

TV for free forever, for real

By  Danette Breitenbach

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We've recently seen the official launch of OpenView HD, the country's first HD satellite television platform that carries no subscription fees.



Platco Digital's OpenView HD kicked off five months ago and currently has 18 channels, which range from entertainment to education, culture and lifestyle and education and children's programmes and religion.

At the launch at Vergelegen Wine Estate in Somerset West late last month, Platco Digital MD, Max Nonge explained that OpenView HD was the first of its kind in South Africa. "The platform, once the decoder has been purchased, is free. This is what we will be focusing on in the coming months as the public is either unaware of this or disbelieving."

The fact is that it is true. Once the consumer has purchased their set top box and satellite dish and paid the installation costs, there is no further cost. "Consumers also think that the service will be free for a few months and then we will charge them. This is not the case at all. It is free, forever."

Everyone's entitled to good-quality TV

Asked why this model was adopted, Nonge said everyone was entitled to good quality content and television.

The launch featured a stop at the Cape Town Film Studios on the N2 where the Platco Digital's uplink facility is situated. The facility downloads the content and monitors all broadcasting. Cape Town was chosen for the facility because of its weather. The technology used is the latest.

At Vergelegen Wine Estate Nonge demonstrated to the media, celebrities and guests just how easy it will be for a consumer to get connected. Once the box and dish are installed the consumer sends an SMS to the company and is then sent instructions and follows them. The consumer is then connected." This technology, Nonge said, is brand new.

The business model is based on partnerships with channels and retailers. "For example, we curate the content, and market it. The channels pay us to be on the platform and we market their content and make sure they are promoted. We also ensure income through advertising and sponsorships. This is our responsibility. We do not produce the top box set. Our partners do that and we have nothing to do with the box so we do not control how much it is sold for."



(Image extracted from the OVHD website)

Simple business model

According to Nonge, the business model is simple, but uses the latest technology while keeping the cost factors low. "In this way it is a sustainable business model that will bring satellite television to ordinary people."

The platform will be marketed actively nationally going forward. "When we launched five months ago we focused on the product. We have realised that we need to educate the consumer about what the product entails not what it is. Therefore, it is not about the coverage and HD but about the content. We will market the content through various platforms such as print and out of home."

The service has coverage across the country and will be looking to expand its coverage into Africa. "As the service grows it will add more channels, and this will still be at no cost to the consumer. By the end of June, we aim to have 26 to 27 channels. We are also adding radio stations to our offering," says Nonge.

Present at the launch on Sunday were OpenView HD personalities ASTV's Dokter My Jacques Botes, V-Jay Ntombi Ngcobo from Gumba Gumba, Katch it with Khanyi's talk show host Khanyi Mbau, Bonnie Mbuli and Bongo Mbutuma, representing the new police drama Traffic! and Faizal Sayed of The Faizal Sayed show on Deen TV.

Lunch was cooked up by Chef Katlego Mlambo, a rising star on South Africa's culinary landscape and host of Kasi-licious cooking show on eKasi.

OpenView HD channels:

Entertainment	Culture and Lifestyle	Children and Education	Religion
SABC 1 SABC 2 SABC 3 e.tv <u>eKasi</u> + <u>eAfrica</u> + <u>eMovies</u> + Glow TV Eku rhuleni TV	ASTV Deen TV Bi-Cars	<u>e.toonz</u> + Mindset TV Da Vinci Learning	Spirit Word Ministries Inspira tion TV <u>etworkTV</u> <u>UCBN</u>

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Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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