

Successful Mobile TV Trial Completion by PTS Consortium in Taiwan

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Mobile TV has been the focus of mobile media in recent years. In Taiwan five consortiums have acquired trial licenses and put mobile TV on trials from the beginning of 2007. Out of the five, PTS with its consortium members have just completed the one-year trial with fruitful results on both technical and user tests. And the local industry is now looking forward to the granting of commercial licenses by the authority NCC to pave way for the rollout of mobile TV service.

In the 4th quarter of 2006, PTS and three mobile operators Chunghua Telecom, Taiwan Mobile and Fareastone as well as two handset vendors, Motorola and BenQ and client software vendor Cyberlink together formed a consortium and acquired a one-year trial license for mobile TV from the regulator in Taiwan. Started from January 2007, PTS consortium has launched its field trial on the network coverage, and the technical tests on the interoperability issues between the head-end system and various terminal receivers. The consortium has also implemented ESG and provided encrypted-based service to test users.

During the user trial, existing famous channels including CNBC, ESPN, local 24-hour news channel, TVBS-N and PTS, together with a tailored-made mobile channel by PTS, Phone TV were provided. And a two-phase market research including street intercept and handset placement test with 340 trial users has also been conducted to know user' opinions and preferences toward mobile TV and their willingness to pay. Trial users said they are willing to pay US\$3.5~9 dollars per month to watch 20 TV channels on handsets once the commercial service is rolled out. Over 50% users are willing to buy mobile TV handsets in 6 to 12 months. Also around 50% of trial users are willing to use interactive service on a pay basis when watching mobile TV. News, sports and drama are among the mostly watched and favored programs for mobile TV.

Having been through the whole process of mobile TV trial, PTS and its consortium members have reached certain consensus on the future business model. They have proposed suggestions for a feasible license policy in the final report to the regulator. Now the industrial players are calling for the NCC to define the license policy as soon as to catch up the 2008 Olympic Games. Yet there is still long way

ahead before the license to be released.

The incumbent NCC commissioners are going to step down in months. It remains unclear about the list of successors and the continuation of mobile TV policy by the NCC. The presidential election is coming on the 22nd of March. All these cast uncertainty on the policy of mobile TV licensing and the roadmap of commercial service deployed in Taiwan. An optimistic timeline could be only anticipated that commercial licenses will be granted in the second half of 2008 and the services be kicked off thereafter.