



Bandwidth the key to radio's future success

With the convergence of modern technology enabling mobile operators to dabble in the broadcasting industry, digital radio broadcasters could well find themselves distanced from their listeners if they did not have their own bandwidth.

Nick Piggot, the Digital Content Manager for GCap Media plc, warned radio broadcasters that they ran the risk of being separated from their listeners if they allowed mobile and telecommunications operators to control bandwidth to the device.

Speaking at the second panel session on "The future scenarios for the radio industry" at the RadioAsia 2005 conference in Singapore, Mr Piggot said it was important for them to "retain their listeners" rather than having "access to mobile customers".

"If we do not control bandwidth to the device, we are disconnected from the listeners. We are separated from them by third parties. In the end, we end up catering to the mobile customers rather than our own listeners," he said.

Mr Piggot also said that it was important to create the right content mix of music, information, and personalities in order to sustain radio listenership in a competitive future.



Trade visitors to BroadcastAsia 2005 in Singapore check out the various booths of major broadcast industry players

He said a successful radio station of the future would need to have:

- compelling and genuinely unique content;
- clever functionality enabled by technology;
- presence on the devices most used by their audience; and
- live audio and time-shifted audio-visual content.

"In the future, listeners will love radio, but they will take control of their own radio experience. We therefore need to package our product in the right mix," he said.

Meanwhile, Jonathan Marks, the Director of Critical Distance, said new media was the key towards changing the future of radio broadcasting, especially with the convergence of various technologies.

"Radio, mobile phones and TV can no longer exist on separate platforms. I am a firm believer of audio-visual syntax on various platforms," he said.

Jointly organised by the ABU, the Asian Media Communications and Information Centre (AMIC) and

(cont'd on page 4)

Hanoi GA logo launched



Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union
42nd General Assembly

Vietnamese broadcasters Voice of Vietnam (VOV) and Vietnam Television (VTV) have jointly unveiled the logo for this year's ABU General Assembly, which is a unique blend of nature, technology and cultural heritage.

The Vietnamese capital of Hanoi, which will host the ABU's annual meetings, is symbolised by the red Khue Van Cac (Pavilion of Literature) – the oldest school in the country.

The brown and blue curves on the logo represent the earth and sea respectively, while the thin blue rings symbolise radio signals. The words "ABU-Hanoi" – in blue – symbolise the sky.

The message behind the logo is that under the ABU banner, the General Assembly is being held in the heart of Vietnam which beams radio and TV signals across the oceans and continents.



A scenic view of the red Khue Van Cac (Pavilion of Literature), which inspired the design of the Hanoi GA logo

More information on the 42nd General Assembly can be found on the ABU website at www.abu.org.my.

Meanwhile, the host broadcasters have come up with an impressive accompanying persons' programme, which includes a visit to the Khue Van Cac, the Vietnamese Fine Arts Museum and Hoan Kiem Lake on the first day.

The lake is also known as the Lake of the Restored Sword. Its name comes from the legend of King Le Thai To, who was boating on the lake when a large turtle swam towards him and asked him to return the sword that helped him defeat his enemy.

On the second day, the visitors will get to cruise along the Red River Delta, as well as stop by Bat Trang Village which is famous for its pottery.

A visit to the Tam Coc and Bich Dong caves is scheduled for the following day. Located some 90 kilometres south of Hanoi, the caves

are noted for the formation of colourful stalactites and stalagmites that sparkle like gemstones.

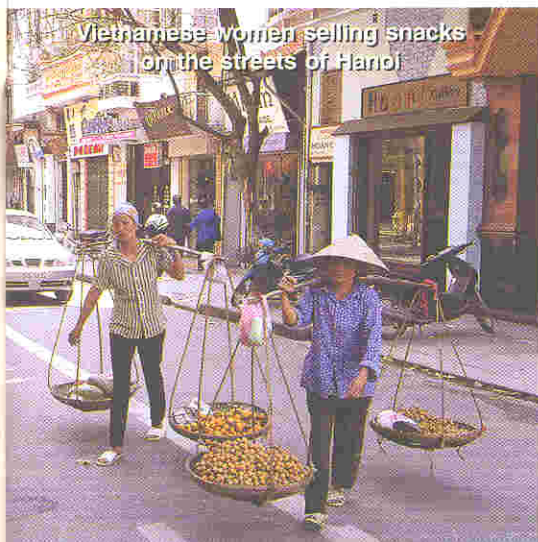
The tour continues with a visit to Ha Long Bay the next day. The area is made up of 1,969 islands, out of which only half have been given names.

The bay is a major landmark of Vietnam and has also been recognised by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee.

The accompanying persons' tour is rounded off with a visit to the streets of Hang Ngang and Hang Dao for some souvenir shopping.

The Vietnamese are known for their arts and crafts made out of wood, animal skin and horns, as well as tortoise and oyster shells.

The organisers have arranged for transport to and from the Daewoo Hotel, the Fortuna Hotel and the Horizon Hotel for those who have signed up for this programme. □



Vietnamese women selling snacks on the streets of Hanoi

Radio reinvents in the digital age

The key to the continued success and development of radio lies within radio alone, according to the Secretary-General of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), Dr Indrajit Banerjee.



Dr Indrajit Banerjee

"Radio must believe in its ability to reinvent itself and adapt to a rapidly changing technological and cultural landscape," he said.

Dr Banerjee was delivering the keynote address to the inaugural RadioAsia conference, held in conjunction with BroadcastAsia 2005 in Singapore.

He said that radio must continue to expand on its inherent and specific characteristics such as its mobility, its low cost and its ability to harness every new technological innovation in order to grow.

"It would be fair to state that radio has proved to be one of the most versatile, flexible and dynamic media forms that we have ever seen.

"Radio must continue to be creative and innovative as a new platform for its growth. This is crucial to attract new listeners whilst at the same time consolidating its base of regular consumers," he added.

Dr Banerjee said that digital technologies offered radio a range of

new possibilities to develop new content and delivery mechanisms as well as distribute them through the mobile, wireless and Internet platforms.

"The Internet is increasingly becoming a platform for radio to become global and reach listeners in international diaspora and special interest communities across the world," he said.

Dr Banerjee said he believed that the digital age offers greater dividends and prospects for radio than challenges.

"I have always been astonished at the number of times that pundits and scholars have proclaimed the death of radio. The fact of the matter remains that radio simply does not want to die.

"RadioAsia was conceived with the idea of breathing new life into radio and ensuring that it becomes immortal." □

Media ignoring important issues

Big global issues like HIV/AIDS, trade and the environment are being ignored by the media because there is "no peg" or they are not "sexy enough", the RadioAsia conference was told.

Ruxandra Obreja, Commissioning Editor for the BBC's English Networks and News, said that the aftermath of 11 September 2001 still dominated today's geopolitical agenda.

"But the world and our news agenda cannot be a one-issue agenda. The threat of terrorism is not the only factor that is making the world a more uncertain place," she said.

"The end result is that many people, particularly the young and those in

developing countries, feel their views are not being heard."

Ms Obreja also spoke about a new relationship between broadcasters and audiences.

"Satellite television, the internet and other digital media are competing for attention and having an unprecedented impact on audience behaviour in many parts of the world," she explained.

She said that audience expectations were moving as fast as the technology and in some cases, leading the technology. They were no longer content to remain passive receivers of information and expected to play an active role by voicing their opinions and reactions to events and ideas.

"As the market fragments and niche broadcasting grows, audiences are increasingly only going to hear about things with which they are familiar. They are only going to be exposed to views with which they are comfortable.

"It is important for a well-informed society, for a well-educated society, for a fully functioning democratic society, that audiences are able to come up against the unexpected and the uncomfortable, that they don't just hear what they would like to hear," said Ms Obreja.

She said that doing this with integrity and skill by using digital technology in a way that fits with people's lives and their busy schedules, is no longer just a challenge, but a daily requirement to which broadcasters have to respond. □

Mr Talbot said that broadcasters needed to change their current operating formats and be more flexible in their business models in order to really be able to tap into the potential of mobile phone usage.

Other conference topics discussed at BroadcastAsia this year include "Measurements in the digital era", "Delivery of content", "Consumer technology", "Broadcaster business issues", "Spectrum usage", "Interactive television" and "Broadcasting to handhelds".

Good turnout

This year's BroadcastAsia conference and exhibition in Singapore from 13 to 17 June attracted more than 9,600 trade visitors, of which almost half were overseas visitors.

This figure does not include the 13,476 attendees who consist of conference participants and speakers, exhibition staff and members of the local and foreign media.

The annual event, organised by Singapore Exhibition Services (SES), also incorporates CableSat 2005, AudioTechnology 2005 as well as ComGraphics&Animation 2005. The ABU has been a strong supporter of BroadcastAsia since its inception 10 years ago.

This year, in co-operation with the Asian Media Information & Communications Centre (AMIC) and SES, the ABU organised the RadioAsia 2005 conference in conjunction with BroadcastAsia to specifically address issues related to the radio broadcasting industry. □

China disallows foreign TV channels

China will forbid any new foreign-owned TV channels from entering the country, state-owned *Xinhua News Agency* has reported.

The news agency quoted regulators as saying China will not again allow a foreign satellite TV station to have landing rights in the country.

Regulators said the new rules were designed to strengthen oversight of the industry while the government "finds ways to regulate and effectively control (existing foreign media in the market) to prevent harmful programmes from entering".

Analysts said the latest directive could be a reaction to the accelerating

expansion of foreign participation in local media.

Foreign players with mass broadcasting rights in China include Viacom's MTV, News Corp's Star TV and Phoenix Satellite Television.

Other foreign companies with limited broadcasting rights include Time Warner's CNN and BBC's news channels.

China's TV and film regulator, SARFT, announced in April that all media companies would be limited to a single programming joint venture.

Last month, the regulator followed with more regulations banning city and provincial broadcasters from cooperating with foreign media companies. □

Spectrum issues make debut

Spectrum issues made a maiden appearance at BroadcastAsia 2005 when the ABU presented a half-day workshop on "Broadcasting spectrum usage" at this annual international conference in Singapore.

The spectrum workshop was part of an ongoing ABU effort to reach out to broadcasters and other players in the broadcasting industry to make them aware of the importance of frequency spectrum and its management.

The workshop was designed to expose the participants to various aspects of spectrum used for broadcasting services, and international regulations governing spectrum usage, focusing on the need for broadcasters to be alive to spectrum related developments.

Conducted in the form of a tutorial, the workshop was directed at the uninitiated as well as to those with some experience in spectrum management.

Topics included frequency bands for broadcasting services, spectrum planning on a regional basis, shortwave and medium wave radio spectrum, the impact on broadcasting services due to powerline telecommunications and Ultra Wide Band emissions, competition for additional spectrum and the ITU World Radiocommunication Conferences.

At the end of the session, an assessment was carried out to gauge the workshop's effectiveness. □

AVN cuts fees for smaller members

Asiavision (AVN), the ABU's daily news exchange, has introduced a new scale of subscriptions for members, with the aim of widening its membership.

The ABU News Group, which sets policy for AVN, has replaced the flat monthly fee for all members with a sliding scale of fees based on members' operational expenditure.

Subscriptions for most AVN members have been reduced by between 20 and 60 percent. Larger members pay the same as before but will benefit along with the others if, as hoped, the new fee structure attracts more members to the news exchange, widening its news coverage.

In addition, a system of fee rebates will be introduced for members based on their contributions to AVN.

ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, told the News Group's annual meeting in Kuala Lumpur at the end of June that AVN had been clocking up healthy surpluses each year, and yet many of the smaller members had been struggling to keep up with their monthly subscriptions.

The existing fee structure, Mr Astley said, was deterring potential members from joining.

He said that using some of AVN's reserve funds to cover the temporary shortfall caused by a reduction in subscriptions would clearly help the development of the news exchange "because any increase in membership contributes to the development of AVN through widening its coverage and increasing the number of stories available to members".

On the news content side, AVN Managing Editor, Alan Williams, told the



News Group leaders Shaun Seow, Johari Achee and Tetsushi Wakita

News Group that the launch of a second daily satellite feed on 16 May had brought a big jump in the amount of same-day coverage.

A comparison of the month before the launch and the month after showed that the number of same-day stories had increased by more than 80 percent. The overall number of stories went up by 40 percent.

"So far, the second feed has been a big success," he said. "The AVN members deserve high praise for their commitment and hard work in taking on this new challenge."

The second feed will continue for a year, after which members will decide whether to make it permanent. It is the first time AVN has had two daily feeds.

The News Group Chairman, Johari Achee of RTB-Brunei, urged members to help improve AVN by looking at their role at national level and pushing their involvement up to AVN requirements.

AVN Senior Editor, Humayun Choudhury, said the commitment from

management at member stations was often not strong enough, and that AVN sometimes ran on the commitment of individual journalists.

In the area of training, the News Group gave the go-ahead for AVN's participation in two projects for the benefit of its members.

The first is a two-day environmental journalism workshop to take place in the Malaysian city of Kuching at the end of November, right before the International Media Environment Summit. AVN will fund the participation of all its members.

The daily news exchange will also organise and fund a course for its members on basic AVN-related journalism skills.

In other decisions, the News Group:

- Elected Tetsushi Wakita of NHK-Japan as a Vice-Chairman for a three-year term. He joins Mr Johari and Vice-Chairman Shaun Seow of Channel NewsAsia-Singapore on the group's leadership team.

- Asked the ABU to continue to work closely with international organisations to strengthen the role of broadcasters in disaster prevention and early warning systems. The ABU has held three workshops on the subject since last December's tsunami.
- Expressed support for the ABU's planned web-based Asian Radio News Exchange, and gave the go-ahead for selected audio material from their AVN contributions also to be made available in the radio news exchange.

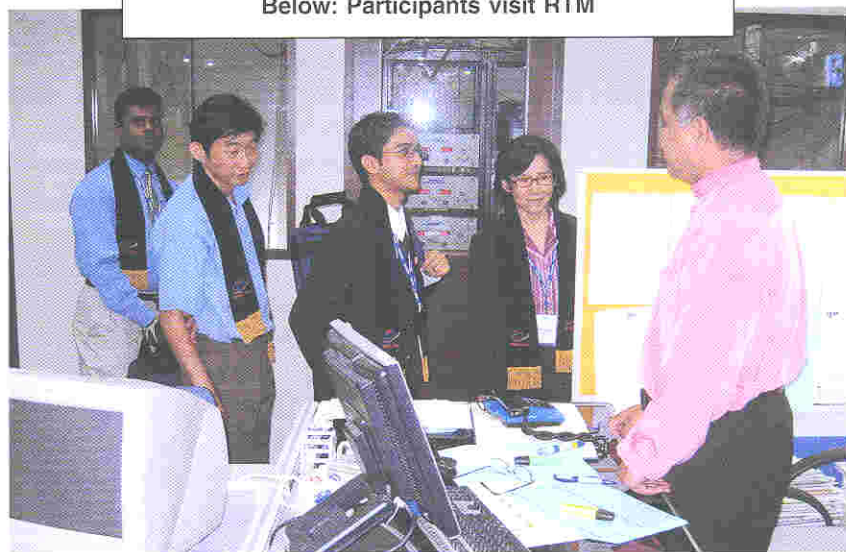
Meanwhile, AVN's Annual Awards for 2005 were announced at the meeting. NHK-Japan won the award for the most news flashes during the previous 12 months.

In a ballot by members, MCOT-Thailand won an award for its overall contributions to the news exchange, including its tsunami coverage.

The third annual award was shared between CCTV-People's Republic of China and DDI-India. Each award carries a cash prize of US\$700. □



Top: Participants at the Asiavision centre
Below: Participants visit RTM



Indian government allows 20% foreign stake in FM radio

The Indian government has set in motion the opening up of the FM radio sector while acceding to a longstanding demand of the industry to migrate to a revenue-sharing model, reports indiantelevision.com.

In a bid to make investment norms more attractive, the government will allow foreign direct investments of up to 20 percent in FM ventures. However, it struck down a plea by the industry to allow news transmissions on private FM stations.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Jaipal Reddy said: "The thrust of the second phase of FM radio is on growth and not on generating revenue (for the government), which was done during the first phase and the experiment failed."

This move, he hoped, would remove some of the concerns of the industry.

Under the revenue share regime, FM radio stations would have to share four percent of their annual revenue with the government.

Speaking about the government's All India Radio network, Mr Reddy said it would be beefed up to withstand competition from the private sector.

He added that the opening up of the private FM radio sector would lead to more job vacancies.

The announcement follows an appeal by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to allow 100 percent foreign ownership in satellite radio broadcasting. □

Bangkok workshops on disaster information flow

Two workshops have been held in Bangkok, Thailand, for broadcasters in tsunami-affected countries on how to spread emergency information and build public awareness of disaster prevention, reduction and response.

The workshops were organised by the ABU in partnership with the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN ISDR) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

Their main objective was to help broadcasters enhance radio and television broadcast information flows that are aimed at reducing the impact of natural disasters in Asia-Pacific countries.

This ABU/UNISDR/UNESCAP initiative on disaster reduction was a further move forward on the recommendations made by ABU member broadcasters at a workshop titled "Natural Disasters and the Broadcaster's Role" staged by NHK-Japan and the ABU in February. The Tokyo workshop – hosted by NHK

at its Conference Centre in Tokyo – drew about 40 broadcasters from 15 countries and regions.

"The tsunami disaster of last December brought to light the lack of emergency warning systems regionally and nationally across the Asia Pacific," said Craig Hobbs, ABU's Senior Officer for International Relations and Development Communications.

"This has resulted in a strong response by the local and international community to come together to improve the way information is communicated from meteorological organisations to the public at large – quickly and effectively.

"Clearly, the ABU has a role and responsibility in helping to coordinate the establishment of better emergency broadcast systems and increased public preparedness by cooperating with the regional and international organisations," Mr Hobbs added.

The workshops brought together broadcasters and representatives from

international organisations who have increased their coordination efforts on disaster reduction and the establishment of early warning systems since the tsunami.

These included various UN agencies and regional organisations such as the World Meteorological Organisation, Asian Disaster Prevention Centre, Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, the Hong Kong Observatory, Thailand's National Meteorological Service and National Disaster Warning Centre, the International Federation of the Red Cross and NIK-Japan.

The objective of the regional workshops for radio and television broadcasters is to help develop faster and more effective early warning systems in the Asia-Pacific region by:

- increasing the rate and accuracy of information flows from meteorological and disaster management organisations to broadcasters;
- ensuring a rapid flow of disaster and emergency information from broadcasters to the public;
- helping to develop faster, more accurate coverage of disasters when they strike; and
- raising public awareness of disaster reduction and emergency preparedness by airing special educational programmes and public service announcements.

"No matter how good the technology or how accurate the forecast and warnings, if the information does not reach the people in danger in a timely and understandable manner, the warning system will fail," said UN ISDR Director, Salvano Briceño.



Tuk-tuks plying a busy street in Bangkok, the host city of the disaster information workshops



“The media has a huge responsibility together with governments in issuing the warnings. They need to work together to ensure that a clear and consistent message is provided to the public,” he added.

ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, said broadcasters had a responsibility to educate people and raise their awareness of natural disasters by airing public service announcements, producing special programmes to mark the anniversaries of previous disasters and creating other related content.

“The ABU is well positioned to both coordinate the improvement of emergency warning systems through television and radio among its member broadcasters across the region, as well as assist in the development of content designed to educate audiences in advance on how to respond in the event of emergencies and natural disasters,” Mr Astley said.

The first Bangkok workshop – titled “Emergency information flows from meteorological organisations to broadcasters” – was more technical in

nature and involved technical or news directors from broadcast companies and operational directors from meteorological, oceanographic and disaster management organisations. The professionals came together to review the rate and accuracy of information from meteorological, oceanographic and geological organisations to broadcasters and the general public.

The second workshop – titled “Public awareness, preparedness and the response of individuals and communities” – highlighted the capacity and responsibility of broadcasters to educate audiences and raise awareness of the dangers of and appropriate responses to natural disasters through the use of public service announcements, educational documentaries, current affairs programming and other content.

“Media can achieve a lot. They can warn people without scaring them and they can educate and better prepare them to face natural hazards. They are key players in the long chain that ultimately will reduce risk and vulnerability to save people’s lives and livelihoods,” said Mr Briceño. □



Participants of the workshops on enhancing broadcast information flows on natural disasters

42nd ABU GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Hanoi, Vietnam • 26 - 28 November 2005



REACH OUT TO OVER 100 BROADCASTERS IN 54 COUNTRIES

Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union
Annual General Assembly 2005

Exhibition and Sponsorship:
Hanoi, Vietnam - 26-28 November

For the first time in its 41-year history, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) is offering exhibition and sponsorship opportunities during its annual General Assembly, an event attracting over 300 senior broadcasting executives and key decision makers in the industry.

Programme distributors, equipment manufacturers, media service companies and others are offered a chance to gain access to the high-level broadcasting executive constituency attending the annual ABU General Assembly.

For more information, contact Craig Hobbs
at the ABU Secretariat:
Tel: +60 3 2282 4205 | Email: craig.h@abu.org.my
Remaining Exhibition and Sponsorship Opportunities are extremely limited.



Hosted by:



Exhibitors & Sponsors:



http://www.abu.org.my
http://www.abu.org.my

ABU members to produce made-for-TV series on HIV/AIDS

A made-for-television series on HIV/AIDS will be put together by ABU members with the help of a UN agency, a non-profit organisation and MTV Networks International, and broadcast rights-free on World AIDS Day on 1 December.

Called "HIV/AIDS Reports", the series will be produced by 14 television producers from the Asia-Pacific who have been selected to participate in a workshop on the project in August.

The project is a collaboration by the ABU, MTV Networks, the United Nations Development Programme's Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (UNDP-APDIP) and the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The ABU is playing a coordinating role in the production of the series by soliciting applications from its member broadcasters in China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Australia, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

UNDP-APDIP will advise on the content of the series and coordinate responses and support from its sister UN agencies and other international development organisations. It will also assign a Project Manager to oversee the initiative.

MTV Networks will contribute an executive producer to provide creative and technical support to the participating producers, drawing on the achievement of its long-running "Staying Alive" AIDS awareness campaign, while the Kaiser Family Foundation will lend its expertise on HIV/AIDS communication.

Expertise outsourced

A production workshop will be held in Bangkok in August where producers will have access to expertise sourced from international development agencies and civil society organisations working on the ground to address these critical issues.

Participants will produce their reports individually and exchange their works which are to be aired in conjunction with World AIDS Day.

ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, said he was delighted to be working with MTV – a global brand recognised by young people all over the world – the Kaiser Family Foundation and UNDP-APDIP to provide new platforms for the dissemination of HIV/AIDS information.

"These workshops will enable broadcasters in developing countries to improve their production skills – a key ABU objective – and at the same time contribute to creating greater awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic among sections of the community that face the greatest risk," he said.

MTV Networks Vice Chair, Bill Roedy, said the partnership was a key building block in encouraging and training broadcasters on raising awareness of HIV and AIDS.

"Crucially, these workshops will enable the broadcasters to develop a series of rights-free and shared programming, which will reach millions of people across the Asia-Pacific," said Mr Roedy.

Shahid Akhtar, the Programme Coordinator of UNDP-APDIP, said the partnership acknowledged the effective role the media played in channelling appropriate information and highlighting the challenges faced by the region.

"This is especially so in the context of changing the unfounded stereotypes of people living with HIV/AIDS," he said.

His sentiments were echoed by Tina Hoff, Vice President and Director (Entertainment Media Partnerships), Kaiser Family Foundation, who said: "Through sustained efforts, the media can play a critical role in breaking the silence and mobilising society to confront HIV/AIDS." □



Bill Roedy speaking at the Global Media AIDS Initiative press conference at MIPTV in Cannes earlier this year