

# DVB-MHP

## The highlight of IBC 2000?

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On the evening of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2000, over six hundred people – double the expected number – flocked to the DVB-MHP Launch Event at the Krasnapolsky Hotel in Amsterdam. This huge ceilidh – sponsored by BetaResearch, Philips and Sun Microsystems (main sponsors) as well as Astra and Canal + Technologies (sub-sponsors) – offered this new technology a flamboyant, dancing, singing and memorable start to life.

As I'm sure you already know, DVB is the "Kingmaker" for broadcasting transmission technologies, yet does not stand still in this modern world: baby "Princes" are constantly being born as we move into new territory – such as the standardization of the Multimedia Home Platform API. It was good to see the "coming-out" at IBC of many companies with respect to this new standard. This shows that DVB is still the force that it was at its conception – driving the technologies forward with respect to market requirements. Of the 85 DVB members present at IBC, OpenTV had a section dedicated to their work on the DVB-MHP, as did many other companies such as Convergence, Sony and Telenor.



A more fundamental and practical side to the IBC are the conferences, seminars and workshops. An MHP workshop was available to delegates on the first Monday and, quite unexpectedly, there was a need for security personnel to intervene at the entrance. This was due to the scuffles that broke out when people got a little agitated as they tried to cram into the small conference room. Not even standing room was available!

As a result of this great success, a dot.com workshop has now been planned for the end of October 2000 – aimed at Content Creators, Internet Service Providers and the Authoring companies. The 170 or so places at this workshop are already over-subscribed.

Compelling content will be the driving force in the MHP rollout. With this in mind, the DVB-MHP – as presently marketed (business-to-business inside the broadcasting community) – is a rather intangible beast: its structure and functionality are not something that can readily be seen, heard or felt. The MHP set-top box will be a facilitator of enhanced, interactive and Internet broadcasts. It will enable a myriad of MHP content to be delivered seamlessly to the viewing screen and will allow the manipulation of text, data, audio and video from the remote control. But if we start telling the consumers about “common APIs”, “plug-ins” and “presentation engines”, they will simply switch off – technology overload! The old adage that a picture speaks a thousand words is absolutely true in this case and no matter how much we rattle on about DVB-MHP, it can best be explained through actually seeing it in all its glorious Technicolor. Accompanying this brief report are several screen shots from the demonstrations that DVB had on its stand at IBC 2000. These have been provided courtesy of the IRT and RTL in Germany.



A great deal of work is presently under way through an initiative called the MHP Implementation Group – which can be contacted through the Chairman of the DVB Technical Module, Professor Ulrich Reimers<sup>1</sup>, as well as via the German TV Platform which is contactable through the Chairman of the DVB Multimedia Home Platform Module, Georg Lütteke<sup>2</sup>. This extremely important initiative brought the demos to fruition at the DVB stand and were most ably supported by the MHP MarComms subgroup of the German TV Platform.

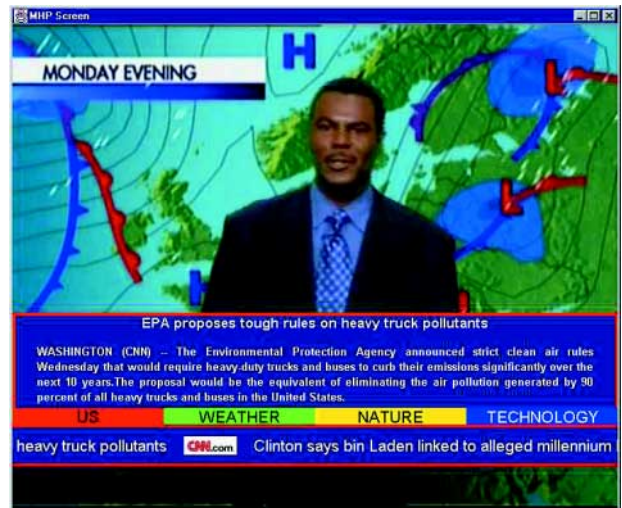
Many other aspects of DVB standards and specifications were to be seen at IBC 2000. The emergence of the Return Channels for Cable, Satellite and Terrestrial are new ‘Princes’ of DVB technology. Portable DVB-T also featured at the DigiTAG stand in the form of the Nokia MediaScreen. This is certainly a device that captures the attention, no matter where it is featured. Nokia also brought us the Media Terminal which embodies the “convergence” that we all speak of. This device contains a dual front-end (DVB-T & DVB-S) as well as VGA, Video-S, Firewire and USB connections, Conditional Access, a PVR (Personal Video Recorder) and Dolby 5.1 surround sound to name but a few of its wonderful characteristics. It very much shows the way that the broadcasting/consumer electronics world is heading. (The reason I mention this is that the Nokia Media Termi-

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nal, too, is — MHP ready.) Devices are becoming “Content Managers” and the Consumer is becoming his/her own “Producer”. “What you want, when you want” seems to be the new phrase to hit the streets.

Work on the promotion of the DVB portfolio of specifications continues; no cessation of activities is foreseen while DVB presence is being requested worldwide, notably in Latin America and the Asia-Pacific regions. IBC does however allow DVB to tap into a huge international audience, due to the fact that the show is recognized as one of the mainstream events in the broadcasting calendar.



So, without downing tools, we look forward to the next IBC where DVB will demonstrate that it is delivering on its promises and is forging ahead. Schism had been seen to be creeping in and around MHP, but this technology is not only the glue that binds the Cable, Satellite and Terrestrial worlds together as a common denominator across platforms – but it is also the glue that has brought together the whole DVB community, once again, with a solid market-led initiative.