

EUTELSAT INVITES PARTNERS ONTO OPEN-SKY, ITS NEW PLATFORM FOR RICH MULTIMEDIA CONTENT

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EUTELSAT is taking a dramatic initiative in aggregating content for a bold new open standard multimedia and high-speed Internet service that will again put the company at the cutting edge of new satellite technology.

“OPEN-SKY” is the name behind EUTELSAT’s open standard service platform for streamed video and audio content, high-speed Internet and fast file delivery. The service is already running from the Organization’s W3 satellite at 7 degrees East and carrying 20 unencrypted international video services that are generally being streamed at speeds from 256 to 700 kilobits/s using MPEG4 encapsulated over IP. This is expected to grow to nearer 50 videostreaming services by the end of April. Users need a satellite dish and PC equipped with an add-in card to receive these new services and can select between accessing content on-line or retrieving content delivered by satellite and stored in their PC in off-line mode.

“We are setting out to aggregate fresh content, whether traditional video out of niche broadcasters, MP3 audio, games and animated content as well as interactive multimedia services. We want our content suppliers to be highly experimental in what they offer to consumers,” says Giuliano Berretta, EUTELSAT Director General.

EUTELSAT is negotiating with multiple content and service providers who have imaginative and experimental concepts to contribute to OPEN-SKY. The baseline is that services should be of interest to the general public and conform to a common IP broadcast format over satellite. “Our action is entirely pro-active”, says Giuliano Berretta. “We have created the platform, and are inviting partners with rich multimedia content to use it for compelling services that create a new neighbourhood on W3 that can also be easily accessed by homes connected to the HOT BIRD satellites.”

EUTELSAT is supporting new services in the first phase of OPEN-SKY. It has created a site entry page (<http://opensky.eutelsat.net>), containing a straightforward guide that is the jumping off point for viewers. Channels already up and running include EuroNews, Eurosport News, I-Télévision, Fashion TV, the RAI Nettuno Uno and Due channels and two Sitcom channels (Leonardo, Nuvolari).

EUTELSAT will expand the capacity available for OPEN-SKY through the W3A satellite, which will be launched in the second quarter of 2003 and co-positioned at 7° East with W3. W3A will also include a SKY-PLEX payload that will permit decentralised access to satellite capacity for local content providers and thus take users into the personal broadcasting era.

About EUTELSAT

As one of the world’s leading satellite operators, Paris-based EUTELSAT enables TV and radio broadcasters, Internet service providers, telecommunications companies and corporations to transmit and receive content throughout Europe and Africa, large parts of Asia and the Americas. EUTELSAT was the first operator in Europe to deliver DVB consumer television and today broadcasts 850 channels to over 84 million satellite and cable homes, making it one of the largest audiences in the world. Fifty-six per

cent of EUTELSAT capacity is used for television broadcasting and just over 40 per cent for services that include high-speed Internet access and Internet backbone connections. EUTELSAT turnover for 2000 was €685 million, representing a 45 per cent increase over 1999.

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