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## Affordable service with D'Channels by Chandra Devi

When third-generation (3G) came into the picture, mobile operators have been excited about the possibility of rolling out mobile TV services to capture a bigger number of subscribers and increase revenue stream. But in reality, the high cost of 3G handsets and access fees for mobile TV services have become impediments for large-scale adoption.

And most phone users are not even on 3G — many are general packet radio service (GPRS) or enhanced data rates for global evolution (EDGE) users.

As such, it will be compelling for telecommunications companies to provide mobile TV services through these networks. And if they can offer such services at competitive and flexible rates, it will give them a better edge to grow their subscriber base.

For now, no other telco seem to understand this better than DiGi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd, a non-3G player. With its revamped MobileTV service - D'Channels - the company has found a way to stay ahead of competitors with 3G services.

DiGi has enhanced its mobile TV offerings with the addition of seven new channels. D'Channels can be accessed via any GPRS or EDGE-enabled mobile phone with streaming capability.

The updated MobileTV service features live video streaming content of entertainment, news, programmes and information updates.

Commercially available since Sept 15, the seven channels DiGi Sports, DiGi News, DiGiToons, DiGi Music, SCTV, Jia Yu and FashionTV - are offered at RM14.90 per month.

This aside, D'Channels features a host of video-on-demand content - pre-recorded one-minute clips of news and entertainment updates starting at RM4.90.

Accessed through DiGi's wireless application protocol (WAP) portal, subscribers can view the seven channels' programmes in Bahasa Melayu, English and Mandarin.

To subscribe to D'Channels, customers can choose to use DiGi's Online Customer Service, WAP portal or short message service (SMS) interface.

DiGi's head of product management, marketing division Albern Murty says the MobileTV service is currently one of most affordable and flexible in the market. In its previous MobileTV offering, subscribers were also charged RM14.90, but for only two local channels plus live traffic report.

According to him, these offerings are still available with the new channel package.

Murty says the best part about D'Channels is that customers have the flexibility to choose any number of channels from one, three, five or the full package of seven from as low as RM6 per month. Subscription to five channels costs RM10 per month and three channels at RM8 per month.

Subscribers are also able to select between live content and prerecorded video-on-demand content.

For video-on-demand content, an option is available for customers to view the content for an unlimited number of times within the week. A pay-per-view option is also available for those who want to view specific content on a one-time basis.

"We are now offer a more creative bundling and niche offerings for different user groups. Aside from the flexible packaging, our new service brings more local content and 24-hour service," Murthy highlights.

DiGi's head of value-added services, product management, marketing division Noelle Tan says revamped MobileTV service offers both international and local content.

"DiGi's News brings 24-hour Reuters coverage of local and global-breaking news, DiGi Music offers 24-hour music featuring international, Asian and local chart-topping hits, DiGi Sports has 24-hour sports news and tournament coverage, and DiGi Toons covers 24-hour kiddie channels featuring children's programmes (and) include works by local animators such as Kiddo and Big Shot.

"As for the FashionTV, it brings 24-hour coverage of American and European couture. Jia Yu is for the Chinese market with programmes from China and Hong Kong.

"As for SCTV, with Indonesian news, drama, music and sports programmes, it will appeal to Malay subscribers," she says. The content, Tan adds, is refreshed three times daily to give customers new programmes and will be reviewed regularly based on customer choice and feedback. D'Channles is developed in partnership with Qtelmedia (M) Sdn Bhd.

D'Channles was launched at the Asean Communications Expo and Forum 2006/MyICMS 886 last week. For more details, visit <http://www.digi.com.my>