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A GEM OF A SOLUTION FOR THE US

Breakthrough for MHP standard paves way to global market for interactive TV developers.

Las Vegas – 7th April 2003 – The DVB-GEM specification, standardised by ETSI (TS 102 819), is set to become the first ever common worldwide standard for interactive television. GEM (Globally Executable MHP) defines the APIs, protocols and content formats that can be relied upon in all interactive television standards and specifications that support globally interoperable MHP applications.

GEM provides a means of ensuring that MHP applications can be carried over networks other than DVB. Where DVB has not been adopted, and therefore where the original MHP standard cannot be implemented, application interoperability is assured by combining MHP based GEM with the appropriate specifications from another body to produce a GEM receiver.

“The aim of GEM is to provide true ‘write once, run anywhere’ capabilities for MHP applications. DVB has been pleasantly surprised by the positive industry reception of the GEM specification,” commented Peter MacAvock, Executive Director, DVB Project Office.

The earlier adoption of DVB’s MHP by CableLabs as the core of its OCAP specification (OpenCable Application Platform) provided a common platform upon which interactive services could be deployed for the US cable industry. This led to further extensive cooperation between the two bodies and resulted in the creation of the GEM specification and the solidification of the OCAP/MHP link.

The significance of GEM is underlined by the marked interest shown from other esteemed standardisation bodies working on open API systems such as the ATSC in the US and Japan’s ARIB. Recent announcements of the harmonisation of standards between the ATSC and CableLabs are largely based on the GEM specification, thus

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enabling the execution of MHP applications and services in the US. Several US cable companies are already working to implement OCAP 1.0, which is based on the GEM specification. The ITU is also working on the harmonisation of API systems, again largely based on the GEM specification.

Adoption of MHP's core across markets will promote greater economies of scale for manufacturers of set-top boxes and digital TVs. It will also provide enhanced commonality of broadcast infrastructures that will promote competition and generate cost savings. Good news for everybody!

Theo Peek, DVB Chairman remarked "There are still many issues to resolve, but DVB is anxious to ensure that the spirit of cooperation between CableLabs and DVB can be extended to other standardisation bodies interested in adopting GEM."

The Digital Video Broadcasting Project (DVB)

DVB is an industry-led consortium of over 270 broadcasters, manufacturers, network operators, software developers, regulatory bodies and others in over 35 countries worldwide, committed to designing global standards for the delivery of digital television and data services. The DVB Standards cover all aspects of digital television from transmission through interfacing, conditional access and interactivity for digital video, audio and data. The consortium came together in 1993 to create unity in the march towards global standardisation, interoperability and future proofing.

To date, there are thousands of broadcast DVB services using DVB equipment manufactured by hundreds of manufacturers. DVB dominates the digital broadcasting world. A host of other services is also on-air with DVB-T, DVB-S and DVB-C including data on the move and high-bandwidth Internet over the air. Further information about DVB can be found at: www.dvb.org.

DVB Multimedia Home Platform (MHP)

MHP defines a generic interface between interactive digital applications and the terminals on which those applications are executed. The standard enables digital content providers to address all types of terminals ranging from low to high-end set-top boxes, IDTVs and multimedia PCs. With MHP, DVB extends its successful open standards for broadcast and interactive services in all transmission networks including satellite, cable terrestrial and wireless systems. Further information on MHP can be found at: www.mhp.org.

European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)

ETSI is officially responsible for standardisation in telecommunications, broadcasting and certain aspects of information technology within Europe. It produces a wide range of standards and other technical documentation as Europe's contribution to worldwide standardisation. A non-profit making organisation based in Sophia Antipolis, France, ETSI unites nearly 800 members from more than 56 countries inside and outside Europe, and brings together manufacturers, network operators, administrations, service providers, research bodies and users - in fact, all the key players in the telecommunications arena. Information on ETSI can be found at: www.etsi.org.

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