

Satellite MENA 2011: Preparing for Satellite Boom

This is a great time for satellite broadcasters and service providers in the Middle East and North Africa. International broadcasters are committed to the future of this technology, providers are increasing capacity and reinvigorated conditional access systems are ensuring profitability. Satellite MENA, alongside CABSAT 2011, will run from 8 to 10 February in the Sheikh Saeed Halls of the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre.



The most recent research from Eutelsat suggests that consumers prefer satellite. While pay television services in the MENA region grew by 15.3% last year, virtually all of this growth came from direct to home satellite.

Northern Sky Research adds that the satellite capacity leasing market has been growing at an annual rate of 4.2% globally, and the MENA region is predicted to see the largest FSS Ka-band demand in the world over the next two years.

The recent announcement by OSN of a set-top box swap-out, to an "unhackable" device, is designed to bring in revenues from at least some of the estimated five million illegal connections in the Middle East. OSN predictions are that at least 20% - one million homes - will convert to a paid subscription.

Greater confidence around content protection is one of the reasons

that international broadcasters are showing greater commitment to the region, with BSKyB now offering a regional news service, and channels from MTV and Turner being added to bouquets.

When considered in conjunction with the strong growth in ethnic programming predicted by the Eutelsat survey, it is clear that there will be a strong demand for satellite transponders in the coming years.

Eutelsat was also in the news recently when it signed a deal with ictQatar, the Doha Government's Supreme Council of Information and Communications Technology, to place a new satellite in the 25.5° east position. Alongside Arabsat's 26° slot it will boost coverage across the MENA region.

That is certainly the view of the leading players. "Satellite MENA is the benchmark exhibition in the region for us to demonstrate our

product and service portfolio," said Eng. Khalid bin Ahmed Balkheyour, President and CEO of Arabsat.

Yassem al Zaabi, CEO at Yahsat concurred. "Our presence reiterates that we consider CABSAT & Satellite MENA a strategic platform to meet business partners seeking a complete range of satellite services, appoint service partners, forge business ties and strengthen relationships in the satellite market," he said.

Who will be there?

With all this and much more happening in world of communications satellites this is a perfect time to come together. Satellite MENA, which takes place alongside CABSAT MENA in Dubai in February, is the perfect place for all sides from the industry to gather, see the latest in technology and debate the issues. Key exhibitors at the event include Arabsat, Yahsat, Eutelsat, Noorsat, Nilesat, iDirect, Arqiva and many more.

What is new?

As part of the CABSAT Academy at CABSAT & Satellite MENA 2011, the GVF Satellite Summit organised in collaboration with the Global VSAT Forum, takes place on 9 and 10 February. This tackles business and technical issues, including the developing regulatory landscape, disaster recovery and the practical issues around hybrid broadband and broadcast services. This

highly focused event runs for 2 days covering 'New Drivers, New Dynamics: MENA Communications Markets, Applications & Technologies' on 9 February and GVF MENASAT 'Case Studies Portfolio' on 10 February.

There will also be a dedicated CABSAT Broadcast Conference on 8 and 9 February. Each session will focus on a particular aspect of the broadcast industry including: Tools and Technologies for Content Creation in the Middle East, Managing Content and Broadcast Workflows, Content Delivery Options "from aggregator to audience" and the "Best of IBC 2010" - selection of some of the most popular papers from the IBC Broadcast Conference that took place in Amsterdam in September 2010.

In addition to the conferences, visitors will have the chance to participate in vendor presentations and tutorials where CABSAT & Satellite MENA exhibitors will be providing information on their latest products and services.

During CABSAT & Satellite MENA, twofour54 tadreeb will also be offering a series of free one hour workshops in conjunction with industry leaders the BBC and INA. Global experts in the fields of broadcast technology and digital archiving will share their knowledge and experience with visitors to the CABSAT Academy over the three day event. 