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"We want to offer deeper and wider services to our customers"

27.07.09



Smart Digivision is a new breed of IPTV operator, common to the Indian market, which does not own the fixed-line network over which it delivers IPTV services but rather works with local fixed-line operators and assumes complete responsibility for the acquisition and delivery of content over these networks, as well as the acquisition and billing of subscribers.

We speak to *Kapil Dev Kumar, COO of Smart Digivision* to learn more about the new service and this uniquely Indian model of IPTV delivery.

The company, which launched its IPTV service 'MyWay' earlier this year, has big plans for the Indian market - it states that it aims to reach 3mn subscribers within the next couple of years, and is working with dominant fixed-line operators BSNL and MTNL in order to achieve this goal.

What kind of potential do you see for IPTV services in India?

With a population of over 1bn and more than 200mn households, the potential for an advanced two-way pay-TV services is huge. Furthermore, there are currently 6.5mn broadband households in India, and that figure is growing by around 200,000 households each month. IPTV is presently the only two-way service available on the Indian market, as cable operators here have not yet made the transition to digital cable services, such as those available in Europe and the US.

Two months ago we started commercial operations in 20 cities across India, which we expect to account for around 80% of our customer base; we will be rolling the service out to a further 34 cities in the next six months, which we expect will account for the remaining 20% of our customers.

How do you plan to differentiate your service?

Our approach is to offer standard entertainment services such as linear television, along with video-on-demand and a number of other rich interactive services - we want to offer deeper and wider services to our customers than those currently available. These will include information on the TV, such as news and weather, and online transactions such as the purchasing of air and rail tickets, and online banking. More will be launched over the next six months, including the provision of computer experiences via the set-top box. We are working with our set-top box partner, AirTies, to enable users to open and view word processing and spreadsheet documents on their television via their set-top box, as well as browse the Internet. This functionality should be available to our customers by the end of this year.

We already offer the ability to send SMS via the television to mobile phones, access to popular email clients such as Gmail, interactive games, music, karaoke services, an educational application in the format of a self-testing quiz, and a mapping application similar to Google Maps, delivered with our partners at MapmyIndia.com, to which we will be adding more information such as nearby restaurants and ATMs in the near future. We are also close to launching a user generated content application, enabling subscribers to share their photos and videos with family and friends over the MyWay network.

Over the next couple of months we plan to launch online transactions on the service, enabling users to book movie tickets and purchase airline tickets, and sometime in August we intend to activate a feature enabling users to attach storage to their set-top box via a USB connection to facilitate PVR capabilities.

What level of pricing is the service being offered at?

The pricing of pay-TV services in India is very aggressive, and we have to pitch our service accordingly - we are currently offering two main packages: the basic package costs around US\$ 4 per month, and a bigger package is priced at around US\$ 6 per month. This is in addition to an upfront fee of around US\$ 40 for the set-top box, which includes three months worth of subscription.

How does the model work for delivering IPTV services over the fixed-line networks of BSNL and MTNL?

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What is the biggest single challenge IPTV operators face?

- Acquisition of content
- Quality of Service
- Regulatory issues
- Network capacity
- Other

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How many IPTV subscribers will there be globally by 2010?

- 20-30mn
- 30-40mn
- 40-50mn
- 50-60mn
- 60mn+

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We are entirely responsible for the acquisition and delivery of content to subscribers, including customer acquisition, service provision and billing. The fixed-line operators are responsible for providing the broadband pipe that our content is delivered over, but that is all.

It is common in India for a telecoms operator to bring in a specialist private partner to acquire content, whether that be for an IPTV service or for a mobile telephony service offering such things as ringtones and wallpapers. By bringing in a private partner, the fixed-line operators here feel they can better acquire content, with around 15-20% of revenues typically going to the content partners.

How are the revenues shared for Smart Digivision's IPTV service?

We have different models for different aspects of the business - for broadcast (i.e. linear) services, we receive 90% of revenues and the fixed-line operators receive 10%, while for non-broadcast services such as video-on-demand and interactive services, we receive 70% of revenues and the operators receive 30%, and from advertisements on the service, we receive 80% of revenues and the fixed-line operators receive 20%.

How does this fit in with companies such as Aksh Optifibre, who also deliver IPTV services over the networks of BSNL and MTNL?

The fixed-line networks of these two operators can accommodate both us and our competitors such as at Aksh - however they can support no more than two IPTV services. Out of the 54 cities in which we operate, we are the only operator in 29 of those, including Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bangalore and Kolkata, and we compete in another eight cities with Aksh Optifibre.

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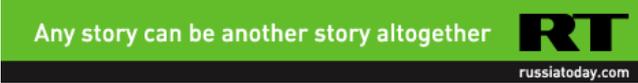
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Indian IPTV operator Smart Digivision rolls out AirTies Set-Top Boxes to three million households in India

Thursday, 16 July 2009 14:53

Award winning Indian IPTV service, MyWay, offers interactive entertainment experience on TV screens across India. AirTies, the innovative wireless home networking vendor has been chosen by Smart Digivision to provide its set-top boxes (STBs) as part of its award winning IPTV service, MyWay™, offering Indian households a high quality, interactive IPTV experience. The service, which is being rolled out across 54 large cities across India including New Delhi and Mumbai, will provide Indian households with the choice of 150 TV channels as well as Video on Demand (VoD) films and DVDs and a range of interactive internet services such as music, gaming, education and e-commerce to allow them to watch programmes as and when they choose.

Smart Digivision will be deploying the IPTV service to over three million subscribers throughout India on the broadband networks of incumbent telco operators BSNL and MTNL. AirTies has created a customised version of its H.264 standard definition set-top box offering high quality video over low bandwidth at a very affordable price. The STB supports low bit rate IPTV networks and plans are afoot to support for external USB disk based personal video recording and wireless video in future developments of the service.

Kapil Dev Kumar, COO, Smart Digivision comments: "Our key requirements in selecting the AirTies STB were fast boot-up and channel zap time, plus support for internet transactional and video applications on the TV. Other key criteria included support for DVR on external storage and low cost pricing for the competitive Indian Market. Not only did the AirTies STB meet all of our requirements, but it also impressed us with its unique visually appealing design. The AirTies STB has allowed us to price the MyWay™ service competitively against our Satellite television competitors, where volumes have already crossed 10 million in aggregate. More importantly, AirTies has lived up to the promise of excellent support and shown a flexible approach towards customizing the hardware and firmware for the specific eco-system deployment, network conditions and custom-developed user interface needed in the Indian market."

AirTies CEO Bülent Çelebi added: "India as a market offers dramatic potential for IPTV technologies with its current installed base of 6 million broadband subscribers and a market that is growing dramatically. We enabled MyWay to compete with Satellite price points by optimizing for the Indian market and designing cost out. Our challenge was to achieve that price point without compromising on quality or features. We see the Asia-Pacific IPTV market as a major opportunity for AirTies and consider a long-term business relationship with Smart Digivision as a key component to our success in the region."



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AirTies Unveils Wireless STB

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ISTANBUL -- AirTies, the innovative wireless home networking vendor is launching the industry's first high definition, 802.11N wireless video set-top box featuring self-service secure wireless network setup with a single push of a button and solid state storage on NAND flash. Air 7124, the high definition, wireless, IPTV/WebTV set-top box (STB), targeted at IPTV operators, eliminates the need for cables between multiple STBs, allowing the device to be located anywhere in the home and allowing single-touch, automated customer installation.

The Air 7124 is an elegant, compact, high definition STB for IPTV, WebTV and Video-On Demand (VoD) applications. Operating in conjunction with the compatible AirTies wireless gateway, it is the first STB to offer seamless wireless video distribution in the home together with internet data access for home computers. Using AirTies' wireless Quality of Service (QoS) and Mesh Networking technology, the Air 7124 offers a prioritised, interference free signal, ensuring a reliable high quality TV viewing experience, without the need to run cables between multiple devices in the home. The combination of AirTies STB and gateway enables high quality end-to-end wireless video distribution at home and offers a simple one-touch installation and setup of a secure wireless network by the end-user, getting rid of truck rolls and installation costs for the operators.

The new AirTies STB also features 96 GB NAND flash memory and the default 2 GB solid state NAND flash offers a cost-effective, Pause-LiveTV feature for the masses without the shortcomings of a mechanical hard drive. This enables storing of photos and music without the 50% cost increase of a hard disk drive. Furthermore Flash disk is more reliable, lower power and produces no noise when compared with mechanical hard disks.

According to AirTies CEO, Bulent Celebi: "The beauty about the wireless video STB is that it appeals to both consumers and operators: It dispenses with the need for unsightly cables and allows consumers to locate their TV wherever they choose. It also has immense appeal to the operator as; by allowing customer self-setup and self-provisioning; it removes the expense of engineer installation and makes it easier and cheaper to sell as a retail product."

[AirTies](#)

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Indian IPTV operator rolls out AirTies set-top boxes

AirTies
Friday 17 July 2009

Award Winning Indian IPTV Service MyWay offers interactive entertainment experience on TV screens across India

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AirTies offers STBs to Smart for IPTV service in India

Friday 17 July 2009 | 12:38 PM CET

Turkey-based mobile products developer AirTies has been chosen by Smart Digivision to provide its set-top boxes as part of its IPTV service, MyWay, offering Indian households an interactive IPTV experience. The service, which is being rolled out across 54 large cities across India including New Delhi and Mumbai, will provide Indian households with the choice of 150 TV channels as well as VoD films and DVDs and a range of interactive internet services such as music, gaming, education and e-commerce to allow them to watch programmes as and when they choose.

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Indian IPTV operator rolls out AirTies STBs



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