



With its Ghana project, VDL, together with its strategic partner SMCNS, opens up a new frontier in Africa for the T-DMB/DAB family of standards

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Television viewing just got better in Ghana, with the launch Wednesday 14th May evening of Africa's first mobile phone-enabled television content viewing service, FonTv. VDL provided the complete head end system that allows these TV programs to be broadcast on the national transmitting network. VDL's total system package also includes components of its strategic partners, SMCNS, T-DMB/DAB+ test solution leader, and KaiMedia, codec expert, of Korea by working together in the scope of the special consortium for the project lead by Zii Technology.



The service is based on T-DMB (Terrestrial Digital Multimedia Broadcasting) technology that allows high-quality television viewing on phones, laptops and other digital receivers. In Ghana it is operated by Black Star television, which has just completed nearly a year of trials before launching full commercial operations countrywide. The country joins South Korea, Japan, Germany, Britain, China, India and France, where T-DMB technology has been successfully introduced.

Mr. D.H. Kim, Managing Director of Black Star TV, said the company was happy to introduce the new service in Ghana as it seeks to penetrate the African market, explaining that the introduction of the 'valuable service' to offer an alternative to Ghanaian lifestyles was ample testimony of the company's confidence in Ghana's ICT sector and the great opportunities it offers.

The Deputy Director General of the National Communications Authority, NCA Mr. Joshua Peprah, who described the FonTv service as 'innovative and interesting', said the Ghana Government plans a common platform to promote its ICT agenda, including the full exploitation of digital media broadcasting and the NCA will continue its spectrum planning to ensure broadcasters by 2015, have opportunities to serve different markets with clarity, where one company can have a news channel, a sports channel, a movie channel and a music channel, among others.

Mr. Yoofi Grant, Chairman of Onetouch (mobile telephone service provider from Ghana Telecom), collaborators of Black Star TV in bringing FonTv to Ghana, said the mobile phone has become indispensable and it is only natural that service providers provide more innovative products for consumers, adding that with the launch of the FonTv, people can now watch whatever their favourite programmes are virtually out of their pockets and announced Onetouch would provide two months' free subscription for the first 1000 people to purchase the product.



The Korean Ambassador to Ghana, H.E. Keyei Chul Wi, expressed the hope that the introduction of the new product would help position Ghana as a real force and leader in Africa's ICT evolution and further strengthen the economic and political ties between Ghana and South Korea.

Deputy Minister for Communications, Mr. Fredrick Opare Ansah said the ministry was encouraged that the gradual improvement in the State's communications infrastructure is now permitting the introduction of emerging value added services for the convenience of Ghanaians and commended the management of Black Star TV for expanding the frontiers of mobile communications in Ghana.

The Attorney General who launched the FonTv, Mr. Joe Ghartey, said the product exemplifies the often repeated catch phrase of the world being a Global Village and also a clear demonstration that the 21st Century is one of a digital age. He said from a modest figure of approximately 100,000 mobile phone subscribers in the year 2000, to the about seven million subscribers currently, the introduction of the FonTv will transform the enjoyment of entertainment and people-to-people interactions.

Mr. Yannick André-Masse, CEO of VDL, said: "We are really pleased and excited with these first projects in Ghana and also in Africa. Of course, it demonstrates our leadership on the head end equipment for digital radio; but also, through this unique cooperation between players from three continents, Africa, Asia and Europe, it shows that we are right and successful when promoting the DAB family of standards as the best way to deliver multimedia content to mobile receivers."

Source: Isaac Yeboah (www.myjoyonline.com)

About VDL:

The French company VDL is a DAB/DMB equipment manufacturer and a DAB/DMB network provider in France since 1998. Its competence and its experience in the field of DAB and DMB allowed VDL to design a full range of DAB/DMB equipment and services, including an all-in-one soft multiplexer D-VAUDAX. These innovative products are easy to use, user friendly and price competitive.

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