



Cox Jumpstarts Tru2way with an Interactive Guide

At the heart of cable's tru2way deployments are new interactive program guides that support tru2way devices and serve as a launch pad for advanced video services. Cox Communications, one of the many cable providers committed to tru2way, is developing a Next Generation Interactive Program Guide (IPG) that will support tru2way HDTVs and provide advanced navigation for its entire HD customer base.

The development of Cox's IPG is a multi-goal project. The near-term goal is to support the deployment of tru2way retail devices by July 1, 2009, a date when MSOs have committed to put more tru2way support in place.

For customers, the advanced guide supports new products, such as multi-room DVRs, and new viewing features, including advanced search and programming recommendations. The advanced IPG also will introduce a new look and feel, tailored largely for display on an HDTV screen.

"The development of this new Next Generation IPG was a home-grown solution conceived by Cox to support our video product strategy and vision. We are confident that this IPG will enable customers to have a better video user experience and also enable them flexibility and support should they purchase a tru2way device," says Steve Necessary, VP, video strategy & product management, Cox Communications.

Tru2way is a key milestone on cable's advanced services roadmap. For Cox, the tru2way-based IPG is supported by an advanced video architecture. Cox is enabling DOCSIS Services Gateway (DSG) in every Cox system to allow high-speed data communication and to deliver high-bandwidth content to and from the Next Generation IPG, says Mark Gathen, director of video product management, Cox Communications.

Cox is building an OCAP services layer (OSL) that will sit on top of a technology provider's OCAP stack. The Next Generation IPG will then interface directly with the OSL. Additionally, Gathen explains, the OSL will support other interactive applications alongside the IPG.

Putting all of the pieces in place has been a major undertaking. Since Cox is using DSG to support tru2way HDTVs and current HD and HD-DVR set-tops, it needed to prepare all of its systems for DSG and

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ensure that in-home video signaling was operating in the correct dB range. Cox had to upgrade all of its system video controllers to support DSG communication.

“Inherently, there were overall challenges with the development of the tru2way solution, since we required upgrades to every component of the video delivery system,” Gathen says.

Cox is making great progress and is on course to have the Next Generation IPG deployed and available to support July 1st tru2way retail deployments, he says. The IPG promises to give Cox HD customers new navigation features and serve as an entryway to exciting new interactive applications.

Lessons learned: “Locking down a target configuration to support the product in every system is key to meeting deployment expectations,” Gathen says.

“Once we had a blueprint to support tru2way products, we were able to develop solutions to meet our product goals. These solutions included the Next Generation IPG and the advanced video architecture, as well as DSG implementation. From a product perspective, we also worked to develop a customer target to ensure we were supporting individual customer expectations.”

The tru2way Guide, www.ctam.com/tru2way
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