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The Hilton Prague Hotel, Prague, Czech Republic



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- ▶ IPTV Forum North America
- ▶ IPTV Forum Eastern Europe
- ▶ IPTV Forum Middle East & Africa
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Caiway eyes November launch for IPTV

11.09.09

IBC 2009: Dutch service provider Caiway is planning a November launch for its new IPTV service, after nearly two years in the planning, according to Jan Stolte, Manager Projectbureau, speaking to IPTV News at the IBC show currently taking place in Amsterdam.

Caiway used to be a cable operator in the Netherlands, before splitting up and selling off its cable assets last year. The company has been planning its IPTV service for one and a half years, with Mr. Stolte stating that the company has been taking its time getting the service right, after disappointing customer experience feedback during the testing phase.

"There was a lag when users tried to change channel, and we initially thought that the problem was in the middleware, whereas it was actually in the set-top box." Having now changed their set-top box provider to Turkish firm AirTies and their middleware to Nordija, Caiway is now hoping to have the system ready in October, in readiness for a commercial launch nationwide in November.

The new service will feature standard- and high-definition live broadcast content delivered in MPEG-2 and MPEG-4, with 11 high-definition channels expected at launch (rising to 18 by the end of the year), and a total line-up of around 210 channels, including the Dutch public broadcasters, History Channel HD, Discovery Channel HD and Voom HD. Also planned for the launch are a number of advanced features such as time-shift, catch-up TV, pause live TV and network Personal Video Recorder (nPVR) functions, depending on approval from the service provider's content partners: "In the end I think we can convince them that nPVR is the way to go," said Mr. Stolte.

Features such as the ability to pause live TV will make use of 2 GB of flash memory which has been integrated into the AirTies set-top box, bypassing the more usual hard disk in an effort to keep costs down. Also featured in the service will be wireless distribution of IPTV content, with Mr. Stolte commenting that this method will "smooth the transition" from coaxial to IP for Caiway's end customers.

Other clients of AirTies include Türk Telekom, Smart Digivision of India and a yet-to-be-announced Russian operator.

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What is the biggest single challenge IPTV operators face?

ipTVnews

- 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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