB-H. This is expected in the summer, probably July, but it could be postponed until the end of the year, said the commissioner, "to give the industry a little longer [...] to agree a common standard".

In her latest speech, Reding said that while "competition among different standards can, for some time, be a good way to let the market identify the best solution", Europe had been waiting too long. "The opportunities are slipping away," she said. "It is time

to break the deadlock.”

Her comments provoked a backlash from companies likely to be key players in mobile television.

Sheila Cassells, head of regulatory affairs at BSkyB, called the latest developments “very bizarre” because the commissioner had stated last December, at the ITU Telecom World congress in Hong Kong, that it was not the role of regulators to express technological preferences.

Adriana Mattei, head of market development at UK transmission company Arqiva, said: “We are concerned that investment in mobile broadcast TV is being deterred as a result of potential regulatory intervention across Europe.”

Arqiva has invested several million pounds in mobile television and conducted trials with O2 and BSkyB using both DVB-H and the proprietary MediaFlo system.

Kamil Grajski, president of FloForum, the industry association formed to promote MediaFlo, said that the mobile-television industry was “already a global, competitive and multi-standard industry” and that the key issue was not the technology of the handsets but the availability of spectrum.

Mattei agreed that the early availability of frequency remained key: “To a degree the technology which might then be employed would be determined by the spectrum band on offer.”

Criticism of Reding’s stance was not limited to the commercial sector. Professor Jens Arnbak, founding chairman of the European Regulators Group, which co-ordinates national regulators across the European Union, said: “Why would you wish, at this early stage, to insist on any one standard when we know that many other technologies are in development?”

Arnbak said that regulation from Brussels could “clear the way” for the successful deployment of multimedia services, but only if it were open, transparent and flexible to allow innovation.

Peter MacAvock, executive director of the DVB Project, said that the body “has a good ongoing dialogue” with the Commission, though communications are not publicised unless requested by the DVB Steering Board and with the Commission’s agreement.

MacAvock added that the DVB Project was based on its standards providing the “best compromise between innovation and implementability”, and that it favours a market-led implementation of its standards.

Licensing fees

The Commission is keen to understand the intellectual property rights involved in the DVB-H standard in order to address one of the main concerns of potential users.

This is the risk that unexpected licence fees might be imposed

on the standard's users several years after its publication, as was the case with the DVB-MHP standard for interactive television (*NMM* March 10, 2006).

The major concern is that once mass-market deployments have taken place "it would be difficult if not impossible to remove any element whose IPR costs were subsequently found to be commercially unsatisfactory", one source said.

The costs of licensing DVB-H have yet to be published, but this is only one potential problem.

The source added that the Commission had talked only of mandating the "transport layer" of DVB-H, which provides end-to-end connectivity, but there was no guarantee that handsets would work across borders if different countries used different security layers.

Mike Bargauan, vice president at Italian research and development firm MB International, added: "We need to start using DVB-H, MediaFlo and any other standard as soon as possible not for technology reasons, but to see which content consumers are interested in: that's the real question."

FLO Forum lobbies EU

1 June 2007

FLO Forum lobbies EU

Mobile-TV-industry lobby group the FLO Forum last week urged Viviane Reding, the European Union commissioner for telecommunications, to support competing standards for broadcast mobile TV. The commissioner has said that it is important to have a single mobile TV standard in Europe, and she is backing DVB-H. "I'm in favor of a robust and proven single open standard: DVB-H," she said in a speech last month at the EICTA meeting in Brussels. Delegates at the FLO Forum event in Brussels argued that the evolution of mobile TV demands time and market flexibility to determine which technological standard will dominate. Reding says rollout will accelerate if a single industry standard is in place in the EU.

Hindustan Times

TV on my Mobile - Right here right now

04 June 2007

Good things come in small packages. Sounds clichéd. Ok I agree. How about fitting life in a 2 by 2 inches device in your pocket? No jokes, seriously, that's true. Our life as it steps into the electronic civilization is itself becoming a cell of information in a yet bigger cell of an information universe. On second thoughts we have always been a huge conglomerate of billions of cells in which information has been fed in at the time we were born. Let's make this simpler. The point I am trying to make is the cell phone is becoming a part of our own selves; it stays close to us more than anybody else in the world including our parents, spouse, friends. I won't be surprised if our soul also finds residence in our cell phones soon! The entire cell phone and the information technology is actually imitating life now. The cell phone is the first screen most of my countrymen would use as their first screen ever. The cell phone is also the most visible screen in the world now. Life in this century is lived 24/7 and life is LIVE now showing in a screen in your hand, right here right now.

Live streaming TV

Imagine a world where consumers are able to have live television or radio, news or soap opera summaries, highlights from their favourite sports teams, live feeds of their local weather and traffic, or real time stock ticker of their portfolio - delivered to their wireless mobile devices at all times. Wherever they go and whenever they want it. No more missing their favourite show while waiting in the airport, or on the train. No more missing their favourite baseball game, or their favourite radio talk show. The ability to stay tuned in to everything you care about - when you care about it. No more waiting for data connections to retrieve information. Instant On - access it immediately.

The multimedia delivery

Where Have We Been? The world of multimedia delivery continues to change. Broadband delivery of multimedia content has been offered to consumers for decades - initially based on analog technologies, but more recently has begun migrating over to digitized formats in order to offer a broader set of content to subscribers (video, music, web pages, games, etc). Today,

the most common distribution path is via the traditional cable, broadcast, and satellite distribution models which service the majority of current consumer demand for multimedia content. Over the past decade, while media was transformed into digital formats, computing devices matured, and bandwidth into the home continued to increase, multimedia access through the portal of the computer skyrocketed. The wired Internet has moved to more data-intensive forms of multimedia such as streaming video, interactive graphics like Macromedia Flash, and scores of mechanisms for the delivery of digital audio. The mobile Internet is evolving in the same way. What was once a 9.6 kbps circuit switched data network has evolved to networks like those based on CDMA2000 1xEV-DO with data rates to a cellular device comparable to landline broadband connections. There has been an explosive growth in device capability, especially for mobile cellular phones. The amount of computing power, memory, and high-end graphics functionality has accelerated the development of new and exciting wireless services.

Live streaming technologies

If the desktop war was about dominance between Microsoft, Google and Yahoo, the telecommunications next level of multimedia war is no different. Giants like QUALCOMM, Nokia, Samsung and others (there is also a consortium of who's who in the telecom world already pitted against one another). Not just this there is also an open source and a proprietary application clash here. Remember Microsoft and Open Source.

Qualcomm's MediaFLO (FLO - Forward Link Only)

Qualcomm's MediaFLO is a comprehensive, end-to-end solution to deliver live multimedia experience to the subscriber. It is promoted by the FLO Forum, which is an organisation responsible for the standardization of FLO technology. MediaFLO's forte is effectively distributing mass volumes of high-quality mobile multimedia, efficiently and at a lesser cost. Noteworthy is the alliance QUALCOMM has had with Verizon Wireless and AT&T Wireless. Powered by MediaFLO technology, Verizon has named it V Cast Mobile TV. The cost of the service with 8 Channels is \$15 a month.

DVB-H (digital video broadcast - handheld)

DVB-H is being supported by leading who's who in the telecom and technology fields across the industry. The proponents DVB-H claim that an open ecosystem in the DTV marketplace enables all companies in the value chain to increase their revenue opportunities with mobile TV services and products. The list of supporters of DVB-H is rather impressive. I can't seem to figure out a single company that matters in wireless not being in their list of supporters.

Mobile TV broadcasting in India - DVB-H takes the lead

Mobile TV has been demonstrated in India often enough - at Mobile Asia, Samsung had demonstrated Korean TV channels via DVB-SH. At India Telecom 2006 - Nokia and Ericsson had got temporary licenses for 3G spectrum for demonstrating mobile TV via DVB-H. MediaFLO has been demonstrated at FICCI FRAMES 2007 as well as at the BES Expo 2007. Last week Doordarshan launched Mobile TV in India.

Doordarshan shows the way

MediaFlo has been largely silent in the India front besides the demo. DVB-H (digital video broadcast - handheld) is already being tested by Indian public broadcaster Prasar Bharti. Doordarshan has teamed with Nokia to start a DVB-H. And trial is going in various metropolitan areas to test the reception quality of the broadcast coverage. Moreover, DD is currently broadcasting 8 channels in New Delhi. The service is currently available only to those subscribers who are within the radius of 10-12 kilometres from Akashvani Bhawan, Parliament Street, on the DVB-H (Digital Video Broadcasting-Handheld) compliant mobile handsets. The channels currently beamed are DD National, DD News, DD Sports, DD Bharati, DD Urdu, DD Punjabi, DD Bangla and DD Podhigai.

The service is being made available from 5:30 am to 12 midnight, will however be free of charge and won't incur any other levy by any mobile service provider.

The Cost of Handsets - Advantage Mediaflo

The big deterrence to Mobile TV is the cost of handsets. Cellphone majors such as Nokia and Samsung have already announced launch of DVB-H compliant handsets. At present the cost of a DVB-H compliant phone is Rs 25,000 upwards.

Mediaflo has an advantage over DVB-H as far as the cost of handsets are concerned. A MediaFlo compliant phone costs like LG VERIZON VX9400 costs roughly Rs 11,000. Samsung Media Flow handset SCH-U620 also comes under \$250 (roughly less than Rs 10,000.)

On the other hand Nokia's N77 DVB-H handset costs roughly Rs 25,000 and a feature rich N92 with DVB-H comes anywhere between Rs 30,000 to Rs 35,000.

The last word

It's Doordarshan now on the mobile and it's going to be the future screen for other broadcasters soon. Life is now live streaming right on our handsets 24/7. It's time to sit back and watch life live streaming on our handsets right here, right now.

Puneet Mehrotra

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