



Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

DRM trial affirms seamless transition to digital

It is being hailed as a groundbreaking achievement that is set to pave the way for the seamless transition from analogue broadcasting to digital transmissions in the medium wave band across the Asia-Pacific region.

The recent digital radio trial conducted in Delhi enabled the transmission of both analogue and digital signals at the same time and via the same transmitter, using a relatively new technology called Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) Single Channel Simulcast (SCS).

For radio broadcasters, the success of the trial means they could use this particular technology to help them make the transition to digital, while largely maintaining their ongoing analogue services.

Furthermore, this could be done with only an incremental addition to the implementation costs of going digital, since radio broadcasters could still retain use of existing facilities such as relatively new transmitters.

The SCS trial was part of the week-long DRM-AIR-ABU showcase, which was jointly conducted by AIR-India, the ABU and DRM Consortium members Thomson Broadcast Multimedia, Hitachi Electric Kokusai and the University of Basque, Spain. Some US\$250,000 was spent to ensure the



Measurements of the Single Channel Simulcast in progress at Kingsway Camp in northern Delhi

success of the showcase which included other DRM trials.

The event was witnessed by over 60 participants of the showcase, including 27 from other ABU member countries such as Singapore, Brunei, Bhutan, Iran, and Papua New Guinea.

ABU Head of Transmission Technology and Spectrum, Sharad Sadhu, said many of the participants were "very keen" to look into the possibility of adopting the appropriate DRM technology following the success of the trial.

AIR has since decided to go ahead with its plans to go digital, using the

DRM standard so that it could provide radio signals in both analogue and digital mode until the country was ready to shut off the analogue signal.

"This will take seven to eight years," AIR Director-General Brijeshwar Singh was quoted to have said.

Bhutan's representatives at the trial have also said they are considering going ahead and adopting the DRM standard for their digital radio requirements.

"However, we have not seen the full potential of the DRM signal since it is still sharing the transmitter with the analogue one. Once the analogue

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The DRM Consortium's Unai Gil (right) explaining the results of the field measurements

signal is phased out, we will be able to experience even better DRM sound quality."

He also said that transmitting the digital signal was more cost effective than the analogue one as "the power required for transmitting a digital signal was only one-fortieth of the power required to transmit an analogue signal over the same coverage area".

Apart from the simulcast demonstration, the trial also witnessed

an AIR-India transmitter sending out a DRM signal on the 18kHz medium wave band. This is the first time that a DRM test has been carried out on that frequency, which is used by many radio broadcasters in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Sadhu said: "This is an FM-like quality, stereo signal in a medium wave digital band. The result was an excellent quality radio test programme, certainly far superior to the service generally resulting from analogue transmissions.

"Radio broadcasters in the Asia-Pacific uniquely use 18kHz-wide channels in the medium wave, and using DRM in the full channel will enable them to provide very high quality stereo service to listeners."

The week-long trial also assessed local transmissions in 26MHz band as well as digital NVIS (Near Vertical Incidence Skywave) radio transmissions which provide wide area national coverage for radio.

The 26MHz band is traditionally meant for long-distance shortwave radio broadcasts, but it is increasingly being used in localised coverage. Tropical bands such as the 3MHz and 6MHz which are meant for wide area national coverage were also tested.

Mr Sadhu said the positive results of the trials went above and beyond the expectations of the organisers, and he hoped that they will spur the adoption of digital transmission across the region.

"The industry is abuzz with the results of these trials and we hope that many broadcasters in the Asia-Pacific region will consider the possibility of implementing this technology in their drive towards fully digital transmissions," he said. □

India's AIR, DDI launch study on emergency warning broadcasts

The Research Department of Prasar Bharati's All India Radio and Doordarshan have initiated a study of an Emergency Warning Broadcasting System (EWBS) which is suitable for the Indian environment.

Limited experimental transmissions have also been carried out on medium wave and FM transmitters in Delhi,

Information and Broadcasting Minister PR Dasmunsi said.

He said Prasar Bharati's large transmitting infrastructure could be selectively used to convey emergency messages to the public about natural disasters following the implementation of the EWBS. However, manufacturers will have to provide EWBS-ready TV sets and other receivers.

Mr Dasmunsi said the EWBS had been in operation in Japan since 1985, in which emergency messages are beamed on all transmitters (public/private, digital/analogue) during natural disasters.

These messages relay life-saving information on preventive measures and rescue efforts taken during disasters. □

Administrative Council proposes indexation of subscriptions

A recommendation to index membership subscriptions to the ABU, to avoid cost increases outpacing income, will be put to the General Assembly in Tehran in November.

This was the major outcome of the Administrative Council meeting held in Cappadocia, Turkey, on 30 April, hosted by TRT-Turkey.

Councillors reviewed a number of recommendations made by the ABU's Planning and Strategy Group (PSG) to ensure that the future funding of the Union was on a secure base.

The PSG had recommended to the Council that the Union achieve a balanced budget within two years, and that there be a 'catch-up' subscription rate increase of five percent in 2008/09 and 2009/10, and then an annual increase of no more than the Malaysian consumer price index (CPI) with a cap of three percent.

The Council would review the proposed subscription rate increase each year and may recommend a lesser amount if appropriate.

The Secretary-General, David Astley, told the Council that the subscription rate had not increased since 1989, but during that 18-year period, the Malaysian CPI had increased by over 70 percent.

Since 2002, the ABU has been operating at a deficit, using accumulated reserves to fund a growth strategy involving the creation of new services and activities to attract more members.

New activities launched during that period have included the annual digital



ABU President, Genichi Hashimoto, is interviewed by a TRT journalist against a backdrop of the World Heritage scenery of Cappadocia

radio and TV symposiums, digital radio trials and ICT road-shows, digital TV roadmap projects, new TV co-productions and the ARNE radio content exchange.

During this growth phase, more than 50 new members joined the ABU, but the objective of increasing income from membership subscriptions was not achieved because there were also about 20 resignations during this period. The resignations – mainly from bigger organisations – largely offset the revenue from the new memberships.

If approved by the General Assembly, the subscription increases will not be enough to produce a balanced budget, so the Council asked the Secretary-General to take action to reduce costs to a sustainable level.

Amongst the cost saving measures already implemented are a reduction in staffing levels (two this year and one next year), cutbacks in the Secretariat travel budgets and termination of some marginal activities.

The Secretary-General said the cutbacks would not impact most of the ABU's core activities.

"We will have fewer support staff in some areas, but this is where the Administrative Council is expecting the Secretariat to achieve further productivity gains," he explained.

New strategic plan

The Council also endorsed a draft of a new Strategic Plan for the years 2007-2013 that had been prepared by the PSG.

The new plan will be presented to the General Assembly in Tehran for approval, and will contain a list of strategic initiatives that will be implemented to achieve the ABU's Vision, Mission and Objectives over that six-year period.

PSG Chairman, Colin Knowles, told the Council that the strategic environment that the ABU will face during this period will be very different to what it faced five years ago when the last strategic plan was prepared.

"The face and scope of what might have been the traditional role of broadcasting has changed through the exploitation of new digital technologies, and the increasing demand of audiences for both push and on-demand services being delivered via a variety of means that have previously been considered outside the domain or interest of broadcasters," he explained.

"ABU members, in the face of this greater diversity of players in what may previously have been their exclusive territory, are also facing increasing budgetary pressures, particularly the public broadcasters, who have strong commercial broadcaster competition at the same time as they are being asked to meet the challenges of the changing marketplace and audience demands.

"From the ABU's perspective, this means that the Union needs to establish more clearly its priorities based on value to members, and to be able to demonstrate the benefits clearly to its individual and collective membership," Mr Knowles added.

Shorter General Assembly

Following requests from members for the Union to find ways to reduce the length of the annual meetings, the Council accepted a recommendation



David Astley enjoys a cup of strong Turkish coffee whilst waiting for his turn to be interviewed

from the PSG to reduce the General Assembly to two days.

In previous years the General Assembly has been scheduled for three days, and usually runs at least two-and-a-half days.

The reduction will be achieved by reducing the two sessions of chairperson reports to a single interactive panel session, and the number of professional discussions from two to one.

The shorter General Assembly will result in cost-savings for the Secretariat

as well as enabling members to return one day earlier.

This decision will be implemented effective from the Tehran General Assembly. The dates have changed from 3-5 November to 3-4 November.

Other decisions

Amongst other decisions taken by the Administrative Council were:

- The ABU logo will not be changed for the time being. The results of the informal balloting carried out at the Beijing General Assembly were inconclusive with none of the options garnering more than 50 percent of the vote. A majority of the Full Members were in favour of retaining the old logo.
- The terms of reference for the ABU Content Exchange Network feasibility study working party were approved.
- Affiliate member Shin Satellite, Thailand, was expelled from ABU membership for non-payment of its membership dues.



TRT-Turkey hosted the Council meeting and their delegation was led by Acting Director-General, Ali Guney (left)

The next meeting of the Administrative Council will be held in Tehran on 1 November 2007. □

Asia Media Summit 2007

Confusing messages blamed for low awareness on 'green' issues

Public awareness towards environmental issues such as climate change remain poor in some places because of the confusing way the messages are presented, participants of the Asia Media Summit 2007 in Kuala Lumpur heard.

RRI-Indonesia President Director, Parni Hadi, said many journalists in Indonesia did not understand the environmental issues well enough to convey them properly to the public.

This is because environmental reports, such as the 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), were too technical and difficult to translate into local languages and dialects.

"If the journalists themselves do not understand the issues, how can you expect the public to understand them?" he said during the session on, "Climate change, how the media is responding".

Mr Parni said in order to solve this problem, journalists needed to be given specific training on how to report on environmental issues.

He also said that environmental scientists needed training on how to present their findings in an easy manner



Georges Leclere takes to the podium for his presentation

for journalists to understand and pass on that information to the public.

Georges Leclere, President of LGMA Inc, came up with a proposal on how to make environmental issues more relevant and interesting to the public. He suggested that TV broadcasters spread the message through a game show.

"We can have several families as contestants and they each will have to do something environmentally friendly each week to win the competition. By doing so, we can compel the viewers to follow their examples," Mr Leclere said.

He said the project, called "Go for the Green", was an innovative televised game show that could considerably enhance the re-emerging global image of Asia.

"With this proposal, Asia, if it adopts it, can take the lead in fighting global warming at the local and regional level for individuals but also at the industrial level worldwide," he said.

The session, which was produced by the ABU, started off with ecologist and

Chair of the Malaysian Climate Change Working Group, Tony Sebastian, giving a comprehensive explanation on how climate change has been happening since man was formed.

Speaking off the cuff, he challenged broadcasters to relate the contents of the IPCC report and those similar to it to the public in an engaging and entertaining way in order to get the message across.

"Could the report be told differently? What are the implications of telling it differently?" he asked.

Veteran broadcaster and Vice-President of the World Conservation Union, Javed Jabbar, said there was a great need for the media to be equipped and trained to report on environmental issues which have become "highly specialised".

"We are now at a very historic stage. The role of the media has to be focussed very specifically on dealing with these highly specialised issues. The media has to act as the custodian of conscience round the world," he said. □

'Media should promote peace journalism'

The media should highlight more peace initiatives and the positive aspects of conflict resolution instead of focusing on only the grim facts of war reporting, a Malaysian political analyst has said.

Addressing media practitioners, NGO representatives and academics at the Asia Media Summit 2007, Dr Chandra Muzaffar said the media should try to "bring the theme of peace" into their content.

He said it was also important for the media to highlight "good practices for peace" by telling stories of individuals or organisations who have sacrificed much – including their lives – in the name of peace.

Community radio stations, he added, also did a lot to promote peace initiatives as they worked at the grassroots level to mobilise the masses towards the successful implementation of these initiatives.

"However, we should also monitor the media by creating a media watch. This will help expose blatant examples of the media promoting war through their reporting," he said.

Dr Chandra chaired the open session on "Broadcasting Peace and Persuasion" on the last day of the summit, which allowed delegates to present their views and ask questions to challenge present journalism practices and approaches to conflict reporting.

Canadian journalism professor, Ross Howard, remarked that most journalists who report on conflict did so without knowing what the root causes of those conflicts were.

He added there was inadequate training available as only a handful of professional journalism schools around the world conducted classes on conflict analysis.

Kumudini Hettiarachchi of Sri Lanka said the media should not be bashed over the notion that they were not doing enough to promote peace.

She said this was because there were many journalists who had died in the quest for the truth. □



Dr Chandra Muzaffar

Traditional media 'still have advantages'

The traditional mass media still have advantages despite the rapid spread of new media, a top Japanese broadcaster has said.

Toshiyuki Sato of Japan's public broadcaster, NHK, said the old media could still reach viewers and readers in great numbers and at the same time.

The participatory new media – such as blogs, wikis and podcasting – held great possibility, as it was in the

nature of people to express opinions, he told the Asia Media Summit.

But there were risks from the new media of loud, anonymous voices shutting out quiet, rational opinions, he said.

"The old media must watch the extremes of participatory media and bring the pendulum back when it is going too far."

Unlike some new media, the traditional media were not anonymous, he said.

"Imparting opinions and analysis with faces or the writer's name can be more convincing."

"Most of the old media have groups of professionals who are resourceful and qualified to present the real issues to audiences or readers," he said. □



Toshiyuki Sato



ABU PRIZES 2007

Call for entries

The ABU Secretariat is calling on all its member radio and TV broadcasters to submit nominations for ABU Prizes 2007.

The ABU Prizes, established in 1964 by the first ABU General Assembly, are international contests for radio and television programmes.

The purpose of the contests is to promote the production of radio and television programmes of a high standard, to raise educational and cultural levels, and to strengthen international understanding among the peoples of the countries and areas of the ABU members.

This year, the awards will be presented at an awards ceremony held during the 44th ABU General Assembly in Tehran on 3 November.

For more information, visit

<http://www.abu.org.my/public/compiled/p325.htm>, or contact Ms Robana Govindaraju of the ABU Programme Department by calling 603-2282 2480/3592 or via email at abuprizes@abu.org.my.



Southeast Asia endorses DVB-T

Southeast Asian ministers responsible for information have endorsed the Digital Video Broadcasting-Terrestrial (DVB-T) as the uniform standard for the region, a move which is expected to make digital broadcasting technology affordable in Southeast Asia.

The ministers arrived at the decision during the Ninth Conference of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information which was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in May.

They also agreed that the regional bloc should "undertake further discussions on the detailed policy considerations in planning for analogue switch off".

Among the ASEAN countries which had been pushing for the adoption of the common digital broadcasting standard were Brunei and Malaysia.

The move "will definitely lower the unit cost of set-top boxes and television receivers which would make digital technology affordable to all Asean masses", Brunei's Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

The Malaysian government was also keen to see the DVB-T standard adopted across the region.

Malaysian Deputy Information Minister, Chia Kwang Chye, announced in March the government's decision to adopt the standard for broadcasting transmissions, nearly a month ahead of the completion of its DVB-T trial in and around Kuala Lumpur.

He cited overwhelming positive feedback from the trial's participants as the reason for the government to speed up its decision, which came just before the 4th ASEAN Digital Broadcasting

meeting on the last day of the ABU DTV Symposium 2007.

The decision to adopt a uniform digital broadcast standard across the region was hailed by broadcast industry professionals as a "significant step forward" in the right direction.

ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, said: "The decision is a significant step forward for broadcasters serving over 400 million in population in the ASEAN countries.

"Deciding the standard for terrestrial digital TV now allows the broadcasters to confidently plan to convert their services over to digital TV. The decision is likely to encourage many other Asia-Pacific countries to select this standard too."

John Bigeni of the DVB Project Office said DVB-T was the most suitable standard for the Asia-Pacific region because of the economies of scale it enjoys.

"Clearly this means not only affordable receivers for the consumers,

but also potential trade and manufacturing opportunities for the region," he said.

He also said there were many other benefits in selecting DVB-T as the common standard.

"The benefits of DVB-T are many. The most fundamental of these is the total flexibility of the standard.

"The system can also be designed to suit the circumstances and the particular business model that the broadcaster desires.

"You can also say that it is a toolbox which allows any type of service or combination of services to be implemented to suit particular environments. This means that you can provide digital services such as HDTV to Standard Definition services to mobile broadcasting."

ASEAN comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. □



The 4th ASEAN Digital Broadcasting meeting in March set the stage for the recent ministerial decision to endorse DVB-T

ABU to launch new content stream

The ABU will launch a new distribution service in August aimed at leveraging the power of media to reinforce important messages on pro-social issues.

"The potential role of the media in Asia in combating pressing global issues is tremendous," said Francyne Harrigan, Development Projects Manager at the ABU.

"With a regular content stream of reliable information on such issues as poverty, HIV/AIDS, pandemic flu, climate change and disaster reduction, the lives of people around Asia can not only be improved, but in some cases saved."

The ABU-Media Awareness Exchange will offer broadcasters a content stream of new programming through a monthly satellite transmission feed.

The pro-social content, which consists of public service announcements, video news releases, audio news releases,



Francyne Harrigan

documentaries and news features, will be distributed rights-free to television and radio broadcasters in the Asia-Pacific region.

The idea for the exchange grew out of ad-hoc demands for programming distribution from partners such as the United Nations, World Bank, the International Labour Organisation, Asia Development Bank, Kaiser Family Foundation and MTV International.

"In order to have a more lasting impact on the audience, it was clear a

regular distribution vehicle would be most effective in increasing the role and commitment of broadcast companies in the Asia-Pacific to cover pro-social issues on their network."

"The Media Awareness Exchange is a natural progression of our distribution services that we hope our members and their audiences will benefit from," Ms Harrigan concluded.

For more information on the ABU-Media Awareness Exchange, please visit <http://www.abu.org.my/mae>. □

ABU-Media Awareness Exchange Content Schedule

"The Hope of Love" (8' 31")	United Nations Development Fund
"Abuse Grows Hatred" (30")	International Committee of the Red Cross



LIVE POSITIVE

INSPIRING EXAMPLES OF HUMAN TRIUMPH AGAINST
HIV/AIDS IN ASIA PACIFIC

CCTV-China lands MDG Media Award

Breathtaking scenery, engaging storytelling and an informative topic were among the ingredients that landed China Central Television (CCTV) first prize in the MDG Media Awards.

The Award was launched by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) to recognise distinguished reporting on the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The winning entry, "Tent Schools on the Prairies", was produced by CCTV's Li Jiejun during the ABU and UNESCAP co-organised MDG workshops.

"I learned a lot at the workshops," said Ms Li following her accomplishment.

"The trainers, the UNESCAP members and other participants gave me much useful advice on my original story. When I came back to Beijing, I did what they suggested, and that made the story much better to watch."

Held earlier this year, the workshops provided training opportunities for ABU



Li Jiejun talking to a HIV/AIDS patient through a translator at the HIV/AIDS hospice

developing member broadcasters, as well as enhancing broadcasters' capacity in becoming the driving force in accelerating national actions towards achieving the MDGs.

Through collaboration in the co-production of News Features and Public Service Announcements, participants were motivated to produce stories that reflected their country's progress, as well as factors that impeded efforts to achieve the MDGs.



Hera Sanchez, Probe Productions, making a point

The workshops brought together 14 broadcasters from BTV-Bangladesh, CCTV-China, TVK-Cambodia, Fiji Television, TV5-Mongolia, NTV-Nepal, Hum TV-Pakistan, EMTV-Papua New Guinea, Probe Productions and Net 25 from the Philippines, ITN-Sri Lanka, Channel 11-Thailand, VTC Digital Television-Vietnam, and Metro TV-Indonesia.

Now in the post-production phase, the final pieces will air across the region later this year.

For more information on the series, visit www.abu.org.my or contact Anom Sani at anom@abu.org.my. □



Participants listening to presentations on maternal and child health at the Siriraj Hospital