

TopTV cans two channels

"TopTV regrets the timing of this change to its channel make-up, but due to operational reasons, it has become necessary to prepare for a proposed new channel structure," it said in a statement earlier this week.



TopTV said it was in negotiations with a prospective investor, and that it expected to make details of the deal public in the coming weeks.

In November last year it was reported that the pay-TV platform faced financial difficulty and had gone into business rescue under section 129 of the Companies Act as a "precautionary measure".

According to an article posted on the Channel 24 website, it was felt it could have problems meeting its payment obligations due within six months from then.

It reported that the business rescue plan was intended to "provide a protective bubble around the company and buy it some time to complete the search for a strategic equity partner".

TopTV, which is owned by On Digital Media (ODM), started operating in May 2010, in competition with MultiChoice's pay-TV platform DStv.

Taking the porn route

In March, the Independent Communications Authority of SA (Icasa) heard an application by TopTV to broadcast three channels of pornography - Playboy, Desire, and Private Spice - between 8pm and 5am.

"There is a potential, when the business does come out of its current situation, that adult content will help in the survival of the business. It is a revenue stream," CEO Eddie Mbalo said at the time.

TopTV applied to Icasa in September for permission to flight three, subscription-based porn channels, but went ahead without Icasa's consent when it had received no response after two months.

The High Court in Johannesburg later ruled that it could not broadcast pornography channels without Icasa's permission.

In December 2011, Christian organisations, including the Evangelical Alliance of SA and the Methodist Church of SA, planned a boycott of TopTV, its advertisers and sponsors, after the pornography plan was announced.

Source: Sowetan, via I-Net Bridge

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