

Press release

Paris, 14 December 2004

Free kicks off high-definition TV via ADSL

On the first anniversary of Freebox TV (Free's ADSL digital television service) and in partnership with France Télévisions, Free is presenting a preview of its new network, ADSL 2+, which will broadcast two high-definition channels showing programmes from France 2, France 3 and France 5.

These two new channels will be broadcast in addition to the 110 standard-definition television channels already available with the Freebox TV service.

Free is using this demonstration to give a preview of the likely format of future HDTV services to be broadcast on its new network, and also to show the current extent of its rollout of the ADSL 2+ network nationwide.

For the purposes of this operation, Free has called on the expertise of industrial players Envivio, Metracom (with Tandberg and ST Microelectronic) and Philips.

This operation and its introduction of high-definition TV demonstrate both Free's intention of remaining at the forefront of the ADSL market and its commitment to continuing to be a platform for the broadcast of audiovisual content. Free hopes to launch this service commercially as soon as HD content is readily available.

In order to ensure the success of this technological first, France Télévisions has been working on this operation in conjunction with Free's technical teams.

Just as public television has always made improvements in picture and sound quality (introduction of colour TV, stereo sound, etc.) available to viewers, the France Télévisions group is duty bound to offer the HDTV services which it is now in the process of developing to French viewers.

France Télévisions intends to foster the development of HDTV on those networks which have the necessary bandwidth capacity, and its strategy is to focus on the gradual migration of its channels to high-definition TV.

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Appendix:

Free thanks the following companies for contributing their technical expertise:

About Envivio

Recognised as one of the leading international players in the provision of MPEG-4 and H.264 solutions, Envivio develops and markets a complete range of broadcast and streaming media tools and integrated encoding and management systems. Envivio is a leading provider of MPEG-4/H.264 solutions for businesses, broadcasters, operators and content providers. These solutions create opportunities to build new revenue streams, using MPEG-4 technologies for delivering content to a wide range of compatible devices. The Envivio solution includes various components to create, encode, protect, manage and view MPEG-4 content.

www.envivio.com

About Philips

Philips develops and markets digital reception terminals for satellite, terrestrial, cable and IP networks. These products are designed either for pay-TV operators or for direct sale to consumers. Whatever the model or the market, the Philips brand is always a guarantee of a high level of quality and performance, based on the company's expertise in high-definition and digital television and also on its extensive experience in designing consumer products.

Philips considers that the telecoms market offers great opportunities for new services which are bound to be popular with xDSL subscribers. This is particularly so in the case of services which combine telephony, Internet and digital television, and for which subscribers only need a single terminal.

In the HD television market, Philips is already marketing a range of flat-screen models which can receive high-definition television.

www.philips.com

About Metracom

Since 1986, Metracom has become recognised as a leading player in the satellite communications market among its national and international customers in both the private and government sectors. Metracom is sensitive to its customers' requirements and offers them more than mere technical expertise. The company's engineering teams take an original approach to project management and always look for the best possible solution from among all the various options, such as standard and high-definition digital television broadcast and streaming, cable terminations for TV-over-IP networks, radio broadcast, earth stations, mobile stations, maritime stations, VSAT networks, remote management, rural and GSM telephony via satellite, or broadband Internet via satellite, etc.

www.metracom.fr

About Tandberg

TANDBERG Television creates products and systems for the delivery of high-quality live video and on-demand content across cable, DSL, optical fibre, IP, satellite and terrestrial networks. Recognised as a market leader, the company provides systems integration and global support capabilities through its sales and 24-hour support operations in the Americas, Asia, Australia and Europe. Tandberg Television's customers include many of the major broadcasters, network operators and content owners around the world.

www.tandbergtv.com