New Satellite to Deliver Mobile Video to U.S. Market

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22 April 2008 Â Another milestone has been reached in the implementation of in-vehicle TV. Last week ICO Global Communications successfully launched its North American geosynchronous satellite, named ICO G1.

This is the first deployment of the DVB-SH mobile video standard in the U.S. â€œIt is interesting because DVB-SH is expected to be one of the dominate mobile TV standards, and the one showing the most rapid growth, over the next few yearsâ€•, says Helena Perslow of IMS Research, author of a new study, â€œThe World Market for In-Vehicle TV, Video and Display Technologiesâ€•. In a large and spread-out country such as the U.S., satellite broadcasting may be the key to such mobile video applications as in-car TV.

ICO expects to start its alpha trials later this year and to launch commercially in 2009. Such a service may be an excellent fit for the U.S., where driving and TV-watching both occupy a substantial part of the day for many people (though not at the same time, one hopes). According to Perslowâ€™s report, although in-car broadcast TV til now has not been a significant market in the U.S., such new mobile digital video applications as ICOâ€™s will stimulate tremendous growth in the coming years. â€œBeginning in 2009, sales of in-car satellite TV receivers will almost double in one year and treble over two yearsâ€œ.

ICO plans to serve not only passengers but also drivers, such as with emergency assistance services. But most in-vehicle TV in the U.S. is expected to be delivered to the rear seat. This is a result both of market demand and legislation in many states restricting front-seat video. Interest in rear-seat video to keep the kids (or adults) occupied is still growing, and with new technologies making in-car TV a more viable option, demand is expected to get an extra kick.
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