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## **Leading industry players commit to accessible interactive television**

### **Digital Interoperability Forum launches in Brussels**

Many of the foremost players in Europe's world-leading digital television industry are to join together on Wednesday 26 November 2003 for the formal launch of a new industry forum that will promote the benefits of digital and interactive television. The Digital Interoperability Forum (DIF) is committed to the development of commercial and technological solutions that will make digital and interactive television services accessible to the largest number of people on the widest choice of platforms.

DIF's growing membership currently comprises 18 of the leading companies in the delivery of television through European satellite, cable and digital terrestrial platforms. Collectively, BSkyB, CANAL+, Espial, Flextech, Liberate, Microsoft TV, Nagravision, NDS, ntl, Numéricable, OpenTV, Pace Micro Technology, Sky Italia, Telewest, TF1, TPS, UPC/Chello Media and ZetaCast serve tens of millions of households in most EU member states with a wide choice of digital television channels and innovative interactive services offering information, e-commerce and entertainment. As members of DIF, they are committed to the development of industry-led solutions that will make Information Society services available when and where European consumers and citizens want them.

The centrepiece of DIF's launch event, to be attended by MEPs and European Commission officials at the Bibliothèque Solvay in Brussels, will be live demonstrations of some of the many possible solutions to interoperability of interactive television services. These solutions demonstrate how interactive content services and enhanced information can be delivered to a range of consumer electronics devices through a variety of digital transmission methods.

Members of DIF believe industry initiatives can achieve the objectives of wider consumer access to digital and interactive television services, which are fundamental to the success of the eEurope Action Plan 2005. DIF will promote market-led solutions that leverage existing technologies and infrastructures in the belief that this approach will encourage sustained investment, competition and innovation in Europe's vibrant digital television industry.

Sheila Cassells, Chair of the Digital Interoperability Forum and Head of Economic Policy at BSkyB, said:

"Europe's consumers and citizens enjoy access to some of the world's most advanced television services. I am confident that the creation of the Digital Interoperability Forum is a significant advance towards even greater proliferation of interactive television services across the widest choice of platforms. DIF members are committed to working together to achieve industry-led solutions that will deliver benefits to EU citizens, sustain progress towards switchover and maintain Europe's leadership in digital and interactive television."

Roy Perry, Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur on the Directive Television Without Frontiers said: "The aim for all of us is to keep Europe as a world leader in Digital. We must make the best of these new digital opportunities. I see lots of opportunities for job growth in the creative and cultural sectors. Innovation will only happen with investments – investment will only happen if there is a return on that investment. This evening is an opportunity for experts in the industry to explain the opportunities and for the legislators here to listen and learn."

## 1) Technical demonstrations at the launch of the Digital Interoperability Forum

**BSkyB**, the operator of the UK's leading digital television platform, will demonstrate the principle of how its WTVML technology, as a candidate Portable Content Format, can be used for different target devices. The demonstration will show some of BSkyB's live UK-based services running on a MHP set-top box using the Espial browser and on a Microsoft TV platform via their embedded browser, alongside the live digital satellite platform using Open TV. BSkyB will also demonstrate Sky<sup>+</sup>, its digital video recorder which allows viewers to record and play back programmes without video tape. In addition, it will demonstrate its Digital Text service, Sky Text, running on a UK digital terrestrial MHEG 5 set top box.

**Microsoft** and **Open TV** will demonstrate **Playjam** games content with the same fundamental look-and-feel operating on both a Microsoft TV and Open TV set-top box.

**NDS** will demonstrate how an interactive TV application can be authored once in XHTML and then published on set-top boxes using a variety of different middleware.

**UPC/Chello Media** will demonstrate their **chello mistral** enhanced TV system, which allows the seamless creation, synchronization and playout of applications over multiple middleware technologies including Open TV, Liberate, MHP and WTVML.

## 2) Members of the Digital Interoperability Forum

**BSkyB** is the operator of the leading multichannel television platform in the UK and Ireland. More than 17 million viewers in seven million households enjoy an unprecedented choice of movies, news, entertainment and sports channels and interactive services on Sky digital, the UK and Ireland's first and most popular digital television platform. BSkyB's channels are available in a further 5.4 million cable and digital terrestrial homes. For more information, visit [www.sky.com/corporate](http://www.sky.com/corporate).

**CANAL+ Group** is an industry leader in the production and distribution of pay-TV channels, movies and television programs. In France, its pay television operations include production of the CANAL+ premium channel and of theme channels. The Group also operates television distribution platforms via satellite (CANALSATELLITE) and cable (**Numéricâble**). CANALSATELLITE is the leading French digital platform of thematic channels broadcasted in France. Leader of digital with 2.6 million individual and collective subscriptions at June, 2003, CANALSATELLITE offers 260 channels and interactive services, and holds exclusive satellite rights to 57 of them. The CANAL+ Group has a 66% interest in CANALSATELLITE. For more information, visit [www.canalplusgroup.com](http://www.canalplusgroup.com).

**Espial** is the leader in providing scalable TV application software for next generation television products. Espial software allows the creation of TV user interface solutions that build revenue via email, chat, games, program guides, broadcaster-content browsers, photo viewers, and Internet, while maintaining look and feel of the user interface. With more than 100 consumer electronic wins with companies such as Motorola, On Command, LodgeNet, Philips, Sony and Samsung, Espial has deployed proven solutions which apply universally across sectors including TV, wireless, automotive, and other connected devices. For more information, visit [www.espial.com](http://www.espial.com).

**Liberate Technologies** is a leading provider of software for digital cable systems. Liberate's open-standards software enables cable operators to run multiple services, including High-Definition Television, Video on Demand, and Personal Video Recorders, on multiple platforms. Headquartered in San Carlos, California, Liberate has offices in Ontario, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Liberate and the Liberate design are registered trademarks of Liberate Technologies. Other product names used in association with these registered trademarks are trademarks of Liberate Technologies.

**Microsoft TV** is a family of standards-based client and server software products and related developer tools that help network operators create digital TV services which delight subscribers and derive more value from digital TV investments. Microsoft TV enables the delivery of new services such as video on demand, On-Demand Storefronts, interactive program guides, managed content services, digital video recording, enhanced programming, e-mail, instant messaging and more across a full range of set-top boxes and TV devices. More information about Microsoft TV can be found at <http://www.microsoft.com/tv/>

**Nagravision** is a leading independent supplier of open conditional access, advanced management tools and integrated solutions for cable, satellite, terrestrial and MMDS, FTTH and xDSL operators. These advanced solutions provide digital TV and content providers with the tools to operate and manage a wide range of pay TV offerings including pay-per-view, on-demand and interactive applications on multiple digital platforms. Nagravision digital and analog conditional access technologies are currently being utilized by leading operators worldwide representing over 35 million digital and analog subscribers. Nagravision is a division of the Switzerland-based Kudelski Group and has offices in the United States, Singapore, Shanghai, India, Brazil, Spain, the UK and Switzerland. For further information please visit [www.nagravision.com](http://www.nagravision.com).

**NDS Group** plc (NASDAQ/NASDAQ Europe:NNDS) is a leading supplier of open end-to-end digital pay TV solutions for the secure delivery of entertainment and information to television set-top boxes and IP devices. See <http://www.nds.com> for more information about NDS.

**NTL Incorporated** (NASDAQ: NTLI) offers a range of communications services to residential and business customers throughout the UK and Ireland.

NTL Home - provides digital cable TV, telephone and internet services to 3m residential customers;

NTL Business - supplies voice, data and internet services to businesses and public sector organisations on its network;

NTL Broadcast - provides transmission and full support services for radio, television and wireless communications clients.

The NTL network passes over 8.4m homes in the UK. NTL Ireland has an extensive network using fibre-optic, broadband coax & copper, satellite and radio technologies to provide services to its 360,000 customers in Dublin, Galway and Waterford.

One of the world's leading interactive television companies, **OpenTV** provides a comprehensive suite of technology, content, games, tools, applications, and professional services that enables cable and satellite network operators in over 70 countries to deliver and manage iTV services on all major digital TV platforms. OpenTV's technology platforms enable interactive television to over 47 million set-top boxes on 43 different networks worldwide; 20 million in the U.S. alone. OpenTV has developed over 300 games that are currently available to over 12 million subscribers on 7 networks. OpenTV has developed 24 applications in 9 languages. OpenTV has ported its various technologies to 36 set-top box manufacturers around the world.

**Pace Micro Technology plc** (LSE: PIC) is a leader in digital television technology. The Company's primary focus is the development of innovative set-top box solutions for operators, broadcasters, telecommunications companies and retail markets worldwide. In addition, Pace develops edge of network devices for service providers, in particular digital IP gateways for low-cost integrated voice and data services. Pace's head office is in Shipley West Yorkshire, with further offices in Bracknell, Cambridge, the USA, France and Hong Kong. For further information, please visit Pace's web site at [www.pace.co.uk](http://www.pace.co.uk).

**SKY Italia** is the new Italian satellite platform created by the merger between Telepiú and Stream. SKY offers Italian viewers an unprecedented range of channels devoted to movies, sport, entertainment,

news, documentary and kids programmes. SKY is a national company with major operations in Milan, Rome and Cagliari.

**Telewest Communications**, the broadband communications and media group, currently passes 4.9 million homes and provides multi-channel television, telephone and internet services to 1.72 million UK households, and voice and data telecommunications services to around 70, 800 business customers. Its content division, **Flextech**, is the BBC's partner in UKTV. Together they are the largest supplier of basic channels to the UK pay-TV market with a portfolio that combines wholly owned and managed channels, including the eleven joint venture channels with the BBC. For further information go to [www.telewest.co.uk/media](http://www.telewest.co.uk/media)

**TF1** operates the leading commercial television channel in France with an average audience share in excess of 30%. In addition to its core channel, TF1 owns more than 20 thematic and premium channels including Eurosport, LCI, TPS Star and is the largest shareholder in the TPS digital satellite platform with a 66% stake. TF1 has subsidiaries in VHS/DVD distribution, music and home shopping.

**TPS** operates a digital satellite platform in France and has 1.2m subscribers. More than 200 TV, radio channels and interactive services are available. TPS recently announced a deal with France Telecom to launch TV through ADSL for all French towns, beginning in Lyon in December 2003.

**UPC Broadband** (UPC) and **Chello Media** are divisions of UGC Europe, Inc., one of the leading broadband communications and entertainment companies in Europe. UPC offers residential customers the value and choice of triple play services, combining television (basic analogue and digital), Internet and telephony. In addition, UPC offers a digital satellite television services in Central Europe. Chello Media includes businesses such as broadband Internet access, interactive digital products and services, transactional television services such as pay-per-view movies, digital broadcast and post-production services and thematic channels. Additionally, Chello Media manages the non-consolidated investment assets of UGC Europe, Inc. and Priority Telecom, which provides network solutions to the business customer.

**ZetaCast** is an independent technology consultancy company, specialising in providing services to the digital television industry. The services available cover many aspects of digital TV systems and products: product and market definition, system architecture, system integration, project management, standardisation support and product design. See [www.zetacast.com](http://www.zetacast.com) for further information.