FastWeb – Stream agreement introduces broadband fibre TV

March 2, 2001. FastWeb, the e.Biscom subsidiary and Aem associated company, has reached a major agreement with Stream S.p.A., the equally owned Telecom Italia and Sky Global Network Inc. venture. The accord, which marks an Italian and worldwide first, provides for a complete television schedule to be broadcast over Internet-enabled fibre to the home (ftth), directly to residents in Milan and the other cities covered by the FastWeb network.

In addition to its current satellite and cable theme channels, Stream will provide a selection of its pay and pay-per-view channels on the FastWeb network. As a result, besides the telephone, Internet, Internet Video and Video on Demand services it already delivers, the FastWeb infrastructure will now also offer users a complete TV schedule.

Stream is expanding rapidly on the pay TV market, where it currently handles approximately 800,000 subscribers and more than 1,300,000 subscriptions, thanks to the success of its offer. A key factor in this growth, in addition to 24-hour live transmission of Grande Fratello, the "programme of the year", and the 157 Champions League soccer matches, is the recent entry into the Stream bouquet of a number of new theme channels (MT Channel and Stream Verde) and new interactive channels such as the TV Mail service for email transmission/reception with the decoder. The company has also bought broadcasting rights for a number of soccer teams, including Naples in the A division, Siena, Ancona, Crotone and Cittadella in the B division and Palermo, Avellino and Benevento in the C division.

Subscribers to the FastWeb-Stream offer will enjoy a host of practical and economic benefits. Once linked to the fibre optic network, they can take out their preferred Stream subscription through FastWeb. To see the programmes, all they need is the FastWeb Web.DVD device, which enables users to play DVDs, surf the Internet via the TV set and, of course, watch television.

"This offer realises the huge potential of the fibre optic network for the integration of television, telephone, interactive video services and high-speed Internet, at 10 megabits per second," commented FastWeb general manager Emanuele Angelidis. "This is a world first for Italy, which we are also exporting to Hamburg in Germany, and we are proud that it is based on the technological competencies of the e.Biscom group. Today, we are finally delivering the convergence of different media – telephone, television and the computer – thanks to a broadband network directly into people's homes."

"Stream is committed to the full integration of TV content and interactivity, as shown by our new tv-mail service and the other services we shall soon be introducing," said Stream communications director Tullio Camiglieri. "So we are particularly pleased with the agreement with FastWeb, which strengthens our role as a service provider across all delivery channels."

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