



Going with the FLO

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FLO FORUM

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The great and the good of the FLO Forum community gathered at Mobile World Congress to debate the big issues in mobile TV. Here's what they said...



AN operator interested in deploying broadcast mobile TV services is like a kid in a candy store when it comes to picking which technology to use.

There's a clutch of solutions vying for attention right now in various stages of planning or commercial launch. The latest additions come courtesy of LG's MPH and Samsung's A-VSB.

The myriad other mobile TV standards being rolled around the

world include DVB-H (various countries), DMB (Japan, South Korea, Germany), CMMB (China), DAB-IP (UK), ISDB-T (Japan) and Qualcomm's FLO.

It was in honour of the latter that members of the FLO Forum gathered in Barcelona to discuss the future of the mobile TV industry. Session chair and FLO Forum president Dr. Kamil Grajski (pictured) asked the questions...

In your own words, what are the current big issues in the world of mobile TV?

Michael Tidwall, Irdeto: A lot of it now is less about the technology and more about finding the right business model.

Over the next two years mobile operators will need to decide how to implement pay-per-view, video-on-demand, subscriptions and ad-funded TV and video services. The choices made will vary considerably between countries.

Thanasis Iatrou, Media Excel: We're neutral in terms of which technology platform operators end up using for broadcast mobile TV services, but we also think it's important that the market is left to decide which

out. Beyond that the quality we're seeing in the services that are live right now dilutes any concerns about whether the mobile TV market will happen. Consumers are liking what they see and the market will grow.

Hubert Rechsteiner, NagraVision: Our technology is used within the DVB-H services currently available from operators in Italy. The service has 1.2 million users across the three operators, but growth has undoubtedly slowed since launch. Personally we were thrilled when Qualcomm opened up the MediaFLO specifications.

Joel Espelien, PacketVideo: We've been involved in the area of mobile video for ten years now and broadcast mobile services for the last two years. The delivery technology is great whatever platform we're talking about, but the big issue for us is the lack of compelling devices in the market. We've actually gone ahead and made a MediaFLO/DVB-H receiver dongle for Apple iPhone to showcase to the public just what's possible.

Claus Darnstädt, Convisual: We're

“ A lot of it now is less about the technology and more about finding the right business models. ”



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FLO Forum members agree that it's good the hype around mobile TV has died down, and that TV functionality is becoming more commonplace on devices



content and now we want to apply the same techniques to mobile TV. The user interface is key to getting people to interact with the shows they are viewing on their mobile handsets. Because of the smaller screen, interactive icons need to be designed from the ground up for mobile – you can just re-use terrestrial content.

David Fagelston, NDS: A lot of the hype we were seeing about mobile TV two years ago has now died down. This is a good thing because it means the technology is now established and part of the overall mobile entertainment mix.

Vinod Valloppilli, Roundbox: The most encouraging sign is that mobile TV handsets are ramping just like cameraphones did a few years back. In another few years broadcast mobile TV will just become another standard feature on new handsets.

KG: It's encouraging that there's so much talk of user experience...

David Fagelston: The Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) is the most important factor in encouraging usage of mobile TV. We're working hard on ways to improve that part of the experience – our most recent

solution is a grid that allows the viewer to see what's going on in the live video stream behind the EPG. It'll be rolled out across all devices.

Vinod Valloppilli: I agree 100 per cent. The stats bear out the importance of the EPG. In many countries modern EPGs on digital satellite and cable TV services have generated 33 per cent deeper channel usage and are so key that they account for 10-15 per cent of average viewing time.

Claus Darnstädt: We have three years of research into mobile TV UI behind us and the critical thing is to keep it simple – that means no sub-menus. The viewer should never be forced to leave what they are watching to use the EPG.

Joel Espelien: The user experience is the single most important factor in the success or otherwise of mobile TV. In 2005 mobile TV services looked like what terrestrial TV looked like in 1985. That means ten channels and an up/down control for the volume. No-one will ever be excited by that, so I agree that what we need is some interactivity.

KG: All that comes only after certain minimum standards are

reached in terms of the quality of picture we can deliver to handsets. For me, that's what the FLO Forum is all about.

Joel Espelien: I agree. For example, there's no way that Apple, for example, will support three different mobile TV standards, which is why we developed the FLO/DVB-H dongle for iPhone. It's the same for all the other handset manufacturers too. The market is very fragmented, but it's there.

Forum for 'em

The FLO Forum is a trade body that comprises operators, device and equipment vendors, and content providers. It's focused on developing FLO-based networks, products and services.

Doing the talking

MODERATOR

Dr. Kamil Grajski, President, FLO Forum

SPEAKERS

Claus Darnstädt, conVISUAL

Claude Seyrat, VP Marketing & Strategy, EXPWAY

Tony King-Smith, VP Marketing, Imagination Technologies

Michael Tidwell, Business Development Director, Irdeto

Thanasis Iatrou, President, Media Excel

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Hubert Rechsteiner, VP Business Development, Nagravision

David Fagelston, Mobile Marketing Manager, NDS

Joel Espelien, VP Strategy, PacketVideo

Vinod Valloppilli, VP Product Marketing, Roundbox & Chair, Content

& Services Committee, FLO Forum