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ANALYSIS


Will IPTV Kill the Television Star?







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It seems logical for the European legislation to apply rules to television-like services in so far as these services compete with traditional broadcasting. There is no argument as to why editorial content provided via a different platform should be treated differently. Also, the provisions now applicable to video-on-demand services do not really come as a surprise.

Already, [YouTube](#)  has conquered your PC and mobile. However, what happens if YouTube conquers your living room, too -- and in high-definition television quality? With IPTV (Internet protocol television), that is possible, and the race to see who will be best-positioned in the digital living room of the future has already started. IPTV is being called the "fourth TV broadcasting channel," after satellite, cable and terrestrial broadcasting.

What is so interesting about this technology is that IPTV provides the potential for interactive TV not possible with traditional broadcast television, along with the true high-definition quality you do not see with typical Internet streaming. Also, network operators can offer their customers one-stop-shopping for Internet access and television as well as landline and mobile telephone services, and thereby become the customer's sole communication link.

So far, the competition to see who gets there first mainly concerns hardware and cable providers. For example, [Microsoft](#) (Nasdaq: MSFT)  and [Sony](#) (NYSE: SNE)  both provide game devices that can be used as a set-top boxes for television reception and allow video download. Also, phone companies like [Verizon](#) (NYSE: VZ)  and [AT&T](#) (NYSE: T)  have invested heavily in new broadband infrastructure in order to compete for TV customers.

Calling for Regulations

Still, this concerns the content industry just as well. IPTV will allow an immense increase in new TV programs and formats, and established TV broadcasters may fear their return on investment will decrease heavily once programs become more and more fragmented.

It is therefore no wonder that some television broadcasters are calling for regulations of IPTV. Their point: Once television provided over the Internet becomes a real substitute for traditional television, there is no argument as to why traditional broadcasters should be