

ntl and O2 to trial multi-channel TV to mobiles

September 13 2004

ntl's Broadcast division and O2 have announced the UK's first usability trial of multi-channel television to [mobile phones](#), beginning in spring 2005. From nine broadcast transmitters covering 120 square km around Oxford, the trial will see 500 O2 customers provided with a multimedia mobile phone with a built-in digital TV receiver. This will allow the participants to receive a line-up of 16 TV channels comprising music, sports, news, comedy, soaps, documentary, drama, cartoons and specialist channels including interactive gaming and shopping. The trial will test consumer demand for mobile TV services, and the perceived value of specific types of content and likely viewing habits that could shape an eventual service proposition.

To carry out the trial in the UK, ntl has joined forces with O2 and leading industry players Sony Semiconductor & Electronic Solutions (SES) and Nokia, both of whom were instrumental in the development of the DVB-H standard and will make available their prototype DVB-H receiver devices. Nokia will also supply the complete service system as well as the necessary eCommerce modules and interfaces, enabling full-scale testing of the technical and commercial concept.

The Oxford trial is the first of its kind in the UK and unique in being focused on commercial aspects of mobile TV. ntl will develop the TV channel portfolio, making use of its extensive broadcast customer base, and will design, build and operate the transmission network. O2 will contribute its experience in content delivery and mobile video, enabling O2 customers in the UK to be the first to preview future mobile services

of this type.

The trial will use the DVB-H broadcast transmission standard for handheld devices - specially designed for low power consumption and robust reception - which is an efficient 'one-to-many' method of delivering content in a way that complements the functionality of third-generation networks currently being rolled-out by mobile operators.

Terry Howard, head of media business development in ntl's Broadcast division, said: "This is a commercial trial to test the business case for a mobile TV service in the UK. We've performed extensive market research about consumer demand and viewing habits and it looks very positive but these results need to be validated in a trial environment in conjunction with key players in the industry. With our significant broadcasting assets, close relationships with content companies and track record of technology innovation, we're ideally positioned to pull this together and we expect the results of the trial to help us shape any future national service deployment. Mobile TV provides a new channel to market for existing media players seeking increased viewership and additional potential revenues. For mobile operators it provides a value-enhanced service and increased ARPU."

Dave Williams, O2's Chief Technology Officer, adds: "This trial will allow O2 to evaluate DVB-H as a potential low-cost delivery mechanism for mobile TV services to complement our planned 3G based mobile music and video services. As a leading mobile operator in this field, O2 is able to add significant value to the mobile TV proposition, enhancing DVB-H based services whilst also stimulating usage of 3G data services."

Mark Hopgood, Head of DTV Marketing, Sony SES, adds: "We are delighted to be part of this trial which we view as an important part of our extensive testing programme."

Seppo Sutela, General Manager IPDC Organization in Nokia, sees the Oxford trial as a logical continuation of European DVB-H development: "We find the Oxford trial extremely interesting and the UK a market of great potential for our global DVB-H activity."

Citation: ntl and O2 to trial multi-channel TV to mobiles (2004, September 13) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2004-09-ntl-o2-trial-multi-channel-tv.html>

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