

Broadband Report: Gametap expands

May 11 2006

The online video-game service GameTap is expanding its service offerings by launching broadband video content. UPI recently caught up with Stuart Snyder, senior vice president and general manager of GameTap, and Ricardo Sanchez, vice president of Content for GameTap, to talk about their push to create original video programming.

Q. What can you tell us about GameTap's future plans for your broadband iTV service?

Snyder. As we recently announced, GameTap has unveiled "GameTap TV," which features a dynamic mix of new channels and shows for the rapidly growing broadband community with more than 250 videos on demand. GameTap is also the leader in on-demand games with more than 400 games from 28 publishers currently on the network and growing every week. Moving forward, we will continue to introduce between five and 10 games each week, along with new shows each month.

Sanchez. The following list of channels that just debuted on GameTap TV is a good overview of where GameTap is heading:

-- OnTap channel: This guide delivers the latest programs on the GameTap service. Whether you want the new episode of "Space Ghost Coast To Coast" with Apple Computer co-founder Steve Wozniak in the hot seat or the "Tapped In" story of the SEGA Dreamcast, the best shows on "GameTap TV" are always "OnTap."

-- GameTap Originals channel: All of the GameTap original programs are housed in their entirety on this channel, such as the reality show "Challenged" (friends settle grudges with game-offs), "GameTap Survival Guide" (experts teach novices all they need to know to master specific games), "The Class of...?" (a pop-culture clip and quiz show), and "Hyper 5" (a Top 5 countdown show spotlighting the wild, weird and wacky elements of games), to name a few.

-- Music channel: The world of games collides with the music scene in original programming and music videos. This channel brings top musical artists to the network, including "GamePads," a show about celebrities and how games have impacted their lives, and this month's debut of "GameTap 10," a celebrity-driven Top 10 favorite video-games countdown show.

-- Animation channel: Debuting later this spring, the channel will kick off with an original series of animated shorts about a campus computer lab and its unusual characters in a usual situation. It is being developed by Soup2Nuts, the creators of "Home Movies," which airs on Cartoon Network. Other original animated features are also in the works.

-- Games channel: With an industry record-setting library of more than 400 games, this channel lets subscribers preview games in the network prior to selecting what they want to play.

Q. Broadband television was tried in the past and failed. What makes you think it's going to be successful this time?

Snyder. Broadband entertainment is on the rise, with the advent of new "fat pipe" technologies that have resulted in the proliferation of broadband in the home. In fact, as of 2005, 5 million people around the world were using super-fast Internet connections to watch TV, movies and other video content. That tally is expected to surge to 70 million by

2010, according to researcher Parks Associates.

We believe that on-demand broadband entertainment is a large part of the consumer revolution -- its more than technology -- it is the new "I want it now" mindset.

Q. What do you think consumers are looking for in their broadband programming -- more original content, repackaged stuff, interactivity?

Sanchez. Consumers want original content along with a new way to look at what they loved in the past. We have exclusive compelling and funny TV shows that you can't find anywhere else. Every week we launch new games on our service and serve up original shows to entertain you on gameplay breaks.

Q. Why are sites/organizations like yours now pushing iTV?

Snyder. As stated earlier, broadband entertainment is on the rise, and companies are recognizing the growth opportunity and demand for iTV among consumers. Everyone is coming to the party: multimedia giants such as AOL, MTV and even Amazon with an original streamed series starring Bill Maher to help sell more books, DVDs and games. Forget about appointment TV -- with TiVo, on demand, DVDs, or broadband video, entertainment is anywhere, however and whenever you want it. With our unique combination of original programming and more than 420 of the best games of all time, as well as Turner Broadcasting's expertise in repackaging compelling content for consumers, we are well positioned to succeed in the space.

Q. As a financial proposition, since the ad revenue doesn't appear to be there, what does having all of this new video content do for GameTap's image? Or a better way to ask this question is, how does this content affect your brand image and customer buy in?

Sanchez. Content enthusiasts, be they movie fans, sports fans or gamers, like to experience their passion outside of just watching a movie, going to a game or firing up GameTap; that's why DVD bonus features are so powerful and why sports talk radio is so successful. The video programming we create for GameTap fills that need for people who like games. You don't have to be a hardcore player with every system since the 2600 to appreciate "Tomb Raider" outtakes, the story of Activision, or a guest being skewered by "Space Ghost." Wrapping the games in our service with this kind of content changes the experience from a shopping cart to entertainment.

Q. Why do you think G4 failed, and do you think its failure presents an opportunity for your new broadband channels?

Snyder. We'd rather not speculate on reasons for another company's success, but there absolutely is a huge market for broadband entertainment these days, and GameTap is poised to take advantage of that.

Q. What do you think are the pitfalls of broadband video and content?

Sanchez. One challenge that is quickly being overcome is that more and more people are utilizing high-speed Internet connections. This allows the content that we create to be enjoyed in the way that we intended it to be.

Snyder. Broadband entertainment is a brave new world, and as industry leaders we're taking it in brave new directions. By boasting the largest library of on-demand games coupled with original shows all at the right price, GameTap is at the forefront of broadband entertainment and culture.

Sanchez. As more consumers and businesses move online, we're going to

see a lot of innovative products that weren't part of the first wave of Internet offerings. GameTap is leading that effort by putting forward a first-of-its-kind product that allows gamers to both play games and experience video-game lifestyle programming in one place.

Broadband Report focuses on happenings in broadband, including staff announcements, business deals and new technology.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: Broadband Report: Gametap expands (2006, May 11) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-05-broadband-gametap.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.