



## Gluing All of the Tru2way Pieces Together

The tru2way platform offers a standardized means for cable operators to create a framework to display a user interface (UI), on-demand menu, interactive applications, and widgets. But integrating all of those pieces with the technology that runs them can be a tricky business.

Zodiac Interactive, at the request of a major MSO, was given the task of developing an easy way to overcome compatibility issues that may arise between applications or between the applications and the tru2way software stack that is housed in a set-top box or other device.

The project goals included developing a UI without replacing the existing interactive program guide or video-on-demand player, since many cable operators want to preserve them as they migrate to a tru2way environment. That required that the UI can run on an existing PowerTV operating system and a new tru2way platform.

“Tru2way technology is still in the process of being adopted by vendors and, even though there is a set standard, the differences between implementations often appear,” says Alexander Libkind, COO, Zodiac Interactive.

“A similar situation occurred in the mobile application industry, where a few Java profiles had to be implemented so that everything would work from one code base. In reality, the developers ended up having to make changes for each target model and vendor due to various quirks. Discovering this early in our process, we aimed to avoid having to fix bugs in a dozen separate applications we were building,” Libkind says.

The solution that Zodiac developed is the PowerUp Framework, which handles presentation and services layers for applications, providing a central point for solving compatibility issues. On top of PowerUp, Zodiac layered its Zidgets User Interface for launching widgets, including games, weather, and local search.

Essentially, PowerUp handles all of the messaging and display needs for applications – an area where integration issues often arise when deploying on different implementations of tru2way technology, Zodiac says. Due to the extensive testing that the base product goes through, every app after it avoids many of the integration issues.

PowerUp also takes a lot of responsibilities away from the apps, including messaging, on-screen display functions, and other key integration points. This makes the apps lighter and easier to develop. Libkind says, “The more complexity and weight you remove from an application, the less room there is for bugs.”

Zodiac says PowerUp is a highly extensible framework, so that it works seamlessly with existing IPGs and on-demand systems.

Zodiac currently is creating a pilot program so that other developers can take advantage of the PowerUp Framework.

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**Lessons learned:** Compatibility issues and bugs can be resolved through a centralized framework, which makes it easier and quicker to integrate and launch new applications. In the lab, Zodiac is finding that meeting most of an application's needs through a single service means that issues recur less frequently and applications have faster quality assurance (QA) cycles.

The tru2way Guide, [www.ctam.com/tru2way](http://www.ctam.com/tru2way)

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