

Jimi Matthews to head Telkom Media news

Former head of e.tv and SABC TV news, Jimi Matthews, has been appointed by Telkom Media to run its 24-hour news channel, it was announced yesterday, Wednesday, 23 May 2007. Telkom Media is one of 18 applicants for a cable and satellite TV licence, and will be rolling out Internet-based TV, IPTV, in the latter half of 2008.

“Jimi is a news junkie,” says Mandla Ngcobo, CEO of Telkom Media. “He’s been in the trenches for over 20 years – from production to management – and has built a formidable network of news contacts from all over the world. Jimi has an instinct for what makes news, a flair for the visually exciting and isn’t scared to adapt to the latest technologies, the latest being IPTV.”

Ngcobo says Matthews had amassed experience unique to his South African counterparts, working for an international news agency (Reuters), a commercial station (e.tv) and a public broadcaster (SABC). He helped transform the evening news at both e.tv and SABC into the most popular bulletins in the country.

According to Ngcobo, Matthews’ varied experiences – starting a news room from scratch at e.tv, supervising the transition from analogue to digital at ReutersTV South Africa, overseeing all sports production output at SABC – will stand him in good stead at Telkom Media. “Jimi is also known for developing loyal teams with an inclusive management style.”

Matthews sees considerable scope for a pioneering news service in SA. “Our news service is going to be entirely different. It will be interactive and on-demand. Consumers are no longer keen to wait for news in the traditional way – for scheduled TV or radio news bulletins, or their daily newspaper. Our news will be constantly updated, and available through many formats. Through IPTV, viewers will be available to retrieve any news segment they have missed.”

At Reuters, Matthews served as a cameraman, editor and senior producer for South and Central Africa. In 1998, he became the head of e.tv news and three years later, turned the channel’s half-hour news slot into an hour-long broadcast – the first in SA.

Matthews then joined the SABC in 2002 as head of TV news, and in 2005 he moved to become head of Sports Production at the channel.