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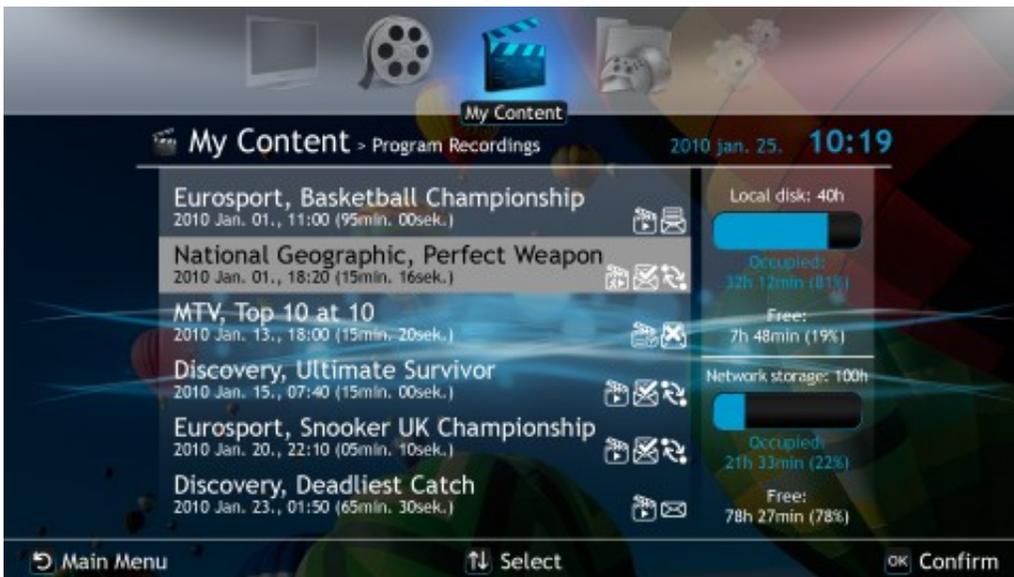
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You are here: [Home](#) / [Event Coverage](#) / [IBC Special](#) / SVG on the IBC menu

ANYWHERE AND AT ANY TIME

## SVG on the IBC menu

14.16 Europe/London, August 30, 2011 By [Broadband TV News Correspondent](#)



Once again this year, IBC will host a vast array of exciting products and visually compelling demos; but if previous years are anything to go by, it is questionable whether many of the “leading edge” user interface demos will ever be seen in shipping product. The growing difference between visual application quality on the TV when compared with that on the tablet, desktop or smartphone is becoming more apparent than ever, leading many to ask why this is.

It is true that some TV manufacturers have started to embrace greater levels of visual quality in their set-up menus, but as soon as any form of external information is involved, even if that’s just the simplest of programme guides, visual appearance reverts to resembling that of an early 1980s home computer screen rather than a high value consumer product.

Part of the reason that TV user interfaces have struggled to keep pace with their counterparts in the desktop and portable device markets is due to the reduced processing power that TV devices have to endure. The most popular rendering technologies in the desktop and portable device markets, which deliver such visually compelling results, are simply not suited to delivering a quality customer experience on a TV. For built-in menus, the manufacturers can resort to native coding techniques to improve visual appeal, but the cost and inflexibility of native applications makes their use impractical for any form of connected content.

One rendering technology that is ahead of the trend, is Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG). Considered by some as an adjunct to HTML, and overlooked by many as a poor man’s Flash, SVG has now grown to be the technology of choice for the majority of TV middleware providers. On the IBC show floor, when any mention of SVG is made, it might well be alongside that of the developer Ekioh.

In developing its SVG engine Ekioh took a different approach to many others; instead of adding SVG capabilities to an HTML browser, Ekioh developed a standalone engine focused entirely upon delivering superior rendering speed within a compact memory footprint. This approach has resulted in an engine which is twice the speed of its nearest competitor making Ekioh the de-facto standard in TV based SVG deployments.

Slovenian IPTV middleware provider, BeeSmart (stand 13.281), was the first middleware vendor to switch its deployment strategy from HTML to Ekioh’s SVG and has since seen significant results; achieving 300% growth last year alone , BeeSmart now has deployments with Invitel, Iskon, BHT, PTK, Euronet, Tsat, Wist, GCN & SEIC and boasts an impressive line up of BeeSmart enabled STB providers. Three such set top box providers helping to drive BeeSmart’s success are AirTies (stand 5.B33), TechnoTrend (Stand 1.A58) and Vestel (Stand 13.131). All three embraced the use of SVG in order to deliver greater flexibility and user interface quality to

their IPTV products. According to Jim Lomax International EVP Sales & Marketing for AirTies, “AirTies integrated its STB platforms with Ekioh’s SVG technology in response to demand from existing customers and prospects. The combined solution provides a compelling proposition for the burgeoning OTT and IPTV marketplace.”

New entrants are also recognising the strategic benefit of SVG. Advanced Multimedia Systems has chosen Ekioh’s SVG engine to convey the visual experience for its EAMS wholesale IPTV product which uses satellite delivery to reach its remote head ends. The service, which is due to go live later this year, is designed to solve the content acquisition and delivery problem for linear and pay-TV across the Middle East. The speed and efficiency of Ekioh’s SVG is helping EAMS to source reliable and cost effective set top boxes to underpin its product offering.

The growing interest in third party applications is also driving demand for easy to author, open standards rendering technologies. Accedo Broadband (Stand 4.C81) was an early advocate of SVG; Accedo’s CEO Michael Lantz said, “We have tried many technologies, but we believe that SVG provides a fantastic opportunity for providing a very attractive user experience on very low performance devices. Accedo works both with our own apps such as our game service Funspot and with apps from media companies such as Napster, Vimeo and Viasat.”



One of the most respected companies in the industry, Nagra (Stand 1.C81) is using its considerable experience to get the most out of using SVG. “We have been working with SVG, and particularly Ekioh SVG for our next generation middleware, OpenTV 4”, said Matthew Huntington, vice president, product marketing at Nagra. “We believe that our OpenTV 4 middleware sets a new benchmark in innovation and product quality, particularly for television user interfaces.”

Ekioh’s SVG technology will also be at the heart of a number of other products which will be on show at IBC this year. “At the last count, we should be on about 15 stands”, said Stephen Reeder, commercial director, Ekioh. “We’re delighted to see the big step forward in user experience that our technology has helped to enable.”

So fingers crossed that 2011 is the year that the exciting demos at IBC turn into the exciting products for 2012; with such a groundswell of support for SVG technology this might just be the year it happens.

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