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DVB APPROVES NEW GUIDELINES FOR H.264/AVC VIDEO & HIGH EFFICIENCY AAC AUDIO CODECS

H.264/AVC for SDTV & HDTV

Geneva – 2 November 2004 – The DVB Steering Board has approved a revision to its well known implementation guidelines for audio and video codecs over a broadcast Transport Stream to include the option of both H.264/AVC video and High Efficiency AAC (HE-AAC) audio codecs. The revision to the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) document (TS 101 154) will now be forwarded to ETSI for standardisation and will be published shortly. Upon publication it will be available for download via: www.etsi.org.

The new document mandates support of Main Profile for H.264/AVC SDTV receivers, with an option for the use of High Profile. The support of High Profile is mandated for H.264/AVC HDTV receivers.

Entitled "Implementation guidelines for the use of Video and Audio Coding in Broadcasting Applications based on the MPEG-2 Transport Stream", the latest addition to the DVB family of standards is designed to promote interoperability between transmissions and receivers by describing a set of requirements for implementing the codecs in a Transport Stream, i.e. the traditional DVB broadcast environment used in cable, satellite and terrestrial transmissions.

Peter MacAvock, DVB's Executive Director said: "This document is one of the most important DVB documents, and a key to ensuring the interoperability of DVB equipment and transmissions. It is the basis of all MPEG-2 DVB decoders in the market. The addition of H.264/AVC and HE-AAC paves the way for using these exciting codecs in mainstream DVB applications like HDTV."

Previously, the document included MPEG-2 video, MPEG-1 Layer II audio, Dolby AC-3 audio, and DTS audio. This revision of the document adds H.264/AVC video (MPEG-4 Part 10) and High Efficiency Advanced Audio Coding (HE-AAC) to the range of codecs that may be used in DVB applications. Both H.264/AVC and HE-AAC bring substantial improvements in coding efficiency over MPEG-2 and associated audio codecs, and are the subject of much interest, especially for prospective new HDTV services.

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A separate specification, TS 102 005, covers the use of audio and video codecs for the delivery of DVB services directly over IP networks (without Transport Stream).

Background

The DVB Project

The Digital Video Broadcasting Project (DVB) is an industry-led consortium of over 250 broadcasters, manufacturers, network operators, software developers, regulatory bodies and others in over 35 countries 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 numerous broadcast services using DVB standards. There are hundreds of manufacturers offering DVB compliant equipment, which is already in use around the world. 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.

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