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**NEWS:**

**BitBand's new IPTV solution addresses key challenges**

BITBAND has introduced its new QualiCTV IPTV solution, designed to ensure a quality viewing and entertainment experience for broadcast channels. QualiCTV's solution helps IPTV service providers improve their service and increase customer satisfaction by mitigating several IPTV challenges, such as packet loss due to errors on access lines and slow channel zapping. QualiCTV is composed of BitBand's QualiC server, a video server that captures and buffers the multicast video and interoperates with the set-top box in a way that enables seamless advanced IPTV functionalities. QualiCTV is part of BitBand's fully featured and automated IPTV CDN solution, providing a flexible and scalable offering for both on-demand and broadcast content to IPTV operators all over the

**IPTV ENTERS NEW PHASE IN 2008**



Michael Lantz

IPTV has been a promising technology for quite a few years, but we have seen endless delays and altered roll-out plans from most IPTV operators all over the world. In 2007, IPTV deployments reached about 10 million subscribers worldwide, and that figure looks set to double in 2008. Michael Lantz, CEO of Accedo Broadband, looks at what the future holds for this technology.

**Distribution of quality** video via IP, over broadband networks, went into mass market in 2007, with video and network websites driving usage of PC-based video. It has been technically possible to deliver quality video to IPTV set-top-boxes (STBs) for at least 10 years, with the first commercial services rolled out in 1999-2000. However, neither broadband networks, head-end equipment, nor STBs provided the necessary quality at the right price to encourage mass roll-out. With increased technical innovation and production scale, price of equipment has fallen and quality has improved, making 2007 the break-through year. For the first time, most operators were able to fully rollout a high quality, cost efficient IPTV service.

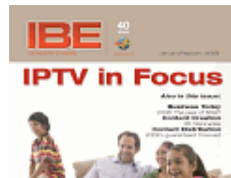
**Regional differences**

Europe has so far been in the lead on number of subscribers and deployments, and is set to continue leading the way in 2008. The success in Europe has been mainly driven by all local incumbent telcos launching IPTV services to counter loss of fixed line voice and broadband subscribers to cable and other competitive fixed line networks. The abundance of high-speed DSL networks has created a natural distribution network for these incumbents to launch services.

In North America, cable has historically dominated the TV distribution market, and the large Telcos have difficulties in creating a viable service. In 2007 both Verizon and AT&T managed to get some scale in their widely anticipated IPTV services. Still, in 2008, North America will remain significantly behind Europe in IPTV service innovation and deployments. Finally, along with Europe, Asia will be another big growth area for IPTV in 2008, although the picture here is very fragmented. Some countries, like Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong are very advanced, and countries like mainland China are forecasted to be the world's largest IPTV country in just a few years. In Asia, the competition with cable is not nearly as fierce as it is in Europe and North America, but the main challenge for the coming years is rather the quality of the telecom networks.

**Cable enters the IPTV market**

IPTV is often considered to be TV deployed by Telcos. This is not necessarily true. Just as cable operators can deploy IP-based broadband



world. Yuval Sovinsky, EVP strategy and marketing at BitBand, said: "BitBand continues to provide solutions and technologies which cater to real market demands, marking the shift towards differentiated offerings focused on quality of experience. The result is a telco-optimised video delivery solution designed to enable revenue generating services, reduced churn and quick time to market."

[www.bitband.com](http://www.bitband.com)

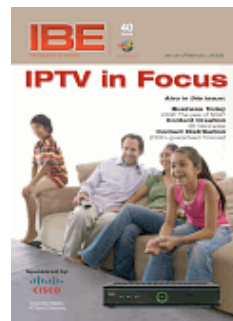
### Contact

BPL Business Media Ltd  
3rd Floor  
Armstrong House  
38 Market Square  
Uxbridge  
Middlesex  
UB8 1LH  
+44 (0) 1895 454411  
[sales@ibeweb.com](mailto:sales@ibeweb.com)  
[www.ibeweb.com](http://www.ibeweb.com)

via cable networks, they can deploy IPTV either completely or as a hybrid service. This deployment will give cable operators the same technical possibilities as telecom operators, and essentially give all essential market players the same opportunities. 2008 is likely to see such cable IPTV services deployed in certain markets, and in 2009 those services will reach the mass market.

### Hurdles to the development

Essentially, the IPTV market is set to double in 2008, with the larger European and Asian markets leading the way. This growth will spur more growth, because equipment prices are coming down rapidly due to economies of scale. However, the extreme growth and potential within IPTV has attracted many companies in the sector. The fragmentation of the market has made it very difficult to reach economies of scale, and almost no IPTV technology companies are profitable. This fact is also the biggest threat to the development. In such a situation innovation could be stifled and products will be more expensive than they need to be. In addition to the scale inefficiencies, the other major hurdle is regarding content rights. It is still very difficult for smaller IPTV operators to get good enough content for their VOD offerings. If they cannot create an attractive package, it is almost impossible for them to increase their subscriber base enough to purchase more attractive content.



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