

MP3 co-creator wants to smarten-up dumb devices

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A widescreen video MP3 player is displayed at the 2010 International Consumer Electronics Show at the Las Vegas Convention Center on January 8, in Las Vegas, Nevada. A German electrical engineer who helped make MP3 players a reality has turned his attention to making "dumb devices" act smart.

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Karlheinz Brandenburg, now a professor at Ilmenau University of Technology in Germany, is backing Perfect Stream technology that lets [computing power](#) in the Internet "cloud" do the thinking for simple gadgets.

"When I first met these guys it sounded crazy to me," Brandenburg told AFP while courting partners for Perfect Stream at a major [Consumer Electronics Show](#) that ended Sunday in Las Vegas.

"But I have a fondness for crazy ideas because when we started MP3 it seemed crazy to everyone as well."

MP3 is now a nearly ubiquitous format used for [digital content](#) online and in mobile devices such as smartphones and music players.

The idea with Perfect Stream is to have digital video and audio tailored to individual tastes and delivered as a service to essentially any gizmo that can talk to the Internet.

Perfect Stream has proven itself in Germany and the company was at CES to license the technology to Internet service providers in the United States.

"This technology works and now we are trying to internationalize it," said Nikolas Samios of Perfect Stream.

Services can be programmed with a person's preferred shows, news sources, music, Twitter feeds, or other Internet content and the data can be routed to digital picture frames, in-car navigation systems, feature phones, game consoles and more, according to Brandenburg.

"It bridges the different technologies," Samios said.

"These are all walled-garden devices that usually never talk to each other."

Personalized Internet streams can flow seamlessly to sophisticated online electronics or to "any kind of stupid phone, a 50-dollar phone with a prepaid plan," according to Samios.

The key is in processing digital content on servers "in the cloud" and then feeding it to gadgets that need only receive and decode the data,

Brandenburg said.

Perfect Stream demonstrated the service on a series of devices, including an inexpensive Internet radio and a Philips television with basic Internet connectivity.

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