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BROADBAND

IPTV remains a mystery to the masses

by Guy Daniels - 3/3/2006 10:33:08

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Consumers are confused about what Internet Protocol television (IPTV) means, according to a survey released this week by technology services and outsourcing company Accenture. The survey of 6,000 consumers across the US, UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy found that 46 per cent simply do not understand the term IPTV. However, despite consumer uncertainty, the survey reveals that the market for the services IPTV can provide is substantial in each country.

As part of the survey, respondents were asked what they would do to make television better; the top two answers were "having access to a larger number of movies," selected by 30 per cent of respondents and "being able to create your own channel to watch programs whenever you want," selected by 26 per cent. When asked what future benefits would encourage consumers to subscribe to an IPTV service, 55 per cent selected less advertising, followed by 47 per cent who want the ability to choose specialist programs.

"Despite a general lack of understanding about what IPTV means, there is strong consumer interest in the benefits that such a service could bring," said Ray Dogra, global IPTV lead for Accenture's Communications and High Tech practice. "Consumers clearly desire choice, control and the ability to personalize their viewing experience - all of which are the key benefits of an IPTV service."

While there is strong consumer interest in the concept of IPTV, the study indicates that service providers must focus carefully on the marketing and associated end user education to ensure widespread adoption of the service.

Cost is cited most often as the main barrier to adoption, with 54 per cent of respondents indicating they are not willing to pay an extra fee to get an entertainment service that allows them to search for content such as TV, radio shows and music whenever they want. Other key concerns slowing the rate of adoption include security issues, such

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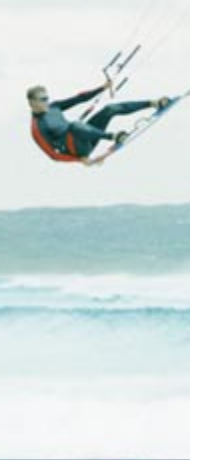
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as computer viruses, and general quality of service - including poor connections.

"Consumers are right to be perplexed by the concept of television being delivered along a phone line - IPTV has presented even the most prominent providers with monumental challenges," commented Sanjay Castelino, VP at IPTV vendor Motive. "A typical IPTV installation involves eleven new pieces of technology going into the home, which must be coordinated and controlled to function properly. This is a consumer-orientated environment, and as this survey has revealed, a compelling, uncomplicated end-user experience is critical to longevity and success of IPTV in the market."

The findings showed a consistent trend across all six countries represented in the survey, with younger adults indicating a greater willingness to adopt and pay for IPTV services than older ones. From a gender perspective men also indicated a greater interest in IPTV than women.

For information about the survey can be found at:

www.accenture.com/iptv

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