

IRDETO BRINGS MULTICHOICE CUSTOMERS “UP TO SPEED” WITH DVB OVER IP TECHNOLOGY

THE CHALLENGE

- Effectively offer pay-TV services to consumers in high density dwellings or gated communities that prohibit satellite dish installation.
- Deliver a comparable or improved customer experience to that of traditional direct-to-home (DTH) Satellite TV by extending the DTH offering through the provision of an HD IP set-top box (STB), powerful STB middleware and low-cost DVB to IP conversion equipment – all integrated into a solution that can be rapidly deployed.
- Roll-out the solution in five months.
- Provide an extensible platform for value added services such as custom made portals, video on demand (VOD) and interactive TV.

“ We had a very aggressive five-month schedule and a small team to get fully up and running with DVB over IP. Based on our evaluation of leading products and our past experience with Irdeto, we knew they were up to the task. Our management team has been pleasantly surprised by Irdeto’s incredibly fast turnaround time that never compromised quality or our strategic vision.”

Rudolf Kogler,
Head of Product Engineering

*Broadcast Technology Division,
MultiChoice Africa.*

THE CLIENT

MultiChoice is Africa's leading multi-channel digital satellite television operator providing premium digital media content to millions of subscribers in sub-Saharan Africa. The South Africa-based company has an established track record of flexibility and innovation in its service offering, along with a large subscriber base that is extremely diverse when it comes to viewing options and multi-tiered subscription packages. To cater to these specific customer needs, MultiChoice is actively engaged in finding innovative ways to maximize the benefit of the fast-paced and competitive digital world.

MultiChoice recognized an opportunity to extend its offering even further through DVB over IP, a technology standard that allows audio and video to be delivered to the home using high speed broadband networks. To achieve this, MultiChoice relies on Irdeto Middleware and Conditional Access.

THE SCENARIO

The rapid pace of urbanization in South Africa is resulting in the redevelopment of high-density apartment dwellings, many of which are unable to provide line-of-sight access to MultiChoice satellites. Meanwhile, a spate of new, suburban gated communities is being built to accommodate the burgeoning middle-income population, but satellite dish installations are discouraged by community regulations in favor of pre-installed fiber networks. In October 2008, MultiChoice approached long-time technology partner Irdeto for a solution that would allow the company to reach new customers in these multi-dwelling units (MDUs). DVB over IP rebroadcast seemed like the most obvious and cost-effective technology choice.

From its roots as a conditional access company, Irdeto has systematically branched out to provide a wide range of technology building blocks and solutions that address the needs of broadcast operators. These components span content security, conditional access, business support systems, commerce, content and digital rights management and can be used to address any connected device within the home.

THE STRATEGY

A thorough evaluation was conducted with MultiChoice, resulting in defined requirements for the solution as well as a gap analysis that identified components needing to be developed or sourced through partnerships. As a result of this exercise, MultiChoice selected IP Streamer equipment from AppearTV and an IP-enabled STB from UEC Ltd in South Africa. After evaluating leading middleware offerings, MultiChoice selected Irdeto Middleware on the basis that it could provide:

- A fully customizable, Java standard-based solution;
- An easily modified end user interface;
- Extensibility to run third-party applications;
- Pre-integration with major chipset vendor reference designs (minimizing the need for STB adaptation);
- Flexibility to build and extend the middleware platform without vendor lock-in.

The team set out to build the DVB over IP solution against tight timelines.

THE SOLUTION INCLUDED:

- Development of the STB and security solutions;
- Modification of Irdeto Middleware to accommodate delivery over IP networks;
- Integration of the middleware platform with a new UEC STB design (accomplished in days rather than weeks);
- Integration of DVB demods and IP Streaming to achieve a low-cost MUD DVB-to-IP head-end;
- Scoping an implementing various business aspects of the solutions
- System testing and trial;
- Training and IT alignment;

By working closely together, MultiChoice, UEC and Irdeto were able to introduce a new service within five months of initial vendor selection. This enabled MultiChoice to deliver its existing content over satellite or broadband networks to more than 5,000 boxes initially while offering a similar user experience to that of any DTH Satellite subscriber.

WHY IRDETO

MultiChoice selected Irdeto based on these key capabilities:

- A broad solutions approach that places emphasis on leveraging relationships with partners, suppliers and system integrators to deliver cost-effective solutions in response to customer needs.
- A comprehensive middleware offering based on open standards that can be customized to suit an individual market's needs.
- Extensive experience in securing and delivering digital content for broadcast and broadband distribution platforms.
- Competency to meet an aggressive five-month timeline with a fully functioning solution that could be delivered to the mass market.
- Access to a wealth of industry knowledge accumulated from all corners of the world and decades of experience in the premium media industry.
- An experienced team of professionals that augments MultiChoice staff, dispersed throughout Africa and Europe.

THE FUTURE

Competition is fierce in Africa as new broadcast licenses are issued by the South African broadcast authorities. This competition will continue to spur innovation as incumbent platforms vie with new contenders to capture market share. Irdeto is the critical technology and solutions partner that enables MultiChoice to leverage its platform throughout the continent.

