



BROADCAST AUSTRALIA

Level 10, 799 Pacific Highway
Chatswood NSW 2067
Australia

PO Box 1212
Crows Nest NSW 1585
Australia

t: (61-2) 8113 4666

f: (61-2) 8113 4646

www.broadcastaustralia.com.au

12 January 2010

Mr Derek Wilding
Manager, Operational Policy for Allocations and Licensing
Australian Communications and Media Authority
Level 15, Tower 1 Darling Park
201 Sussex Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Wilding,

Report to ACMA for the months February 2009 – January 2010

Please find below the Broadcast Australia report on its Datacasting trial for the months February 2009 to January 2010. As outlined in our application to ACMA for a datacasting trial licence, the purpose of the trial was to determine the:

- Viability of datacasting (and now open narrowcasting) as a “product” in the current environment and regulatory regime, including its commercial viability;
- Impact and viability of various technical innovations;
- Potential of datacasting as a communications platform to deliver services to the public;
- Demand for services encompassing ‘public information’ content (e.g. from government agencies) and commercial content.

Since the commencement of the trial, legislation has been put in place which provides for narrowcasting content to be carried on “Channel A”. This has expanded the potential programming for a commercial Channel A service should the channel be allocated by the government. On 5 September, 2008 ACMA approved the continuation of the trial and the trial inclusion of narrowcasting content trial subject to the condition requiring each service to display a message advising of the trial nature of the service.

Developments since our last report include:

1. Completion of implementation of a full 7 day Electronic Program Guide (EPG) across the **DIGITAL FORTY FOUR** trial platform.

This was initially implemented on the NITV channel and was subsequently provided for the Australian Christian and EXPO channels. The ingest of program schedule data and transformation into the required on-air format was initially a semi-manual process, however, this has now been largely automated. We believe this to be a first for an Australian service aggregator to source EPG schedules directly from a number of different providers.

The EPG implementation so far has been a valuable exercise with learning that will directly benefit any future rollout, both technically and in terms of developing the processes required to support it.

2. Further VPG (Video Program Guide) development to support broadcasters multi-channels

The launch by many broadcasters in the past 12 months of new services meant that the Channel 4 VPG had to be substantially re-engineered to allow information for these channels to be displayed on the service. This resulted in the development of a three phase cycle that allowed all program information made available to us to be displayed. New channels supported include; ABC 2, One HD, SBS 2, Go!, and 7 Two, and is expected to be expanded to the other new channels over the coming months.

3. Integration of the DIGITAL **FORTY FOUR** multi-channel monitoring facility into the BA Network Operations Centre (NOC)

In order to provide a more robust service level, monitoring of the trial was moved from a dedicated facility in Chatwood to our NOC in Gore Hill. This has allowed the wider skilling of NOC staff in multi-channel monitoring procedures, and the use of standardized procedures for fault management.

4. Set-top box behaviour monitoring following further LCN changes

The changes involved in moving Teachers TV to LCN 45 allowed us to also further understand the behaviour of digital TVs, set-top boxes, and other devices when changes take place to multiplex LCN configurations. In particular it allowed us to better understand the differentiation between boxes picking up changes without any issues, those experiencing some difficulties and those experiencing major customer / service disrupting issues.

5. Rebalancing of bandwidth across the DIGITAL **FORTY FOUR** platform and service re-arrangement

Following the removal of Channel NSW, Teachers TV was allocated its own dedicated channel on LCN 45. This also restored full time availability of LCNs 47 and 48 to Federal Parliament. This also allowed us to further rebalance bandwidth across the platform.

The current channel line up is now:

LCN 4	Video Programme Guide (VPG) for most Sydney free to air television services and DIGITAL FORTY FOUR services;
LCN 40	National Indigenous Television (NITV);
LCN 41	ABC News, Sport and Weather;
LCN 44	DIGITAL FORTY FOUR homepage;
LCN 45	Teachers TV;
LCN 46	Australian Christian Channel;
LCN 47	Federal Parliament House of Representatives;
LCN 48	Federal Parliament Senate;
LCN 49	Expo (shopping channel);

Teachers TV is now a full time channel, and Federal Parliament House of Representatives and Senate are also now separated channels. Work is continuing both on the transmission system and content production sides with continuous improvements being made: The next three months work program includes;

- Moving the DIGITAL FORTY FOUR homepage currently featured on LCN 44 to LCN 42 to allow the Sydney Community TV Broadcaster to use LCN 44.
- Further monitoring the behaviour of set top boxes with the introduction of new services.
- Reviewing and scoping the testing opportunities arising from the introduction of Freeview accredited set-top boxes into the market. In particular BA will scope possible MPEG-4 and MHEG applications.

Should you have any questions relating to the matters raised above please don't hesitate to contact me on (02) 8113 4629 or martin.farrimond@broadcastaustralia.com.au

Yours sincerely,



Martin Farrimond
General Manager – New Platforms