FREE TV

BROADCAST JOURNAL

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SPECTRUM
VALUE & USAGE

IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Nigeria is now a cynosure and trail blazer in Digital Switch Over (DSO) in Africa especially in the West Africa sub-region.

So much so that our brothers in Africa have sent their delegations to Nigeria to learn from our experience in order to model their transition. From Ethiopia, Niger and others, came delegates eager to join the move from analogue to digital broadcasting.

Good lessons have been learnt from the previous launches even by our own operators. Efforts are being made to ensure that limitations and challenges are properly addressed so that going forward, shortcomings observed and experienced in the Jos Pilot and Abuja roll out are not repeated.

This is heart-warming; even though it comes with delays in launches in other cities, it is better late they say than never.

Tests of signals are on-going in Kaduna, Ilorin, Oshogbo and Enugu; and as soon as all necessary requirements are in place, roll-out will be effected.

So, the word is- PATIENCE as stakeholders in the process of 'DSO Roll-Out', fine-tune their acts to give us the very best of digital television.

Rajiv Mekkat
Chief Executive Officer

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Content

FREETV BROADCAST JOURNAL

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The FreeTV broadcast Journal is gaining currency amongst industry stakeholders and associates. From your support, encouragement, and patronage we are now in the third leg of this publication.

In this edition, an audience measurement conference is in the offing. Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, says the event will provide broadcast industry stakeholders, the opportunity to contribute to efforts to establish a scientific audience measurement system for Radio and Television broadcasting in the country.

Spectrum, a Valuable, Limited, and Natural resource, is an enabler for economic and social growth. We bring you an expert's presentation of this phenomenon.

Also, the Integrated Television Service (ITS), one of the Two Signal Distributors of the DSO, gives an insight into their level of preparedness as a critical stakeholder, in an interview with the General Manager, Rotimi Salami.

New, from this edition are Global Broadcasting Events schedule, result of TV Programmes survey and many more.

Happy Reading

Kalada Wilson

The Team

Ekeria Esele
FINANCE & LOGISTICS

Stanley Nkwazema
EDITORIAL ADVISER

Folarin Oworu
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Babatunde Oni
DISTRIBUTION

Chioma Eke
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Michael Fego Samuel
WEB & GRAPHICS

CONTRIBUTORS
Friday Ukwela
Joy Patrick-Akpan

ENQUIRIES & ADVERTS
magazine@freetv.ng
08098567900

JOIN US ONLINE
www.facebook.com/freetv.nigeria
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www.freetv.ng

SPECTRUM: VALUE AND USAGE

By Friday Ukwela

Electromagnetic (EM) spectrum is a valuable, and limited, natural resource that is required for broadcasting, telecommunication, aviation, navigation, and data services in the areas of Earth science, space science, human space exploration, aeronautical research, and disaster management.

The Radio Spectrum is a natural resource that is unlike the other resources of water, land, etc. It is a resource that is available equally to every country. It cannot be used up like the other natural resources and If it is not used, it is wasted. The use of the Radio Spectrum needs to be planned, managed, and regulated to make the radio spectrum available for all uses .Every country has the potential to derive the benefits of this resource, the radio frequency spectrum. The electromagnetic spectrum needs to be managed and shared by all the world's citizens.

Nations from all over the world must meet and come up with standards and regulations for the use of the spectrum. International Telecommunications Union (ITU), a United Nations specialized agency responsible for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is saddled with the responsibility of managing the spectrum. Spectrum allocation is a planning function which involves the designation of portions of the frequency spectrum to specified uses in accordance with international agreements, technical characteristics and potential use of different parts of the spectrum, and national priorities and policies.

Spectrum allocation is a distribution of frequencies to radio services. An allocation designates the use of a given frequency band for use by one or more radio communication services. National and international tables of frequency allocations contain lists of these frequency band designations.

In Nigeria, National Frequency Management Council (NFMC), a body set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria is saddled with the responsibility of managing the spectrum for Nigeria.
The spectrum is used for all forms of wireless communications: cellular telephones, radio and television broadcasting, weather radio services, weather satellite systems, radars and voice communication systems used to control aeronautical and maritime traffic, ships and aircraft communications, navigation, surveillance services, national security, telemedicine, flood warning and water control systems, disaster and relief operations, time signals, GPS position locating, and satellite command and control.

The law enforcement agencies (e.g., State Security Services, Army, Police, Navy, Airforce, Customs and NSCDC) use the spectrum for command and control of their forces, just as fire departments do.
The Federal Aviation Administration uses the spectrum for safety services such as aeronautical radionavigation, precision landing systems for all weather operations, surveillance, and air/ground communications.

The Department of Agriculture Forest Service rangers use the spectrum every time they use their transportable radios for control of crowds or forest fires.
In developed countries, the Department of Energy uses it to transmit power control data and commands for their dams and power grids. The Defense uses the spectrum extensively for tactical and non-tactical uses. Tactical uses are generally limited to several specific testing sites and training areas and facilities. Non-tactical applications are extensive and include aircraft command and control, mobile communication at military bases and air fields, and long-distance communications using satellites.

Within the spectrum, there are a limited number of frequencies, and at any given time and place, one use of a frequency precludes its use for any other purpose.

The growing popularity of radio-based technologies requires that the radio spectrum be used efficiently and be managed through the oversight of radio frequency spectrum use to prevent users from harmful interference while allowing optimum use of the spectrum.

The limited nature of the spectrum and increased demand also means that certain frequencies must be shared within the spectrum with other users.
However, because multiple users cannot transmit radio signals at the same frequencies, at the same time in the same direction, shared use of a particular frequency must also be closely coordinated and managed.

The United States of America delegation to ITU World Radio Conferences (WRC) is headed by a USA citizen at the level of an Ambassador with a delegation of about 200 people. That shows the value USA attaches to spectrum.

USA has a specialized Standing Committee saddled with the responsibility of meeting regularly before any ITU conference to harmonize USA spectrum needs, develop proposals and submit to ITU, study submissions from other countries to ITU, and come up with USA positions on the submissions ahead of any ITU conference.

The most basic factor in determining the value of a certain band of spectrum is the propagation characteristics of the band. Depending on the potential usage, some spectrum may be better suited than others. In general, spectrum ranging from about 400 MHz up to 6 GHz will have higher value than bands at higher frequencies, because it enables greater throughput per megahertz at lower infrastructure cost. This is because the service area covered by a base station is proportionate to the square of the frequency.
The number of potential uses for any given spectrum band increases the perceived value of that spectrum.

Other factors determining the value of spectrum are:
The intended service, the bandwidth required to deliver the service, sharing capacity, global and regional harmonization, Demographics, Population density, Income distribution, Economic growth rate, Political stability, Absence of corruption, Policy and regulatory environments, Favourable investment and customs laws, Independent regulatory agency, Competition policy, Infrastructure sharing, Rules of protection of the public against electromagnetic waves, Business and trade laws in the country, Open access rules, Technology neutrality, Limitation of and protection against interference, Coverage obligations, Auction rules and bidding credits/set-asides, Transparency, Licensing framework, Dispute-resolution mechanisms.

Global telecom body, the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), had estimated that broadcast frequencies' sale as a result of digital switch over (DSO) could fetch Nigeria over $2 billion. The Federal Government of Nigeria approved the lease of 20MHz in the 700MHz spectrum band by National Broadcasting Commission to MTN. This generated a revenue of N34b to Government.

Digital Television will bring additional revenue source to the coffers of Government.

LICENSING: DTT operators shall pay license fees to Government. A percentage of revenue accruing from advertising income.

AUCTION: Unused frequencies in major commercial cities could be auctioned for Pay Subscription services and other services.

DIGITAL ACCESS FEE (DAF): The spectrum is the medium for the delivery of all ICT services and is a valuable, and limited, natural resource

The use of the Radio Spectrum needs to be planned, managed, and regulated to make the radio spectrum available for all uses.
The spectrum is an enabler for economic and social growth which makes it an essential tool for empowering people, creating an environment that nurtures the technological and service innovation, and triggering positive change in business processes as well as in society as a whole.
The spectrum is a potential source of revenue for Government. Government needs to pay closer attention to all activities surrounding the management and use of spectrum.

Friday Ukwela is the Head of Engineering & Technology at NBC

President Muhammadu Buhari

UNITY OF NIGERIA NOT NEGOTIABLE

• Broadcasters Declare in Owerri

The Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) held its 67th General Assembly on Monday, July 17th 2017 at Imo Trade and Investment Centre, Owerri while agreeing that the unity of Nigeria is not negotiable.

The Assembly was declared open by the Governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha, and had in attendance the General Manager of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Owerri, who represented the Minister for Information and Culture, Ahaji Lai Mohammed.

Also represented was the Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, Mallam Modibbo Kawu, by Mrs Susan Obi who is the NBC's Enugu Zonal Director. Likewise, the Director General of the National Orientation Agency, Dr Garba Abari, was represented by NOA's Deputy Director, Pastor Innocent Iwuchukwu.

Other dignitaries included the National President of RATTAWU, Alhaji Kabir Garba Isanni; Mr Nnamdi Njemanze, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Press Council; and the Country Director, BBC Media Action, represented by Mr Aro Leonard.

The Governor spoke extensively about the unity of Nigeria and the need for patriotism to be uppermost in all we do. He further said that BON members should ensure the proper branding and promotion of Nigeria and Nigerians in all its programs.

On the issue of industry debts, the BON Chairman said two meetings have been held with Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) and a larger body of Heads of Advertising Sectorial Groups (HASG) where all stakeholders were represented. Industry best practices were discussed and members asssured that a memorandum of understanding by all stakeholders will be signed by the end of this year.

The Assembly noted:
• BON believes in the unity of Nigeria.
• That BON would partner with various organisations to tell Nigeria's story by Nigerians.
• That content of members' platforms and devices should emphasise what unites us rather than what divides us.
• That all issues relating to Digital Switch Over (DSO) should be properly and promptly addressed by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC).
• The position of government as communicated by the Minister of Information on the non-production of media content outside Nigeria.
• The directive of NBC to licensees on the issue of city based radio stations

1. The Assembly therefore resolved that the unity of Nigeria must be upheld by all citizens. That BON will partner with government and various organizations to tell Nigeria's story by Nigerians, and broadcasters' content should emphasize on what unites Nigerians rather than what divides them.

2. The National Broadcasting Commission should come out clearly with the timeline of the Digital Switch Over (DSO), which must include fees payable by licensees, compensation to organizations whose equipment would be taken over, who will benefit from the spectrum that would be sold since licensees currently have paid for them and will also pay for them during the DSO etc.

3. The position of the government as communicated by the Minister of Information that production of media content outside Nigeria is banned is of great concern to members, however, government should encourage and partner with local content producers rather than encourage foreign media to produce content about Nigeria for Nigerians.

4. That the NBC should look at individual licence on its directive to radio stations to be city-based operators. It should also reduce licence fees by 75% since revenue would be drastically affected as a result of reduced frequency.

FG PLANS AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT TO CATALYZE BROADCASTING GROWTH

Alh. Lai Mohammed
Hon. Min. for Information & Culture

The federal government has confirmed plans to measure audience and provide broadcast industry stakeholders opportunity to contribute to efforts towards establishing a scientific Audience Measurement System for radio and television broadcasting in the country.
The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, disclosed this in Lagos at the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) 3rd International Summit on Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria. The event will hold on Tuesday October 3, 2017.

He explained that "It is imperative that we urgently put in place an industry framework that will ensure that Content Producers receive their just due for the value of the Content they create, as well as provide objective guarantees to the Advertising community on their Return-On-Investment on media placements. This will then have the overall effect of guaranteeing greater spending by the Advertisers, who are all seeking to grow their market share."
This industry framework can only happen if the Ministry of Information and Culture, which fortunately supervises both the Broadcasting and Advertising industries, serves as a catalyst for putting in place a robust Audience Measurement System that is in line with global standards and supports the realization of the immense potential that the Nigerian Creative and Entertainment industry holds," he said.
The minister disclosed that for the switch over from analogue to digital television to be sustainable for signal distributors, channel owners, TV content producers and advertisers, the scientific Audience Measurement System is critical to articulate the value of the content to consumers, as well as the value of the audience to advertisers, particularly in the television sector.
He said lack of a scientific Audience Measurement System has resulted in under-investment in the sector, which is necessary to foster the growth of the industry, as the advertising community continues to rely on subjective factors when making decisions on the content they want, as opposed to how many viewers the content truly attracts.

As a consequence, the minister explained television platforms are subjected to renting out space on their channels to sustain their businesses and content producers have become increasingly over-reliant on sponsorship which, unfortunately, skews the authenticity of their creative output in favour of a few decision makers and not the millions of TV viewers.
"Further, the value of Nigeria's Broadcasting Advertising Market is not proportionate with its population when compared to the Top 3 Markets in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Despite having a population three times more than South Africa, Nigeria's Television Advertising Revenue in 2016, at US$309m, was behind that of South Africa, at US$1,301m.

"By 2020, the gap between South Africa and Nigeria is projected to marginally decline to 72%. Similarly, in the Radio sector, the value of Nigeria's 2016 Advertising Revenue of US$81m was behind its peers, South Africa and Kenya, both at US$343m. Kenya is projected to overtake South Africa in 2017 as the leading Radio Advertising market," he said.
Mohammed stressed that in both South Africa and Kenya, the value and growth rate of the Broadcasting Advertising Revenue is largely influenced by the availability of a scientific Audience Measurement System that provides confidence to advertisers in measuring their Return-On-Investment.

Speaking further, he noted that bringing Nigerian TV advertisement market into line with benchmarks that is two to three times the current size could result in additional $200-$400 million of revenue to the industry, based on current comparisons with other African countries.
The minister said the federal government had already taken a critical long-term decision to support the Nigeria creative and entertainment industry by ensuring and funding the inclusion of a middle-ware that is capable of scientific audience measurement on set-top boxes, hence the need to develop the framework.

"The existing model will never enable Nigeria's Creative and Entertainment Industry to reach its full potential. It stunts the quality of the Content that can be created and it also limits the capacity of Television platforms to invest in dynamic offerings that Consumers will be attracted to," he noted.

NIGERIA

Improving Broadcasting Through Digitisation

Joy Patrick-Akpan

Broadcasting transformation has been ongoing in the last decade, and digitizing the broadcasting networks has become a keenly desired global goal. While the drive towards a new transmission platform threatens the traditional broadcasting channels, it also presents a huge potential for unprecedented media diversity and opportunities. Transiting from analogue to digital is no longer a national option nor an arbitrary decision to be taken by individual countries. It is a global standard set by the digital switchover (DSO) agenda, an initiative that is regulated by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Although sanctions await non-complaint nations, countries are increasingly keen on migrating to the digital platform as it affords them a great opportunity to connect isolated users in remote communities, thereby somewhat closing the digital divide. Also, countries are mostly motivated not only by the market opportunities digital broadcasting can create for the multimedia services and ICT applications, but also, by its contributions to the efficient use of spectrum. In addition, countries that have switched over from analogue broadcasting gain an edge as they enjoy extensive wireless broadband communications which enables the navigation of satellite and the monitoring terrestrial signals.

Incidentally, the proportion of digital penetration in a country is determined by its rate of high capacity data networks which offer consumers broadband internet access that delivers quality audio-visual content and output. To this end, the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting is founded on the premise that it improves coverage of digital television (TV) transmission; ensures the availability of bandwidth for wireless broadband services; enhances sound and picture quality; enables more channels and provides users with unfettered access to transmission.

GLOBAL TRENDS AND DIGITAL BROADCASTING

The introductions and subsequent implementation of digital broadcasting is gaining traction worldwide. A resolution on global digitization of broadcasting was reached in Geneva, Switzerland on June 16, 2006, at a conference organized by the International Telecommunication Union. The digitalization treaty was signed by 120 ITU member countries, including Nigeria and other African countries. The signatories committed to setting their deadline for digital migration within a 10-year timeline, to end by June 2015. However, this ITU target was for the digitization of television broadcasting only, since the roadmap for radio was yet to be determined.

Global update on the ITU mandate indicates that the implementation drive is quite positive. Countries are at different stages of operationalizing the digital switchover plan, while some countries such as the United States and Britain have completely switched off their analogue TV services, the process is still at an early stage in a number of countries. In North America, most of Europe and Asia, migration to the digital platform has been completed, but the process is still ongoing in most parts of Asia-Pacific and Latin America. The Netherlands was the first country to successfully transit to digital broadcasting, followed by Andorra, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, and Norway. In Africa, Kenya, Gabon, Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda completed their digital transit by the end of 2015.

The market circumstances in each country indicate the level of complexity, and drive the effective implementation and speed of completion of the DSO plan. For instance, although digital penetration is higher in Argentina, Venezuela, Chile and Uruguay (78, 68, 67 and 64 percent respectively), Mexico and Brazil are considered the leaders of digital broadcasting in Latin America because they are closest to completing the process. However, the circumstances in the Asia-Pacific differ considerably. Hence countries like Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Singapore plan to finalize the transition between 2015 and 2020.

In Africa, environmental situations for digital terrestrial television (DTT) also vary. Forty-three percent of African countries only have 1-2 analogue channels while some others have many; some large countries have a high demand for DTT, the demand is low in smaller nations. Countries like Nigeria have high penetration rates, others like Cameroun have low penetration. However, while Nigeria and 51 other African countries could not meet the ITU deadline, Ghana is leading the way, followed by Mauritius. As a result of these differences, the ITU treaty allows for an additional five years for many African countries to complete the switchover.

In an effort to beat the current challenges, DSO implementation decisions are based on country specific situations and local realities. For instance, several countries chose a single switch over date for all broadcast operations while others like the United Kingdom, India and Kenya adopted the phased migration option whereby a designated number of cities switchover at different time. Similarly, other countries decided to separate the transmission function from the content creation service. The result is that the signal carrier is distinct from the TV broadcast channels. For example, in Africa, Uganda's government broadcaster UBC has two different entities, the first is signal carrier which transmits television programmes for all broadcasters while the second continues to produce the TV channels to be transmitted. However, countries like Kenya and Tanzania have more than one signal carrier, and this gives all broadcasters access to a larger national footprint.

Nigeria's experience so far...

In Nigeria, broadcasting is deregulated to allow private initiative, and this has resulted in an immense growth in the industry. Thus, the information and communications sector contributed 12.25 percent to total nominal GDP in the first quarter of 2016, higher than the 11.93 percent recorded in the same quarter of 2015 according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Broadcasting was the primary driver of this growth; it exhibited the highest nominal growth rate at 17.20 percent in the period under review; and a quarter on quarter growth rate of 1.45 percent.

Given that each country was allowed to choose its switch off date within the ten-year window, Nigeria adopted June 17, 2012 as the nation's switch over deadline. This timeline was approved by the federal government, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and other stakeholders in the Nigerian broadcasting sector. Regrettably, Nigeria could not realise the 2012 date and had to set another deadline for 17th June 2015. Again, in spite of the assurance of the NBC, Nigeria was unsuccessful the second time thereby failing to meet the global ITU 2015 deadline.

To be continued

Ethiopian Authorities Endorse Inview to Provide Middleware for DTT

Inview Technology the software providers for CCNL has been selected by Set-Top Box manufacturers (Tana and Hi-Tech) and endorsed by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA) to be the sole middleware provider for the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) migration in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA) planned to manufacture and distribute up to 5 million set-top boxes in Ethiopia for the Digital Switchover and Inview's end-to end software solution will be integrated in all of these DVB-T2 boxes.

Inview will be delivering a wide range of Broadcast Value Added Services (BVAS) including a unified user interface (UI) and branding, feature rich EPG, Government and News Information Portal, eBooks for education, Push VOD and Advertising.

Interestingly, these services will allow the government to communicate directly with the nation to inform and educate, while also enabling broadcasters to monetise the digital TV proposition via advertising integrated directly into the EPG and UI with click through full screen messages and adverts.

The Vice President of EMEA Jaques Van Hollebeke explained that "Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country in the World and we are excited to provide broadcast value added services for the DTT migration. Our flexible cloud infrastructure which enables a high level of functionality but keeps set top box prices down in addition to the knowledge and experience we have gained from supporting the transition from analogue to digital in Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa will benefit the Ethiopian digital switch over immensely.
The first supply of set top boxes is expected at the end of quarter one 2018 and analogue is to be switched off by 2020.

Inview is a digital technology innovator company with over 15 years of technical, commercial and operational expertise in the television industry. Its lightweight software is globally deployed across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas

The company specialises in analogue witch off and wide scale legacy set top box upgrades in addition to new pay Tv products

Inview's wide range of products and OTT services, provides high end user experience on a cost effective platform and enables the operators to better monetise content

It would be recalled that The Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Is'haq Modibbo Kawu received a delegation of the Ethiopian Digital Transition Committee in Nigeria in June 2017 when they came to understudy the digitization process.

The Etihopian Delegation also held an interactive meeting at the National Assemble chaired by the Chairman, House of Representatives Ad Hoc Committee on Digitization, Hon. Sunday Marshal Katung.

Mr. Leila Gebru, the Deputy DG, Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, who led the team, expressed the team's appreciation for the reception accorded them. He stated that Ethiopia was about starting their own digital process and so needed to understudy Nigeria, whose process was ahead of others in the African continent.

He noted that the team had already visited the headquarters of the signal distributors in Nigeria as part of their visits to learn from the Nigerian digital process.

BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA

How it All Began

- By Chioma Eke

The value of Television Broadcasting and its role in the lives of Nigerians and the global community is quite remarkable. As a nation, we have come to depend on our "square gadgets" as integral parts of our socio-cultural existence. Our TV's hold daily sources of information; News, Education, Entertainment, as well as Factual and Lifestyle updates.

Daily the world showcases its achievements in science, agriculture, arts and literature, displaying a wide array of cultures and traditions from across the globe in vivid colours and live streams. Our TVs provide such thrilling excitement that forge bonds of lasting friendships and sportsmanship through shared experiences within our social circles.

From overly dramatic soap operas to intense football matches and intriguing news reports from around the world, we are surrounded by multiple sources of exhilarating bursts of adrenaline and humbling reports of human mortality. It is almost impossible to imagine a time when such luxuries did not exist.

Television broadcasting in Nigeria did not spring up out of thin air or come to be through wishful thinking. Its origin is every bit as exciting and historic as the stories we often see on our ultra-modern TV screens.

In 1954, following several political upheavals, the Nigerian constitution made provision allowing regional governments to establish broadcasting services. This led to the establishment of the first television station in Nigeria and Africa by the regional government of Western Nigeria.

Though the regional government promoted the station as a means of educating the people about developments in the world, it initially served as a means for an opposition leader to address the people of Western Nigeria. That leader was Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Awolowo established Western Nigerian Television (WNTV), Africa's first TV station in October 1959, in Ibadan Nigeria.
Not to be outdone, the regional governments of Eastern and Northern Nigeria and the federal government in Lagos started their own TV stations shortly after in the early 1960's. All four of these stations basically existed to serve partisan political objectives for the various governments.

In 1973, a sudden awakening of regional consciousness occurred after the military government allowed the further division of the country into 19 states. This change coupled with the oil boom, and the effectiveness and importance of existing TV broadcasting, led to a new surge of state-owned TV stations. Three years later, the military regime enacted Decree No 24 of the 1976 constitution for the establishment of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) to coordinate nationwide coverage.

The NTA in 1976 acquired existing stations such as Radio Kaduna Television (RKTV) which became NTV Kaduna, The Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), MidWest TV, and Benue-Plateau Television Corporation (BPTV) where the first colour test transmission commenced on 1st October 1975. Re-branded as NTV Jos, BPTV was the first television station to launch regular/permanent colour broadcasts in Africa. By May 1977, all the afore-mentioned television broadcasters were merged and re-branded Nigerian Television (NTV), also known as the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA).

> "This change coupled with the oil boom, and the effectiveness and importance of existing TV broadcasting, led to a new surge of state-owned TV stations.

On October 1, 1979, the military government handed over power to a civilian president and Nigeria began to operate a new constitution. This permitted states to establish and operate their own broadcasting media. Thus, states started to re-establish and operate TV stations to compete with the exiting national television network, NTA. By 1983, states had established 11 televisions stations. They are:
LTV – Ikeja, OSTV – Akure, OGTV – Abeokuta, BDTV – Benin, OYOTV – Ibadan, IMTV – Owerri, ATV – Enugu, Plateau TV – Jos, Borno TV – Maiduguri, Gongola TV – Kano, and City TV – Kano.

In August 1992, broadcasting was deregulated in Nigeria following the Federal Government's promulgation of the National Broadcasting Commission. Decree No. 38, Section 22 repealed the provisions which allowed the government exclusive monopoly of ownership of electronic media in Nigeria. After 60 years of government monopoly on broadcasting, private and independent ownership of electronic media became legalised in Nigeria.
It would, however, take two years before the first private independent electronic media commenced operations. Thus, in September 1994 the beginning of a dual broadcasting system in Nigeria commenced.

To prevent disorder and chaos through proper regulation of the broadcast system, the National Broadcasting Commission was created in 1992. It has since then been solely responsible for issuing licences to television stations and ensuring professionalism in the industry.

After decades of analogue broadcasting, the federal government in a bid to improve upon the industry's standards took the initiative to transit to digital broadcasting. This initiative was put forth by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Therefore, on 16th June 2006, a treaty agreement was signed at the conclusion of ITU's Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC-06) in Geneva, heralding the development of 'all-digital' terrestrial broadcast services for sound and television.

The digitisation of broadcasting in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Islamic Republic of Iran by a target date of 17th June 2017 represents a major milestone towards establishing a more equitable, just and people-centred Information Society.

To this effect, ITU set a June 2017 deadline to enable the global community's adaptation to the changing telecommunication environment. The new digital GE06 Plan provides not only new possibilities for structured development of digital terrestrial broadcasting but also sufficient flexibilities for digitization world-wide.

Although sanctions await non-compliant nations, countries are increasingly keen on migrating to the digital platform as it affords them the gains of extensive wireless broadband communications by use of satellites in channelling terrestrial signals.

The federal government has been resilient in its efforts to drive a successful digital switch over by putting the following measures in place:

1.The appointment of Cable Channels Nigeria Limited (CCNL) to manage marketing and aggregation of channels on behalf of the content owners and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC).

2.Authorization of thirteen (13) local Set-Top Box manufacturers to produce the decoders for the digital switch over.

3.Engaging middleware operator Inview Nigeria to ensure varied channel signals are compressed into multiplexes before transmission. Inview's mandate also includes protecting the boxes from hacking and piracy.

4.Establishing licensed signal distributors – one from the public sector and two from the private sector. These are the Independent Television Services (ITS) Limited, Pinnacle Communications Limited and MTS Communications Limited.

In hopes of instituting a solid framework to drive the process, the government set up a Presidential Taskforce on Digitization by inaugurating Digiteam Nigeria. Digiteam is made up of experienced industry professionals expected to work alongside the National Broadcasting Commission.

As broadcasting deviates from traditional to digital space, it brings with it fresh opportunities for all – broadcasters, investors and the viewing public, further increasing revenue streams as stakeholders embrace this spectacular platform for diverse content.

ITS: We Have Facilities to Meet DSO Transmission

Following Nigeria's agreement to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)'s decision to migrate from analogue to digital transmission, ITS, one of the licensed transmission signal distributors has moved ahead of the pack due to existing fixed assets of masts, transmitter halls and lines. In the chat, ***Rotimi Salami*** *outlines ITS strengths in the DSO*

The Integrated Television Service (ITS) is one of the Licensed Signal Distributors of Nigeria's Digital Switch Over (DSO). Who are the main drivers of the company and what experience(s) are you bringing to the table for a task as this?

The Integrated Television Services Limited (ITS) came to be as a result of Government's acceptance of the Presidential Advisory Committee's recommendation on Digital Migration process in Nigeria.

It states that out of the Nigeria Television Authority shall emerge one of the Broadcast Signal Distributors, which shall inherit all transmission facilities of NTA and deploy same in its development of transmission capability in the digital era. So in 2015, the NTA Television Enterprises Limited (NTATVE) the business arm of the NTA, registered ITS with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Since then, we had demonstrated our capability and in realization of this Government's objectives that was brought on the Nation through being a signatory to the GE 06 Geneva agreement through the pilot DSO scheme in Jos, which had been running since April 30th 2016 and the recent expansions to the cities of Ilorin, Osogbo and Enugu within the shortest possible time.

Our strategic partner is Star Communications of China who already has operational, a PayTv service with the NTA. However, the relationship (ITS/STAR partnership) is quite distinct and separate from that which exists with the NTA. The key strength of the ITS is that in most locations that it had to roll out as at today, it does not have to start from the scratch. We have the benefit in existence, fixed assets of Masts and Transmitter halls, transmission lines, etc. in most cases too, the NTA-Star TV network is already operational at most of these locations, because of this relationships, we are able to share these facilities, all we do is increase capacity by deploying additional transmitters and signal processing equipment. Recently, the Network Operational Control (NOC) was deployed to facilitate remote monitoring and services.
Having ran the platform for the past sixteen months, with the experiences over the years in transmission sustenance in NTA coupled with the expertise shared with our strategic partners, we can say we are there and capable.

As we speak, local capacity is being developed. Recently, CAS and EPG integration in Ilorin, Osogbo and Enugu were done in-house.

People can hardly differentiate between ITS, Startimes and NTA. What is the relationship.

In due course, the difference will become so obvious that you don't have to ask. Even then as at today, you can discern these differences.
As I had already explained, the common denominator here is Star Communication who had way back in 2008 been in a business relationship with NTA, under the trade name StarTimes, providing PayTv DTT and satellite services.
In their DTT operations, they utilize the mast system of the NTA and mostly occupy space within the NTA premises.

These facilities are the same ones that the ITS is inheriting from the NTA, it is just logical therefore that ITS having reached an agreement to work on the DSO with StarTimes, do share these facilities. It is reasonable, it is economical. We have separate distinct managements, different logos, different business objectives but shared resources.

The DSO has been activated with the test launch in Jos. Considering that Nigeria has missed the deadline it set for itself again-June17, 2017, in your opinion, what factors are responsible for the slow pace and what do you think can help meet actualisation of DSO and eventual ASO?

There is nothing sacrosanct about the deadline date. The most important and promising thing here is that we are on course to realizing this objective.
The greatest challenge of the DSO is funding. The building and operation of the transmission infrastructure is capital intensive and unlike what obtains in the analogue era, coverage area here is key. There are no fringe areas in digital transmission. The signals are either present or absent. You have to "fill in" or provide "re-transmission" where the signal is null. What this implies is that in urban areas like Lagos, Abuja, Port-Harcourt etc, even in some rural settings, you may have to have more than one transmission site for effective coverage. With adequate funds these sites would be developed faster than what presently obtains.

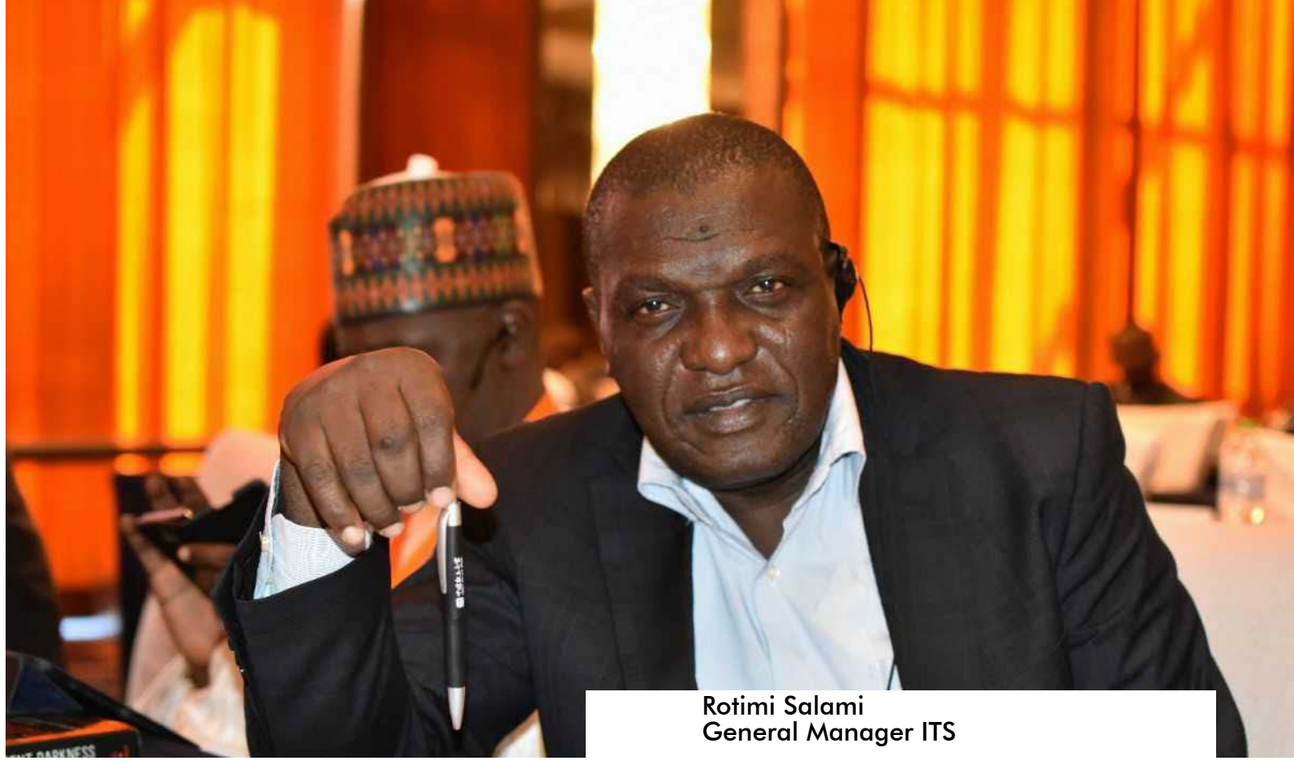
There is however in addition the challenge of the existing business model. Every enterprise is in business to provide services, make profit and be socially responsible. Without these three or any of these factors then there is no business.

Where the business model stifles your capability to exploit the platform to optimize your revenue stream, then it becomes a disincentive for growth and expansion. I am glad the National Broadcasting Commission is addressing this.

As for attaining Analogue Switch Off (ASO), I see no reason why this shouldn't be so in the cities of Jos and Abuja for example. Any city that has successfully enjoyed Digital Switch On (DSO) for say six months should automatically attain ASO. Like the nation's experience with the BVN in banks, Nigerians would key into things only at the approach of given deadlines.
We need to start doing ASO now. In Jos there are over 160,000 Set Top Boxes (STB) while in Abuja, there are over 230,000 STBs operational. Once ASO is muted, I can assure you these numbers would more than double.

Beyond the original three local governments that received signals in Jos upon the launch, are you now able to cover the entire Plateau State, if not, when do you plan to?

It is erroneous and misleading to say we are being received in only three Local Government Areas of Plateau state. Our signals are being received in Nine LGA. There are several misinformation being bandied. Recently we had to debunk



Rotimi Salami
General Manager ITS

that which says we transmit only nine programmes in Jos. You are free to go to the Plateau and verify.
Another erroneous information is that the pilot project covers the whole plateau. This is not true. From inception, the pilot project was designed and referred to as Jos pilot. Jos does not constitute Plateau.
The concept of pilot cities from conception were for Jos followed by Kaduna then Uyo. These were the designated pilot cities.
I however agree we owe it a duty to cover the whole plateau and arrangement is on to realize this. We have plan for presence in Shendam, Langtang, Pankshin and Mangu. The simulated radiation pattern for these cities is that which you have just seen. Very soon, they all shall enjoy the digital experience.

Signal Distribution is a capital-intensive venture. How are you able to meet the requirements and what is the business case for the project?
Signal distribution is truly capital intensive given the scenario I had earlier painted, acquiring masts, sites and antenna systems, building structures, alternate power systems, UPS, signal processing kits and configuration for a 2+1 transmission unit. The sum is mind boggling but as I said earlier, as of now for ITS, the site and mast had not been an issue. The challenge is in acquiring and operating the transmission kits.

Our strategic relationship with Star Communication has led to the growth and development of the ITS platform. The alliance had enabled ITS to build the necessary platform in Ilorin, Jos, Osogbo and Enugu. It is hoped that the next phase will commence presently.

The business model as it presently is does not favour Broadcast Signal Distributors. Looking at the digital broadcast ecosystem, the major investment is borne by the BSD while the least revenue accrues to them.

What challenges are in the present and foreseeable future? What are your plans to meet the cost of equipment and installations of new digital Head ends for every site and total coverage of the country?
We have not just jumped into the business of signals distribution. Feasibility study was carried out, a business plan was evolved so also was system integration plan. We are going to follow these to the letter. The challenge I foresee is in the instability in the exchange market. A sizeable percentage of items required for the platform development are to be imported, so this would always impact on any plan one has. Like when the exchange rate suddenly went from N160 to N460 to the dollar.

Given the opportunity, what time frame would you require to effectively cover the entire country?
As at today, the speed at which the platform is grown is not solely the decision of the BSD. The regulator also has a say. The issue of geographical spread and balancing is also important, as I said in the beginning, let us not again be a prisoner of deadline, let us grow the industry and the business at a reasonable speed.
You have forgotten that aside from building the platform, other elements too are critical, say STB availability; this is a constant headache in the process. Making STB available and at affordable prices.

What would you recommend to the authorities that will help the DSO case?
Let each party play well its role and the enabling law too has to come in place. The political will is there.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMMISSION

WHY NBC IS CENSORING PHONE-IN-PROGRAMMES

Following series of complaints by government, individual and corporate bodies, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has announced that it would from October 1st, 2017 fine broadcast stations a sum of N500,000 for any perceived hate speech expressed by callers during phone-in programs.

The new rule was communicated to broadcast houses at a meeting held at the NBC zonal office in Lagos, on Thursday August 10, 2017.

The zonal director of NBC, Matthew Okoduwa, who addressed the meeting on behalf of NBC, expressed profound worry for the comments some Nigerians make during phone-in segments of live programs. He blamed presenters and show anchors for giving people the opportunity to air hateful statements on live shows.

Okoduwa explained that he understood Nigerians are angry and frustrated about the state of the nation, but emphasized that hate speech is not the way to express such frustration. He warned that the country is very volatile, hence media houses need to control the kind of comments Nigerians are allowed to make on television and radio broadcasts.
The Director also limited newspaper reviews to once a day, urging viewers and listeners to contribute such reviews to social media rather than on television or radio programs.

"Newspaper reviews can only be broadcast once a day on a station. Anything more than that would amount to a breach of the new rule," the director explained.

Okoduwa mandated broadcast stations to use screeners to censor calls before they go live on programs. He also said programs can only have five call-in shows per day.

The commission also mandated that henceforth, the cost of phone calls must be borne by the station and not individuals calling in.

On the discussion of judicial cases, Okoduwa said broadcasters cannot hold a discussion about ongoing court cases, stating that filed suits can only be discussed at the early stage and at the final stage after judgment has been given.

Interestingly, some broadcasters have raised concerns over this new set of rules issued by the NBC. One concern is that the new rules compromise free speech, as it could deny Nigerians the opportunity to voice their opinions on important political and social issues.

Others have lamented that the new rules will impose new expenses on radio and television stations, as they will now have to bear the cost of phone calls and purchase screening machines.

"I believe that this will restrict the free speech of Nigerians," a media practitioner who requested anonymity told our correspondent.

"Putting the cost of calls solely on the shoulder of stations will likely mean most stations will only have one or two toll-free lines, which reduces the ways in which Nigerians can voice their opinions. The costs of toll-free lines and call screening machines may prove high for some stations, making them choose between giving Nigerians access to voicing their opinions and their expense sheet."
The new regulations came less than a week after a hateful song inciting violence against Igbos was circulated in northern Nigeria.

GOSPELL DIGITAL PIONEER NIGERIA'S SURFACE MOUNT TECHNOLOGY

- **800 YOUNG ENGINEERS, TECHNOLOGISTS, OTHERS GAIN EMPLOYMENT**

By Stanley Nkwazema

Following Nigeria's quest to reach a milestone on The International Telecommunications' Union (ITU) for all its member countries to go digital in 2006 and the need to transition from analogue to digital broadcasting in Nigeria and West Africa, one of the primary off-take of the DSO, Gospell Digital Technology FZE has moved beyond meeting the Set-Top Boxes and decoders of the Switch Off to investing in local production and knowledge transfer.

Interestingly, at inception the Federal Government in a bid to meet a deadline of June 17, 2017 for the full digitisation of the broadcast landscape licensed some local companies to produce the set top boxes for the actualisation of the process. However, only Gospell Digital located in Calabar and Port Harcourt has been able to reach a significant milestone in the production of the DTT and DTH boxes for the transition.

The company has however moved beyond producing Set-Top Boxes. In conjunction Shenzhen Skyworth and Mishan of China are Pioneering efforts to invest in local production and knowledge transfer by opening 3 Surface Mount Technology (SMT) Automatic chip placements line and 4 pneumatic assembly lines , with capacity of placing 250,000 components per hour and production of 200,000 set top boxes per month.
The SMT line, the first and largest in West Africa is currently able to manufacture in excess of 100,000 printed circuit boards (PCB) per month (i.e. decoders, prepaid electricity meters, smart phones and television main boards) while also assembling set top boxes and tablets.

Gospell which will be formally opened on Thursday October 5 at the Free Trade Zone in Calabar Cross River state by the Vice President. It will employ about 300 direct staff- young electrical engineers and technologists, with additional job creation of over 500 contract staff and another 1000 or more value added service providers and technicians nationwide.

The major significance of the Gospell Digital SMT line factory is its pioneering effort in technology transfers especially the manufacture of Digital Television Set Top Box (DTT and DTH) and android cable and wireless Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) in West Africa.

Significantly, Gospell Digital FZE is also a white label company involved in contract manufacturing for different brands. As such the desire to partner with local STB Assembly plants, PayTv /Free To Air (FTA) and cable TV platforms; Electricity Distribution companies (DISCOs), Electrical home appliance companies, Telcos and Science and Technology Institutions and agencies.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMMISSION

NBC TO SHUT DOWN 89 FM STATIONS

The Director General of the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), Mallam Modibbo Kawu has threatened to wield the big stick against 89 erring city-based FM Radio stations in the country for illegally transmitting beyond their approved limits.
The boss of the regulatory body disclosed that the organisation may revoke licenses of the defaulting radio stations at a stakeholders' meeting on transmitter power in Nigerian broadcasting, it organised.

The mandate empowers it to establish the national broadcasting code to which all licenced broadcast stations are bound. It was gathered that the FM stations threatened by the NBC were broadcasting beyond the limit of their signals leading to interference with other service providers.
"We learnt that NBC felt the FM stations acted in breach of broadcast code and were rendering service not in the interest of the public," he said.

Kawu said the industry was faced with very difficult challenges resulting from unauthorised transmission that is causing frequency interference and clashes.
According to him, "There is illegal and rampant use of transmission power by stations all over Nigeria.
"Stations procure transmitters without respecting the stipulated and recommended transmitter power in city-based FM stations. The consequence of this is that we have frequency clashes occurring all over Nigeria.
"As at February 22, 2017, the NBC had compiled a total of 69 stations around the country, where transmitters had been installed beyond the transmitter power stipulated in the conditions of their licenses, we have a list of 89 such stations, and the list is not exhaustive.

"High-power transmitters installed all over the country today, are responsible for the frequency jamming taking place all over Nigeria. We are dealing with an anarchic situation in the Nigerian broadcasting airwaves, to be honest, and there is no responsible regulatory institution that can allow the problem to persist."

Kawu explained that the electromagnetic spectrum is a finite resource that all nations of the world deploy for various uses, from broadcasting to space science and telecommunications, adding that nations understand the importance of this finite resource and take steps to ensure the judicious use of the radio spectrum to derive maximum benefit for their development purposes.

In his presentation, the Director, Engineering and Technology (NBC), Friday Ojone Ukwela, explained that Electromagnetic (EM) spectrum, a valuable and limited natural resource, is the medium for broadcasting, telecommunications, aviation, navigation, and data services in the areas of earth science, space science, human space exploration, aeronautical research, and disaster management.

He therefore, warned that radio stations must use the spectrum effectively or risk sanction.
"The use of the radio spectrum needs to be planned, managed, and regulated to make the radio spectrum available for all uses.
"The 88MHz –108MHz frequency band is allocated for the FM Radio service by the International Telecoms Union (ITU) and the bandwidth for FM radio is 200KHz. In Nigeria, the guard band between adjacent FM radio stations is a minimum of 200KHz," he said.

Ukwela however said in 2008 NBC suspended sales and processing of broadcast application forms for FM radio service for these saturated areas that reached their saturation limit. He further said in 2010 the Nigerian Broadcasting Code was reviewed in Uyo, where it was agreed that the coverage area for FM Radio service in Nigeria should be per city as from 2010.

"All existing FM radio stations at the expiration of their licences should revert to the city-based coverage area for FM radio service. Given that the life of a licence is five years, all FM radio licences were expected to be city based in 2015. It was equally agreed that all new FM radio licensees, beginning from 2010 should adhere to this new FM radio service city base coverage area agreement," Ukwela said.

The commission is however worried that radio stations have not adhered to the agreement reached in 2010, a situation, he said was causing frequency interference around the Nigerian airwave.

MULTICHOICE SAYS NO TO PAY-PER VIEW . TSTV Set to Launch DTH Service

Pay-TV service provider, MultiChoice Nigeria, has dismissed fresh reports saying it is about to make its services available via the Pay-Per-View model. In a statement issued in Lagos, the company said reports currently circulating and suggesting that it is about launching Pay-Per-View are unfounded.

This is coming just as TSTV is set to launch into the Nigerian Broadcasting Service a Direct-to-Home (DTH) satellite TV.

The newly launched pay TV satellite would cover all sub-Saharan African countries and would provide over 100 TV channels to their audience.

Managing Director of TSTV, Bright Echefu during the signing of the multi-transponder agreement with their ABS partner disclosed that their services would offer viewers the experience of HD and SD video, internet services, broadband, TV and radio at a very affordable rate.

"MultiChoice wishes to correct the news currently being circulated and states that at no time was it announced that a Pay Per View service was about to be launched," said the statement.

Before the Floyd Mayweather vs. Conor McGregor boxing fight, it explained to journalists at a media briefing that premium subscribers on its DStv platform would watch the fight as part of their package, while subscribers to pay television services in the USA would need to pay an additional US$99.

"During the briefing, it was clarified that Pay Per View is a pay television service whereby subscribers of a particular television provider can purchase additional sporting events to view over and above their normal subscription package and charges. Furthermore, it was explained at the briefing that this service does not currently exist in Nigeria or anywhere else in Africa at the moment, but is being used in the United States and the United Kingdom," the company explained.

It added that should it decide to offer a new service in the future, the media and its subscribers will be directly informed.

TSTV however stated that the services would be distributed on ABS-3A satellite located at the prime video neighbourhood of 3°W and the antenna would be straight to the sky

BBC GOES PIDGIN FOR WEST AFRICA

The British Broadcasting Corporation has introduced a new Pidgin language service for West and Central Africa.

The Pidgin language service which has been in the making for over one year finally made its debut, giving recognition to the unofficially and most widely-spoken languages across the region. The launch is part of a bigger expansion programme by the BBC arising from a budgetary boost it received last year and is expected to lead to 10 more new services in Africa and Asia.

Under the new expansion drive, BBC intends to generate more mobile and video content including more than 30 new TV programmes for partner broadcasters in sub-Saharan Africa.

The production hub for the service is in Nigeria, where it is estimated that more than half the population speak Pidgin as the unofficial lingua franca, with reporters and stringers filing in from Ghana and Cameroon

Pidgin language broadcasting is not new to Nigeria having been used sparingly as the language of broadcast since 1939 when local broadcasting began. It was however not until Nigeria launched into FM radio broadcasting in the late 1970s with NBC-2, that Pidgin began to feature a little more prominently as a broadcast language.

Later in the mid-1980s, the rechristened public broadcaster FRCN set up its own languages station NBC-3 and later became Bond FM. It featured the three major Nigerian languages, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba with Pidgin English as the main driver. But it was not until 2008 that an exclusively Pidgin Language radio station Wazobia FM owned by private broadcaster Steam Broadcasting came on stream.

According to a BBC release, Pidgin Language Service will provide a mix of local, regional and international news current affairs and analysis – bringing the world to the region and vice-versa.

CAPE VERDE ROLLS OUT DTT

Digital terrestrial television has started in Cape Verde, with more than 75 percent of the population covered during the first stage of deployment, according to information provided to Lusa by the National Communication Agency (ANAC). The population of four islands (Santiago, Maio, Sal and Sao Vicente) can receive five channels. The remaining islands will be covered during the second stage of DTT deployment, while the analogue switch off is planned during the course of 2017.

GHANA'S CRYSTAL TV TO DEVELOP SATELLITE PAYTV

Ghana's Crystal Television in conjunction with Eutelsat plans to create a PayTV bouquet across Africa according to Chief Paul Crystal-Djirackor. Crystal-Djirakor, who spoke to Russel Southwood, said the idea for the satellite platform came from the need to keep up with the pace of change. Although Crystal-Djirakor is still closely involved with the Association of Private Broadcasters, he launched his own satellite platform in November 2014. The Mega-Choice Digital Network has three of Crystal TV's channels on it: Prime (which includes sports), Extra (movies and entertainment) and Plus. A ten-year contract has also been signed with Eutelsat Communications for capacity connected to the African service area of the Eutelsat 16A satellite to support the launch of Mega-Choice

2017 GLOBAL BROADCASTING EVENTS

MIPCOM
Oct 16th – 19th, 2017.
Cannes, France.

VIRTUAL REALITY
Oct 16th, 2017
The Stewart Hotel, NYC

NYC TELEVISION WEEK – THE VIDEO INDUSTRY'S MARKET PLACE
Oct. 16th – 19th, 2017
New York City

STREAMING TECH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
Oct 16th – 17th The Stewart Hotel, New York City

NEAT TV SUMMIT, NEW YORK CITY
Oct 18th, 2017
Sheraton Time Square, New York City

ADVANCED ADVERTISING
Oct 18th, 2017
Sheraton Time Square, New York City

NAB SHOW NEW YORK
Oct 18th – 19th, 2017
Javis Convention Center, NYC

TVDATA SUMMIT, 2017
Oct 19th, 2017
Sheraton Time Square, NYC

DISCOP AFRICA
Oct 25th – 27th, 2017.
Johannesburg, South Africa

BROADCASTING & CABLE 27TH ANNUAL HALL OF FAME
Oct 26th, 2017 Grand Yatt Hotel, NYC

STAKEHOLDERS ASSESS THE DIGITISATION PROCESS IN NIGERIA

It is no longer in doubt that the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has worked hard towards ensuring a seamless switch over. Stakeholders in the Broadcast Media recently converged in Lagos to assess the progress report of the ongoing migration from analogue to digital broadcasting in Nigeria.

It was a gathering of key operators in the sector which included Signal Distributors, Software Integrators, Set Top Boxes manufacturers, Channel owners, Station Managers, State Government representatives, Workers representatives etc.

The forum took place at the Lagos Airport Hotel under the theme "Understanding the roles of key operators; Signal Distributors/Platform Providers, Channel Owners, Software Integrators, Set Top Boxes Manufacturers etc, in digital switchover".

The Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, Alhaji Modibo Kawu who was ably represented by Director, DG's office, Dr. Armstrong Idachaba, while declaring open the forum, made it known that the Commission has made a lot of progress in the DSO project. Idachaba disclosed that NBC has determined to achieve the best of digital migration in Africa and will continue to partner with necessary stakeholders to make Nigeria proud.

In his remarks during the meeting, the Director General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Alhaji Ibn Mohammed who spoke through the Zonal Director NTA Lagos Network Centre, said NTA is ever ready and is working with all relevant agencies to ensure a first-grade digital transmission that will make NTA the best among its equal.

The National President of RATTAWU, Comrade Kabir Tsani, urged workers in the industry to continue acquiring more knowledge in IT in order to stay in tune with daily changes in the broadcast industry, adding that digitisation will lead to job creation for more Nigerians. Among those that presented papers at the event was the Vice President of Startimes World Mr Michael Dearham who navigated on content production and technicalities of production equipment. Dearham said the issue of content is very important because it is the product that consumers will patronise and failure to dish out good, interesting and culturally relevant programmes may spell doom for the station.

The Managing Director of Integrated Television Service, Mr R. Salami, who spoke on behalf of the signal distributors, explained that apart from those areas that have been commissioned; Ilorin, Kwara State and Osogbo in Osun State, are now ready to switch off analogue and begin to enjoy digital signals. He gave kudos to the NBC for the good job the Organisation is doing.

Other speakers include the representative of FreeTV / CCNL, Folarin Oworu who is the Director, Business Development and Strategy. Oworu enlightened participants on the issue of Set Top Boxes as approved by government and its availability and functions.

Charles Olojede who represented the Software Provider, Inview in his submission, took the audience through several advantages of the software installation, insisting that it will protect from unnecessary interruption among others.

In his own presentation, an academician from North-West University, South Africa Dr Jendele Hungbo urged media practioners to tap into numerous opportunities of Digitisation while calling on the government to provide the enabling environment for smooth digital migration.

During the question and answer session majority of the participants expressed their appreciation to the organizers YEMABEL, RATTAWU and NBC, calling for more of such interactive sessions.

The Executive Secretary of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria Mr Segun Olaleye and the immediate past President of RATTAWU Dr.Yemisi Bamgbose coordinated the session .The interactive forum moved to other zones in August.

Nigerian DSO Team with GatesAir Officials

NIGERIAN OFFICIALS TOUR GATESAIR U.S. FACILITIES

By Matt Dutton

A group of Nigerian officials, including Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture Alhaji Lai Mohammed, toured the GatesAir facility recently during a two-day stop in Quincy.

Also in attendance were Sunday Katung, member of the House of Representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and chairman of the Committee on Digital (Broadcast) Switch Over; Mallam Ishaq Modibbo Kawu, Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, and Sir Lucky Omoluwa; Pinnacle Communications CEO, one of the licensed signal distributor for Nigeria.

Quincy electronics and broadcast manufacturer GatesAir is playing a large role in transitioning Africa's most populous nation from analogue to digital programming.
The company has customers in 185 countries and has worked closely with Pinnacle Communications since 1998 to launch TV and FM radio systems across Nigeria.

The digital switch-on started in Jos as a pilot in 2016 and moved to the country's capital city, Abuja, providing 30 free-to-air channels for millions of residents, and it is expected eventually to reach more than 50 million homes and 170 million residents.

According to the Minister of Information, the shift to digital has cultural significance for Nigeria that goes beyond better broadcast quality and more television channels, describing the upgrades as a "catalyst to drive creative industry."

"We are using the migration from analogue to digital to create more jobs and to make young people realise their potential, Mohammed told the crowd of fellow Nigerians, GatesAir representatives and Quincy community members.

"GatesAir has written the name of Quincy on the world map," Mohammed said during an early evening press conference. "When you look at the number of countries GatesAir has dealt with, GatesAir is actually an ambassador of the US."

As the group inspected the factory, they said a number of transmitters will be shipped to Nigeria, even as the minister disclosed that the country plans to upgrade services to six states, representing each of Nigeria's geo-political zones, by the end of July or early August.

The NBC DG, Mallam Modibbo Kawu, who was part of the delegation also explained that "This trip is an opportunity for us to see our partner company. This company has played a very important role in the evolution and development of broadcasting in Africa and particularly in the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

GatesAir CEO Philip Argyris said having Mohammed and his contemporaries make the long trip to Quincy shows the importance of the project "The honourable minister came here to honour us, to see our facility and to see the hard work that goes into our product," Argyris said. "Our business is to make the republic successful in its switchover."

Argyris hopes the partnership will continue to flourish as the upgrades continue across the country.

RATTAWU

Ensuring Seamless DSO Transition

By Yemisi Bamgbose

The Radio, Television, Theatre and Arts Workers' Union (RATTAWU) is the umbrella body for the workers in both the government and privately-owned broadcast media and allied industries as well as Theatre and Arts workers in Nigeria. RATTAWU is an affiliate of National and International Labour Bodies which include the Nigerian Labour Congresss, Union in Media and Entertainment (UNIMEI), Africa Union (UNI AFRICA) etc.

However, the migration from analogue to digital television is an established global trend and is being pursued vigorously. The underlying factors to switchover differ in emphasis from country to country but the common objective as stipulated by the International Telecommunication Union is to achieve GREATER SPECTRUM EFFICIENCY by closing the Analogue Terrestrial Transmission among others.

The spectrum vacated will be relocated or sold for a wide range of broadcasting or Telecommunication purposes.

Some of the countries that have successfully switched off analogue transmission include Andorra, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Columbia, United State of America, United Kingdom, Morocco, Mozambique, Malawi, among others. In all, about fifty-five countries have migrated or switched off analogue successfully.
Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Chad, Cote D'ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra-Leone. About 72 countries are working on their own migration.

Kenya is already in the final stage, though there is no certainty as to when it will complete analogue switch-off, it has certainly gone farther than Nigeria. Mozambique, Tanzania and Rwanda have largely switched off analogue by adopting a public-private cooperation with Star Times of China using a payTV to implement DTT.

Ghana has launched pilots in Accra and other cities, working assiduously. It is not ascertained yet whether it will meet the deadline of June 2017.

The Nigerian switchover process has witnessed the characteristic behaviours associated with initial take up as experienced in nearly if not all the countries that have carried successful and enduring analogue switch off such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Japan, Spain and Italy.

Nigeria has shifted switch-off dates on two occasions (2012 and 2015)

SOME IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DIGITAL MIGRATION

There are problems which can be narrowed down to the following
1. Analogue switch of dates that are politically motivated
2. Lack of financial resources to implement the switch off
3. Absence of regulatory framework or enabling law
4. Inadequate close collaboration between the principal stakeholders.

In analysing the switch over situation in Nigeria, some basic questions must be answered.
a) What is the result of the pilot/experiment carried out in Jos, Plateau State more than a year ago using Integrated Television Services (ITS)?
b) What is the outcome of the Abuja launch that was carried out late 2016 using the two platform providers?
c) What is the percentage of coverage in Plateau?
d) What is the percentage of coverage in Abuja?
e) How many Set-Top boxes were distributed or sold in Abuja and Jos?
f) What is the viewers' population in Jos and Abuja and what is the percentage covered?
g) How many local governments are covered by the digital signal or the level of penetration?
h) Have we done the economics of digitisation that will enable the determination of what is chargeable and what is payable to the platform providers by the broadcasters.
i) How much is set aside for the existing broadcast stations to compensate for their transmitters or what is the plan for e-waste?
j) What is the state of preparedness of the state-owned private stations?
k) How many regions or zones do we have in Nigeria and how many have switched off analogue successfully?
l) How many Set-Top Box manufacturers do we have and their locations as well as their level of preparedness for the switchover?
m) Is there any enabling law in place to spell out the nitty-gritty of digital migration?
n) What is the role of public broadcasters in Digital era?
o) What is the budgetary allocation
p) How many megahertz of the spectrum have been sold and what percentage is ploughed back for the switchover business?
q) What is the level of awareness of Nigerians?
r) What is the position of our neighbouring countries, Benin, Chad, Cameroun and Niger?

WHY THOSE QUESTIONS?

Digital switchover/Analogue switch-off must be well and carefully planned and implemented in order to prevent failure which may be calamitous to all the stakeholders. Policy of switchover must be well articulated with all the principal stakeholders carried along meticulously. A sincere analysis of the situation must be carried out and all agreed together before concluding on final switchover date.

OVERVIEW OF SELECTED COUNTRIES

USA – In the case of USA Federal Communications Commission initially fixed year 2006 with a proviso that it must have achieved 85% target of households in any given area. It was further change to 2008 and later 2009. A $1.5 Billion subsidy was created to provide eligible households with up to $40 coupons with to buy converter boxes, USA started as early as year 2002 and was able to switch-off analogue in 2009.

GERMANY

It took Germany seven years, that is between 2003 and 2010 to complete regional switchover rather than naming big ban national date. By 2007 Digital Terrestrial coverage reached eighty percent of the population of Germany. It finally switched off analogue in 2010.

UNITED KINGDOM

UK also did regional switchover between 2008 and 2012. The aim was to preserve the role of terrestrial television as a universal and affordable service. It targeted 98-99 percent of all household before the switch-off of analogue in 2012.

SPAIN

The Spanish government in 2007 approved proposed digital switchover plan. The country was divided into 73 technical areas and scheduling analogue switch-off into four phases starting from 2007 and completing in 2010.

ITALY AND FRANCE

Italy started with switch off set for 2006 but postponed twice in 2006-2008 and later 2012. Regional switchover was adopted. France equally region by region switch off between 2008 and 2011. It must be noted that France has as far back as 2008 covered 85% of the Paris metropolis.

JAPAN

Japan commenced in year 2000. By 2007 Digital Terrestrial coverage had reached 90 percent targeting 2011. By the end of 2007, over 20 million digital receivers had been sold.

IS NIGERIA READY FOR ANALOGUE SWITCHOVER IN JUNE 2017?

With the available data at our disposal, the answer is negative and the reasons are as follows;
1.The outcome of Jos pilot scheme did not show the country is ready for analogue switchover.
The coverage achieved in Plateau ranges between five and nine local governments.
The technical fine-tuning has not been done. No synchronization of the audio and visual.

2. The Abuja signal is not received beyond the airport.

3. Majority of the state-owned television stations do not have very critical equipment.

4. There is no enabling law.

5. Economics of the switchover is yet to be done in order to determine how to sustain the critical stakeholders such as the platform providers and broadcasters.

6. The Set-Top box manufacturers

Continued from page 27

issue must be resolved.

7. Digital terrestrial spectrum needs to be allocated to existing broadcasters.

8. The role of the content aggregator and software provider must be satisfactorily addressed.

9. The issue of e-waste that will emanate as a result of the various analogue transmitters scattered all over the country must be resolved.

10. The constitution needs to be amended with a view to empowering the broadcast industry to collect radio and TV licence rates instead of the local government.

CONCLUSION

Firstly, it is too obvious that naming one "big bang national date" cannot work. Secondly, analogue switch off dates which are set politically without regard for consumers and industry concensus will continuously be postponed. Thirdly, it has been observed that full switchover is generally much easier in countries where terrestrial reception is of limited importance.

In countries where terrestrial reception is dominant, high penetration achieved during the period of voluntary take-up is important as a pre-condition of switchover.

SUGGESTION

1. Enabling law must be put in place

2. Nigeria should equally adopt the system of regional or zonal switchover

3. Government should make funds available

4. Close collaboration between the principal stakeholders e.g Government, Regulators, Broadcasters, including the Workers' representatives, Platform providers, receiver manufacturers and consumer representatives.

Yemisi Bamgbose is the Immediate Past President of RATTAWU

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK VITAL FOR DIGITAL MIGRATION

Managing Director, MultiChoice Nigeria, Mr. John Ugbe, has said Nigeria needs regulatory and legal framework as well as a buy-in from all stakeholders to make a successful transition from analogue switch off.

Ugbe stated this in a keynote address delivered at the third Digital Migration Summit, in Lagos. It was organised by Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON).

While noting that the country is a late starter on the migration journey, Ugbe said it can learn from the experiences of countries that have achieved digital migration and avoid the mistakes from previous exercises.

"Using the United Kingdom, Kenya and Rwanda as case studies, one common denominator is that they all opted to make Free-to-Air (FTA) cost-free in each country. Another key lesson learnt is that they all had adequate regulatory and legal framework in place and ensured that there was buy-in from all stakeholders. Everyone had a role to play – from making Set Top Boxes (STBs) affordable and partnering the private sector which brought in investment," he said.

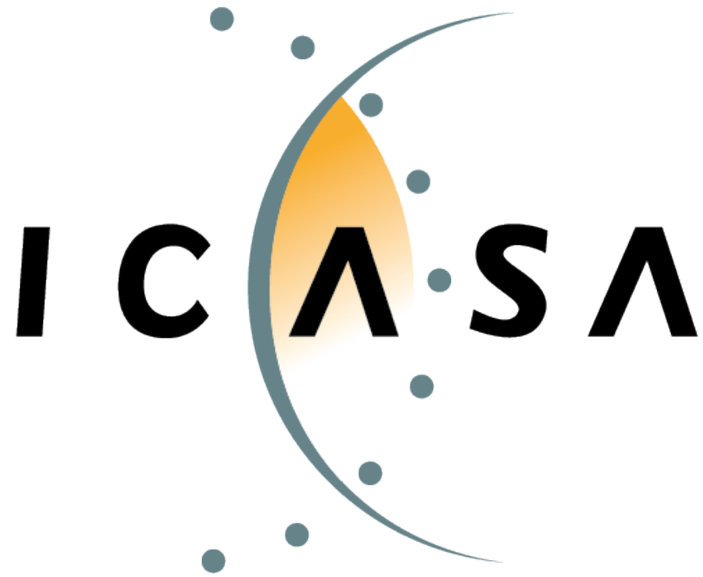
Digitisation, he explained, will ensure better transmission quality and make more channels available. As a result, there will be a need for compelling content.

"It is crucial to make content as engaging as possible, otherwise we will lose our audience. Compelling content is expensive to achieve as it affects cost of equipment, production and distribution, to mention a few," he added.

Along with digital migration, he further explained, will come a more effective use of spectrum, with a move from one analogue channel per frequency to over 20.

While noting that digital migration offers many benefits, Ugbe said it is also accompanied by challenges.

"That there will be more channels also means that the already limited advertising revenue will shrink further. Additionally, segment boundaries will blur. The internet already enables anyone to create and distribute user generated content. There is tremendous diversification going on and this will continue in the foreseeable future," he said.To get around the challenges, Ugbe called for light- touch regulations that will ensure lower costs for operators.



ICASA MOVES TO BREAK INDUSTRY MONOPOLY

An Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) document released recently has raised inquiry into pay tv broadcasting and proposed to restrict among others, Multichoice monopoly of premium sports content.

ICASA is proposing a major intervention to redress recurring competition issues in the sector, by imposing licensing conditions it says will "make the market more competitive".

These include shortening exclusive contracts, unbundling and splitting rights and set-top box interoperability.

ICASA cited the 2010 imposition of "must-offer rules" on Sky Sports channels in the UK, as a feasible option it was considering, as well as insistence on the opening of distribution by Multichoice to other pay-tv operators.

Submissions to the ICASA discussion document is expected to close by the end of October after which the findings will be published

Soon after his appointment earlier in the year, the CEO of ICASA, Pakamile Pongwana lamented the tight grip MultiChoice had on premium content in South Africa which made impossible for other subscription TV services to enter the market.

He was quoted as saying, "twice now we have tried to allocate subscription TV and every time we have hit a brick wall".

He didn't mince words expressing determination to at least regulate premium content adding that this was holding up the launch of competitive subscription TV offerings in South Africa.

Hitting back at these earlier statements, Koos Bekker CEO of Naspers, a Multichoice affiliate, said that it was ridiculous to consider doing away with exclusive rights on sports broadcasting.

He explained that in the case of the local Premier Soccer League, MultiChoice/Naspers pay for everything. "We pay for every player and the lights at the stadium and…the back room, we pay all the bills."

Bekker said that the reason they can pay the bill is because they have exclusive rights to the content.

The current move by ICASA to end Multichoice dominance of the pay-tv sector is being watched closely by other African broadcast regulators particularly in Nigeria, where similar concerns about Multichoice monopoly have been topical.

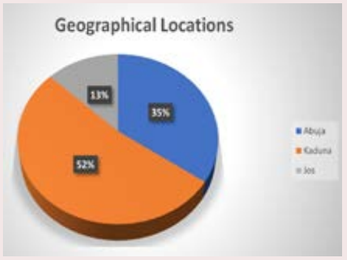
It, however, remains to be seen whether this development in South Africa would spur action that would affect Multichoice operations elsewhere in Africa.

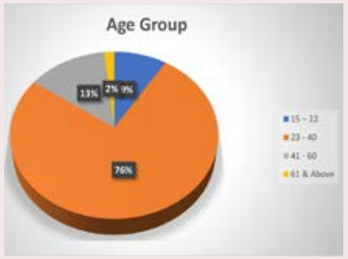
TOP 5 CHANNELS SURVEY

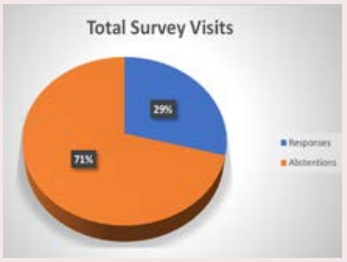
Based on a survey carried out between August 1st and September 26th involving1171 People, 345 responding and 826 abstentions. TVC news with 114 votes had a tie with Channels TV 114, Nolly Africa 86, Trybe Tv 71 and AIT 69 to emerge tops.

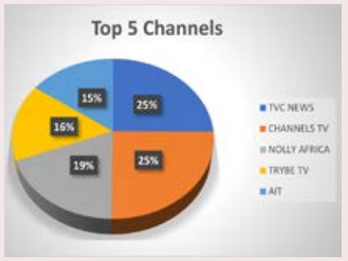
Abuja, Kaduna and Jos were used as survey zones with the Federal Capital Territory accounting for 118 (37%) votes, Kaduna 179 (51.88%) votes and Jos 44 (12.75%) votes.

Interestingly, people from age groups of 15-22 accounted for 8.97 %, ages 23-40 (75.75 %), ages 41-60 (13.26%) and people 61 years and above accounting for 1.66% of total votes.









FREETV CHANNELS	VOTES
TVC NEWS	114
CHANNELS TV	114
NOLLY AFRICA	86
TRYBE TV	71
AIT	69
AFRICAN MOVIES NETWORK	67
NTA NEWS 24	63
1MUSIC	62
KWESE FREE SPORTS	59
LIBERTY TV	56
GALAXY TV	55
TVC ENTERTAINMENT	53
GET TV	50
KENNIS MUSIC	49
CORE TV	49
WAZOBIA TV	45
NTA SPORTS	42
AIT ABUJA	42
AWA TV	41
CNBC AFRICA	35
NTA ABUJA	35
ONXY TV	34
DEXTRITY TV	33
RAVE TV	29
ITV	26
PIDGIN TV	21
PRTV JOS	19
STV JOS	16
NTA JOS	15

TOP 5 CHANNELS

TVC NEWS	CHANNELS	NOLLYAFRICA	trybe	ait
114 VOTES	114 VOTES	86 VOTES	71 VOTES	69 VOTES