

T-DMB technology arrives in Ghana

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20 Jul 2007

The first ever mobile television to operate on Terrestrial Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (T-DMB) on the African continent has been launched in Accra, Ghana.

Operators of the service, Black Star TV is currently running a test transmission and is establishing demonstration centres with the Ghana Telecommunications for members of the public to view and to place orders for mobile phone handsets that have easy connection to the facility.

Ibrahim Adjei, of Black Star TV told Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) in Accra that other formats of moving picture compression technology existed on the African continent but explained that none of them is comparable in terms of the broadcast accessibility, digital quality and CD-quality reception offered by the T-DMB.

Operators of Black Star TV said they launched the service ahead of the African Nations' Cup (CAN) 2008, to be held in Ghana, with the view that the majority of Africans can watch the matches wherever they are on the continent.

"The launch of Black Star TV and with it, the ability to watch television on your mobile phone provides the local organisers of CAN 2008 with an opportunity to attract an increased number of viewers to the football extravaganza that Ghana will be hosting next year," Adjei said.

He however said the Black Star TV had not as yet established a formal relationship with the Ghana LOC for CAN 2008 but the company had engaged in preliminary discussions with the LOC to ensure that the facility and the broadcasting medium would help complement the national effort to make CAN 2008 an extraordinary success.

According to him the service can be received on the latest models of mobile phones, laptops, digital cameras, PDA's and PMP's, through a USB device which would be made available at a cost of approximately GH100.00 new Ghana cedis, or just over a \$100, which when interfaced with the mobile devices would allow users to receive the broadcast signal from Black Star TV.

Adjei said Black Star TV had plans to make available secure channels for the police service to access and enable them to view the communities they patrol in real-time in due course. This, he said, can be achieved by using the platform of Black Star TV to broadcast images of the city centres that are presently covered by CCTV cameras.

The operators of Black Star TV say they would charge by monthly subscription based on "top up" renewals of subscription from designated centres.

According to Adjei, subscribers would be open to a wide range of entertainment programmes and that they would broadcast on six television channels with digital quality reception.

Programmes will range from entertainment, sports, African movies, international news, content from local television stations, music videos, documentaries and lifestyle programmes.

He said the company hoped that with time subscribers would receive other content such as traffic and travel information transmitted on real time and with technology that would also allow for distance learning.

Customers would also enjoy cable television content at affordable ratings ranging from GH40.00 new Ghana cedis, or \$43, and above for enhanced services including two data channels that allows access to the digital world via the internet.

Consumers are also expected to benefit from four radio stations to be broadcast with CD-quality reception that is better than the FM.

"The public will now be able to watch their favourite programmes 'on-the-go', be it in a taxi, trotro (local name for mini buses), and beach or wherever. Multimedia broadcasting from Black Star TV will be available anytime, anywhere, everyday," Adjei added.

Mobile TV transmissions can be accessed in Asia, North America, Europe, Latin America and African.

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