

NorDig – Migration to a common digital platform

1. Introduction

Nordic television companies, programme distributors and network operators seek, according to the Odense declaration, to formulate and follow a common strategy leading to the full introduction of digital television in the Nordic countries. The overall goals are threefold: to make the transition from analogue to digital television reception as simple as possible for Nordic viewers, to avoid and eliminate technical hindrances which might block viewers' access to the various programme companies' output, and to make the transitional period with parallel analogue and digital transmissions as short as possible.

The NorDig Members agree that IRDs are required for various levels of functionality, covering the various needs of consumers. These levels of functionality are expressed in the NorDig specifications as profiles; **NorDig Basic** for services that do not require enhancement by applications or interaction, **NorDig Enhanced** for enhanced services that do not require an interaction channel, **NorDig Interactive** for interactive services that require an interaction channel and **NorDig Internet Access** for services that also require standardised Internet access. The various profiles are supersets of the preceding, starting with NorDig Basic. They include the corresponding DVB-MHP profiles for Enhanced, Interactive and Internet Access Profiles. The NorDig profiles also include the NorDig I profile without requirements for a standard API and without a mandatory interaction channel.

The NorDig standardisation work is based on approved European and international standards. NorDig recognises that the DVB MHP standard (DVB-MHP 1.0) has been approved as a European standard (ETSI TS 101812) and further upgraded (DVB-MHP 1.1, ETSI TS 102812).

In March 2002 a new set of Directives regulating the telecom markets entered into force in the EU. It includes *Directive 2002/21/EC on a Common Regulatory Framework for Electronic Networks and Services*, which has direct relevance for digital television. Member States are now to implement this by July 2003.

According to article 17 on standardisation and article 18 on interoperability of digital television services, Member States shall encourage the use of an open API and the use of standards from a set list that the Commission is to publish shortly. This list will include the DVB-MHP standard for interactive digital television. The Commission will examine digital television markets in Member States in July 2004, and can, if interoperability has not been satisfactorily achieved, propose a compulsory standard. Preamble 31 in the Framework Directive explicitly encourages the use of Memoranda of Understanding between market players to achieve migration from existing APIs to new open APIs.

2. Objectives

In order to achieve and comply with;

- the goals set by NorDig,
- the decisions taken by EU and the process now taking place in the EU/EEA
- the goals expressed by the NorDig members concerning the implementation of an open API

the members of NorDig agree to act in accordance with the following NorDig Plan.

The members consider the Plan to be an essential expression of the ideas behind the NorDig cooperation and consequently consider compliance vital for NorDig membership.

The NorDig members see an open horizontal market for IRDs as essential for the development of digital TV. The Plan shall support and secure that development.

The Plan should be seen as setting the basic principles for the establishment of digital platforms, giving a set of common requirements with a set of common standards as well as provisions for the migration of existing enhanced and interactive services and platforms to a common standard which include DVB MHP for enhanced and interactive services.

The Plan is a commitment by the members also towards viewers and others. Therefore the plan is a statement of intentions of the members and is not a legally binding agreement among members. The compliance with the plan, however, is a prerequisite for the membership in NorDig. The members of NorDig may, when appropriate, include the NorDig Plan, as such, rephrased or more specified in detail, in legally binding agreements. Such agreements shall not bind or give any basis for liability of any other member.

The NorDig Broadcasters will, in order to make programmes available for transmission, only enter into negotiations concerning new, or renewal of, bilateral agreements with network operators and programme distributors that will comply with the plan. Such negotiations shall take place on a non-discriminatory basis.

Broadcasters will, in accordance with their bilateral agreements with network operators and programme distributors, present their long term plans for the introduction of interactive services. This will be done annually, starting 4Q2002.

The NorDig members shall strive towards an open horizontal market for IRDs and that IRDs connected to networks controlled by NorDig members comply with the common minimum requirements. Members may (also) subsidise IRDs or provide IRDs for rent to consumers. IRDs shall not be blocked against reception from other distributors platforms or transmissions.

3. Harmonisation of transmissions

- (a) All transmissions shall comply with NorDig “rules of operation”.
- (b) The NorDig Broadcasters, programme distributors and network operators will contribute to the fulfilment of the plan by providing and supporting applications in MHP format.
- (c) NorDig Broadcasters will provide all new and existing applications in MHP-format, when NorDig Enhanced or NorDig Interactive compliant receivers are launched on the national retail market or provided on the rental market by network operators or others. Broadcasters can simultaneously continue using a legacy API-format according to agreements between broadcaster, programme distributor and network operator.
- (d) Network operators and programme distributors providing general services, like EPG/TV-Guide etc. will publish plans for their use of the MHP format when IRDs that at least comply with the requirements for the NorDig Enhanced profile become available.
- (e) When broadcasters present in the network provide significant applications (e.g. Super Teletext) in MHP format, the network operators and programme distributors shall carry these applications in their networks in accordance with legislation and/or agreements.
- (f) Network operators or programme distributors starting digital operations after 1 January 2003 shall offer interactive services based on MHP only and shall ensure that broadcasters can distribute such services through their networks.
- (g) Network operators and programme distributors may, when allowed by broadcasters, convert applications originally made in MHP into applications that may be received by existing legacy IRDs.

4. Harmonisation of IRDs

The harmonisation covers two aspects:

- Standardisation of minimum hardware requirements,
 - Standardisation of minimum software requirements,
- mainly through specification of NorDig IRDs and selection of MHP as the common NorDig API. The NorDig minimum requirements do not prevent additional functionality.

4.1 NorDig IRDs for the retail market

- (a) Each network operator or programme distributor shall only recommend and support the sale of NorDig compliant IRDs to be used in their networks. The support of existing deployed IRDs may be continued.
- (b) Each network operator or programme distributor shall only recommend and support the sale of IRDs that at least comply with the IRD requirements for the NorDig Enhanced profile for use in their networks for *enhanced and interactive* services under the following conditions; Verified NorDig Interactive IRDs have been available from at least two

manufacturers for a period of at least 6 months, and more than one broadcaster in the network have started significant applications (e.g. Super Teletext) in MHP-format.

- (c) Each network operator or program distributor starting their operations after 1 January 2003 shall, for *enhanced and interactive* services, only recommend and support IRDs that at least comply with the requirements for the NorDig enhanced profile.

4.2 New rented and subsidised IRDs shall be NorDig compliant

- (a) All new IRDs procured or subsidised by NorDig members, for rent or subsidised sale to the public, shall comply with one or more profile of the NorDig specifications. The support of existing deployed IRDs may be continued.
- (b) All decoders providing *enhanced or interactive services* that are procured or subsidised by NorDig members, for rent or for subsidised sale to the public, shall at least comply with requirements for the NorDig Enhanced profile, under the following conditions; Verified NorDig Interactive IRDs have been available from at least two manufacturers for a period of at least 6 months, and more than one broadcaster in the network provide significant applications (e.g. Super Teletext) in MHP-format.
- (c) Each network operator or program distributor starting their operations after 1 January 2003 shall, for *enhanced or interactive* services, only procure or subsidise IRDs that at least comply with requirements for the NorDig Enhanced profile.

4.3 Active promotion to the trade and consumers.

- (a) NorDig members shall actively and exclusively promote IRDs in compliance with the NorDig specifications.
- (b) When verified NorDig Interactive IRDs have been available from at least two manufacturers for a period of 6 months all NorDig Members shall, for *enhanced and interactive services*, only promote IRDs that at least comply with the requirements for the NorDig Enhanced profile.
- (c) All IRDs that pass a NorDig verification test are entitled to wear the NorDig logo.
- (d) The availability of NorDig compliant IRDs shall be communicated to the trade and consumers.
- (e) All NorDig specifications and migration plans shall be published on the NorDig website.

5. Conditional Access

CA-modules and smart cards shall be made available by network operators (CA / SMS operators), without discrimination, for IRDs that comply with NorDig specifications.

6. Procedures for modification of the plan

If major changes occur, or major deviations occur in the basic assumptions for the plan, NorDig shall review the new situation and shall modify the plan or specify a new plan.

Any modification to the migration plan shall be agreed within the NorDig Steering Board.