

## Speakers

### Robert Chua, Founder and Chairman of The Interactive Channel



Robert Chua, widely acknowledged to be one of the pioneers of Asian television, is founder of The Interactive Channel, a 24/7 cable channel in Hong Kong that is notable for its cross-media approach to interactive TV and for the degree to which it allows viewers to participate in its programming. Chua first came to prominence in 1967, when he helped start Hong Kong's first terrestrial TV station, Television Broadcasts Ltd. (TVB), and created the show, "Enjoy Yourself Tonight," which was not only the first program broadcast live in Hong Kong, but eventually became Asia's longest running variety show. In 1974, he started his own production company, Robert Chua Production House (RCP), which in 1979 became the first foreign TV production and advertising company to enter the mainland China market, and which in 1984 became the first company to distribute foreign television programs in mainland China. In 1994, he founded China Entertainment Television Broadcast (CETV), a Chinese-language family entertainment channel which is transmitted via satellite to 33 million households in China and the rest of Asia. He sold his stake in the channel to Time Warner in 2003, in order to focus his efforts on The Interactive Channel, which launched last December. In 2001, he was appointed to the Board of Governors of Canada's Banff Television Festival; in 2004 he was appointed to the Advisory Board of the Rose d'Or TV Festival in Switzerland; and in 2005 he was appointed as a board member of the National Association of Television Programming Executives (NATPE). (Note: for an in-depth interview with Chua, see [itvt] Issue 5.95.)

Mark Hess, Senior Vice President of Digital Television, Comcast Cable



Cable industry veteran, Mark Hess, is senior vice president of digital television at Comcast Cable. He is responsible for the development and deployment of new and enhanced video products and services, including VOD, PVR/DVR, and interactive TV. He joined the company in 1999 as

VP of digital television, and was promoted to his current position last year. Prior to joining Comcast, he worked at Sega, helping to launch its subscription-based games service, the Sega Channel. Prior to that, he was director of new product development at TCI, a role that saw him closely involved in the early development of digital television. He joined TCI in 1982, and served in a variety of positions, including a stint as VP and state manager, with responsibility for all TCI systems in New York. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and English from Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina.

Scott Higgins, Director of Interactive Programming, EchoStar



Scott Higgins oversees EchoStar's ITV programming group, which is responsible for designing, managing and marketing interactive TV channels on the company's DISH Network satellite TV service. Under his leadership, the group has launched 26 ITV services, including news, sports, entertainment, lifestyle, games and customer support applications. The services are available to over 10 million households. Prior to joining EchoStar, Higgins worked at OpenTV, where he was responsible for development processes including design, licensing content data and delivery of interactive programming in the US. Prior to that, he was an executive in charge of production at Electronic Arts, overseeing the company's interactive properties, NCAA Football, Jane's military simulations, the Strike series, Future Cop and Fantasy Sports. Prior to joining Electronic Arts, he spent stints at the Family Channel and MTM Entertainment, working on a variety of well-known TV shows, including Hill Street Blues, Evening Shade, and St. Elsewhere. He holds an undergraduate degree from Clemson University (where he was a member of the 1979 Gator Bowl Championship team) and an MBA from Pepperdine University.

Ryan O'Hara, President of TVG Network



Interactive TV industry veteran, Ryan O'Hara, is president of TVG Network, the Gemstar-TV Guide-owned horseracing channel that recently launched an interactive TV information and wagering service on EchoStar's

DISH Network (see [itvt] Issue 5.90 Part 3). Prior to joining TVG in February, 2004, O'Hara spent two years as SVP of business development and strategic planning at Gemstar-TV Guide. Prior to that, he was director of interactive TV strategy and development for BSkyB: among other things, he was responsible for integrating Open..., a 400-person company which BSkyB purchased in June, 2000, and which became the core of the company's ITV operations. He also worked with a number of broadcasters (e.g. MTV, Sky Sports and Disney) and technology companies (e.g. NDS, OpenTV and Astra) to build out BSkyB's ITV offering, and managed the launch and marketing of a number of the company's ITV products, including some of its betting applications. Prior to his stint at BSkyB, O'Hara held senior management roles at Fox Cable Networks, Fox/Liberty Networks, Nestle, and PricewaterhouseCoopers. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Stanford University and a Masters of Business Administration from the Harvard Business School. (Note: for an in-depth interview with O'Hara, see [itvt] Issue 5.36 Part 1.)  
(continued below...)



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## **Presenters**

### **Patrick Donoghue, Vice President of ITV Development and Operations, Digital Product Group, Cablevision**



Patrick Donoghue, recipient of a 2004 [itvt] Award for Leadership in Interactive Television, has been working in interactive television for over a decade. He started his ITV career in 1993, as a member of the team behind the AT&T/Viacom Castro Valley Project, designing and building the system user interface and working prototypes of ITV applications for MTV and Showtime. In 1998, he co-founded an interactive entertainment company, Big Band Media, with the goal of conceptualizing and developing ITV and broadband content. Its clients included CBS, Showtime Networks, HBO Studios, and Young & Rubicam. In 2000, he worked as a consultant creative director and user interface producer for WatchPoint Media's interactive MPEG2 technology. During this time, he developed ITV services for Showtime Networks to run on the WebTV, Liberate, and AOLTV platforms. His work with the Sesame Street Workshop was presented at the NAB's 2000 conference during the keynote, "Enhanced TV and Interactivity: Driving the Future of Television." From 2001, Donoghue has been at Cablevision, where he has been instrumental in the conception and development of the ITV components of the MSO's Emmy Award-winning digital platform, Interactive Optimum (iO). iO features multiple channels of ITV content from providers such as ESPN, MSG, IFC,

Hollywood.com, Zodiac Gaming and Zone4Play, and was the first US digital cable service to offer set-top box-based gaming. While at Cablevision, Donoghue also helped design and implement the first application deployed by an MSO to allow on-screen upgrades of digital cable offerings.

Vincent Dureau, Chief Technology Officer, OpenTV



Vincent Dureau, recipient of a 2004 [itvt] Award for Leadership in Interactive Television, began his career in 1984 in the research department of Paris-based TV technology giant, Thomson, and subsequently moved to Los Angeles to head up that company's research-and-development efforts in the US. In the early 1990's, he was one of a small group of people who started a Thomson subsidiary that would eventually become OpenTV. He emerged as the driving force behind the development of OpenTV's middleware, being responsible, among other things, for assembling the company's widely respected engineering team (note: many of the members of the team Dureau assembled in the early 1990's are still with OpenTV today, which in itself is a testament to his leadership): the company secured its first large customer, TPS, in 1996, and secured BSkyB as a customer in 1997. Among Dureau's many contributions to the digital television industry in general are his work at Thomson in the early 1990's on video compression and on the development of the first digital satellite-TV system, DirecTV.

Alison Green, Vice President of Programming and Content, Bell ExpressVu



Interactive TV industry veteran, Alison Green, recently joined Canada's largest satellite TV company, Bell ExpressVu (currently has around 1.5 million DTH subscribers), as vice president of programming and content. As well as overseeing programming--including enhanced TV programming--on Bell ExpressVu's satellite TV platform, Green is responsible for programming the company's VDSL service which targets MDU buildings, and for programming Wireline, the interactive IPTV service which the company plans to roll out early next year over Microsoft TV's IPTV Edition platform, and which will have a potential reach of 4

million. Her background includes stints working in multiple areas of the entertainment industry (the record business, film, intellectual property law, cable, satellite, computer games, and EPG development) in the US, Canada and France.

Rick Mandler, Vice President and General Manager, ABC Enhanced TV



Rick Mandler, recipient of a 2004 [itvt] Award for Leadership in Interactive Television, has built up an impressive track record of achievement since taking charge of ABC's interactive TV efforts in 2001. During his tenure, ABC has led the "big four" US terrestrial broadcast networks in rolling out interactive TV, enhancing high-profile programs with interactive applications for a variety of platforms, including set-top boxes, Internet-connected PC's, and SMS-enabled mobile phones. Notable applications produced under Mandler's leadership include those that have accompanied ABC's coverage of the Academy Awards and the Daytime Emmy's for the past few years, as well as multiple seasons of the popular show, Monday Night Football. As a result of his efforts, his group's work has received wide recognition from the television industry at large, and has been nominated twice for an Emmy Award. Among other contributions, Mandler has been a strong supporter of the American Film Institute's influential Enhanced TV Workshop/Digital Content Lab (in 2003, he led the team that developed the "Celebrity Mole II" ITV prototype, the first prototype from the Workshop to see actual deployment, and the first deployed ITV application on the Windows Media Center platform), and has helped evangelize ITV by speaking at numerous conferences and other industry events.

Tim Hanlon, Senior Vice President/Director of Emerging Contacts, Publicis Groupe Media Ventures



For the past few years, Tim Hanlon, recipient of a 2004 [itvt] Award for Leadership in Interactive Television, has been leading efforts to introduce the advertising community to interactive television. As senior vice president/director of emerging contacts for Publicis Groupe Media Ventures, he is responsible for all the agency's client activity and initiatives

in emerging media, and heads up its "TV 2.0" practice, which is designed to help clients understand and take advantage of new TV technologies-- including interactive TV, EPG's and addressable advertising, as well as technologies such as PVR and VOD that are often seen as a threat to TV advertising. Under Hanlon's leadership, the TV 2.0 practice has matched a roster of blue-chip advertisers that includes Allstate, Best Buy, Discover Card, Kellogg, Kraft, Nintendo, General Motors, Procter & Gamble, Sara Lee/Hanes, Walt Disney World and others with 1) VOD content providers and system operators, such as Scripps Networks, ESPN, Turner, Cox, Comcast and Time Warner Cable; 2) interactive TV platforms such as OpenTV, MSN TV, Navic, GoldPocket, and Disney-ABC Enhanced TV; and 3) the TiVo DVR platform. The practice has also carried out significant work in areas such as measurement and business modeling of non-linear TV advertising. In addition to his work at Publicis, Hanlon serves as chairman of the American Association of Advertising Agencies' (AAAA) Advanced Television Committee, in which role he has led the organization's efforts to develop standards for measuring non-linear TV advertising. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Innovation in Digital Advertising (IDiA) consortium, and a member of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' (NATAS) Advanced Media Committee. He holds a BA from Georgetown University, an MBA from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, and an MA from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California.

Lindsay Gardner, Executive Vice President of Affiliate Sales and Marketing, Fox Cable Networks



Lindsay Gardner has been executive vice president of affiliate sales and marketing at Fox Cable Networks since 1999. As well as leading distribution efforts for Fox's FX, FSN, National Geographic, Speed, Fox Movie, Fox Soccer, Fox College Sports, Fox Sports en Espanol, Fuel and Fox Reality channels, he oversees distribution methods and strategies for new channels and technologies, including interactive TV, tcommerce and non-theatrical VOD. Prior to joining Fox Cable Networks, Gardner was executive director of programming investments at Cox Communications, where he led investment initiatives in US and international channels. He

earned his undergraduate degree from Brandeis University, and his MBA from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

Dale Herigstad, Executive Creative Director, Schematic



Dale Herigstad, recipient of a 2004 [itvt] Award for Leadership in Interactive Television and of three Emmy Awards, has been called by some "the first ITV artist." During his 13-year career in interactive TV, he has led the user-experience and interface design of a number of pioneering projects, including Time Warner Cable's Full Service Network (FSN), TCI's First Screen project, Go2Net's TV implementation, and IXL's MoreTV. More recently, he has worked on ITV projects for Comcast and Cablevision (among other things, he redesigned the user interface of Cablevision's iO digital cable service). He has also been very active in the American Film Institute's Enhanced TV Workshop (now known as the Digital Content Lab), producing ITV prototypes for the Turner Classic Movies Channel, and the shows Arli\$\$, Battlestar Galactica, and Queer Eye for the Straight Guy. At Schematic, the design firm he co-founded in November, 2002 with Richard Titus and Paul Taormino (note: the company last year merged with The Content Project, to form one of the largest interactive agencies in the US: the merged entity retains the name "Schematic"), Herigstad has led development of ITV applications for CSI, Survivor Africa, Life360, Bravo, Discovery, and other programs and channels. Throughout his career, his goal has been to transform ITV into a "rich," highly visual medium, consistent with the traditional TV experience: as part of a project conducted at Sony's research division in San Jose, he pioneered new television interfaces that utilize spatial navigation and real-time composition. He has also conducted pioneering design work around the ongoing extension of television to devices such as mobile phones. He serves on the board of the Interactive Television Alliance.

(continued below...)







## **Judges**

**Bob Crawford, Senior Director of Broadcast Operations and Interactive TV, MTV**

**David Docherty, CEO, YooMedia**

**Allison Dollar, CEO, Interactive Television Alliance**

**Patrick Donoghue, VP of ITV Development and Operations, Digital Product Group, Cablevision**

**Cara Familet, Director of Interactive Television, Bloomberg**

**Daren Forsyth, Managing Director, Fernhart New Media**

**Jean de Fougerolles, CEO, Two Way TV**

**Joe Franzetta, SVP of Business Development, GoldPocket Interactive**

**Richard Fyffe, General Manager of Interactive TV, MultiChoice (South Africa)**

**Marc Goodchild, Executive Producer, BBC**

**Alison Green, VP of Programming and Content, Bell ExpressVu**

**Simon Gunning, Head of Interactive Media, Celador International**

**Mark Hess, SVP of Digital Television, Comcast**

**Sinead Hughes, Interactive Editor, The Community Channel**

**Mike Ivanchenko, SVP and Managing Director for the Asia-Pacific Region, OpenTV**

**Rebecca Lim, Senior Director of Advanced Services, Starz Entertainment Group**

**Rick Mandler, Vice President and General Manager, ABC Enhanced TV**

**Ben Mendelson, President, Interactive Television Alliance**

**Chris Moreton, CEO, Press Red**

**David Preisman, Director of Interactive Television, Showtime**

**Vibha Rustagi, Co-Founder and CEO, itaas**

**Peter Schultz, Director of Solutions Marketing, ICTV**

**Seth Shapiro, Director of ITV/DVR Production Advanced Services and Content, DirecTV**

**Bill Sheppard, Industry Marketing Manager for Digital Television, Sun Microsystems**

**Emma Somerville, Head of Interactive TV Programming, BBC**

**Mark Strong, Senior Manager for Interactive TV, Foxtel**

**Doug Sylvester, Chief Operating Officer, TVN Entertainment**

**William Van Rest, Head of Channels, The Optimistic Network**

**Richard Titus, President, Schematic**

**Nigel Walley, Managing Director, iBurbia**

**Marcia Zellers, Director, American Film Institute Digital Content Lab**

### **Demonstrations**

A number of companies will be showcasing their interactive products and services at the awards event. They include:

- Alticast, which will be demo'ing OCAP applications it has developed for Korean cable operator, CJ CableNet (the first operator to deploy OCAP) and others.
- AgileTV, which will be demo'ing its Promptu technology. The technology allows cable subscribers to give voice commands to their EPG by pressing a "talk" button on a special microphone-equipped remote control.
- DFILM, which will be demo'ing its MovieMaker technology. The technology lets users create a short animated cartoon on a Web site and email it to their friends.
- SMS Media Network (Alphabit), which will be demo'ing what it describes as new interactive concepts that blend the Internet, mobile devices and TV into new forms of rich media.



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## ABOUT [itvt]

\*Founded by Tracy Swedlow in November 1997

\*Began Publishing June 1998

\*Read in over 100 countries

\*Demographics are provided upon request from qualified persons

[itvt] is an ITV/broadband advisory and media company which identifies new trends, business opportunities, and relationships within the interactive television broadband space. [itvt] offers professional services, products, and programs to clients. These include our free email newsletter, focused analysis and advice sessions, in-depth research reports, a B2B portal Web site, networking and workshop events, dynamic online discussion groups, and interactive database resources.

Today, more than ever before, [itvt] believes it is imperative to develop dynamic, flexible, and robust interactiveTV platforms that allow us to learn from and talk about our world and the cultures in it in a free, constructive, and proactive manner.

### MISSION

1. to report the latest business developments and technologies
2. to feature the companies and people building the marketplace
3. to investigate new content and tcommerce projects
4. to provide contextual and critical analysis on all of the above

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<http://www.itvt.com>

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If you would like to submit something for review or want to send a press release, please contact us. We prefer FedX packages, UPS, or email releases. Phone is okay to follow up.

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## The 2nd Annual [itvt] Awards for Leadership in Interactive Television

- Keynote Speakers
- Recipients of the 2004/2005 Awards
- ITV All-Star Award Recipients
- Tracy Swedlow's Opening Address
- The Judges
- Special Thanks



**On the evening of Tuesday, April 5th, just after the closing general session of the National Cable & Telecommunications Association's (NCTA) National Show, [itvt] teamed once again with the NCTA to produce the 2nd Annual Awards for Leadership in Interactive Television at San Francisco's Moscone Center. Anywhere between 300 and 500 people attended the event, which was preceded by a cocktail reception in the modernist environs of the Moscone West building, overlooking the San Francisco skyline.** Live music was provided by flamenco guitarist, Jorge Licieaga, and attendees enjoyed a variety of locally produced artisanal food and drink, such as Anchor Steam beer and Louis J. Martini wine. Demonstrations of the latest interactive technologies were presented by Alticast, AgileTV, Dfilm and SMS Media Network (Alphabit). After 45 minutes or so of networking and socializing, attendees moved to the room where the awards ceremony was to be held, which was decorated with modern TV light box sculptures from noted local artist, Steve Boverie. The ceremony began with the showing of a short video showcasing some of the best interactive TV applications and programming of the past year from around the world. [itvt]'s founder and editor-in-chief,

Tracy Swedlow, then gave a short introductory address (see below), and

the event's keynote speeches and award presentations began: 

awards were presented to five individuals who have demonstrated leadership in the interactive TV industry over the past year, and to two "ITV All-Stars," recognized for their long-term track record of leadership in the ITV industry. The recipients of the awards were selected by an international panel of 28 expert judges from nominations submitted by [itvt]'s readership. Of course, we were not able to recognize many other very deserving individuals who have contributed greatly to the interactive television medium, but we hope to see these people honored with ITV Leadership Awards in the coming years.

The awards ceremony featured music composed by prominent local musician, Nik Phelps (who, among other things, has recorded with Tom Waits), and played by a band, Sprocket Ensemble, that features some of the Bay Area's best jazz talent.

### **Keynote Speakers**

#### **Robert Chua, Founder and Chairman of The Interactive Channel**



Robert Chua, one of the pioneers of Asian television (among other achievements, he helped found Hong Kong's first terrestrial television station, Television Broadcasts Ltd.; developed Asia's longest-running variety show, "Enjoy Yourself Tonight"; started his own production company, Robert Chua Production House, which in 1979 became the first foreign TV production and advertising company to enter the mainland China market, and which in 1984 became the first company to distribute foreign television programs in mainland China; and founded a Chinese-language family entertainment channel, China Entertainment Television Broadcast--CETV--which is transmitted via satellite to 33 million households in China and the rest of Asia, and which was sold to Time Warner in 2003), recalled how he had promised his wife, when he sold CETV, that he would "semi-retire," but in fact was soon "working harder than ever" developing plans for a new channel. In order to differentiate the new channel from the hundred or so other channels available in Hong Kong, he explained, he decided that it should be a "cross-media interactive channel" that would "bring together TV, Internet and mobile." The Interactive Channel (TIC), as the new channel was called, would "allow

viewers to interact using the Internet and mobile SMS, without the need for a set-top box; allow viewers to use SMS to play games on the TV or give feedback on TV shows, and allow viewers to appear on TV using Webcam, video phone or 3G phones." Chua played video clips of the new channel (which launched last December), explaining how the screen could be divided into up to six sub-screens: a feed from the studio, a chatroom, a feed from a viewer Webcam, video phone or 3G phone, a live vote, and dynamic banner ads. He concluded by explaining how the channel is designed to generate revenue not only from advertising, but from SMS charges and from "play points" which viewers can purchase on the Internet in order to interact with the channel. In thanking Chua for his presentation, [itvt]'s Tracy Swedlow noted that she knows of no other channel whose content is so completely driven by its audience.

**Mark Hess, Senior Vice President of Digital Television, Comcast Cable**



Comcast's Mark Hess (he is responsible for the development and deployment of the MSO's new and enhanced video products and services, including VOD, PVR/DVR and interactive TV) gave a short, witty speech studded with self-deprecating humor: "Honestly, if I'd have known there were going to be this many people here tonight, I never would have agreed to do this," he began his presentation. He compared interactive TV in the US to the Loch Ness Monster, rumored to exist but hard to find--at least until recently. And he offered an interesting theory to explain why ITV in the US has lagged many other countries: the early availability here of multichannel television had rendered unnecessary the development of proto-ITV services, such as Teletext. "Rather than having Teletext to get your weather information, like in the UK, we simply had a weather channel, or rather than using Teletext or something like it to get your news, we created news channels," he said. "This was partly because of the US's 50 to 60-year love affair with moving pictures." In light of this "love affair," he continued, ITV is most likely to succeed in the US if it is televisual: "If I have anything to say to those that are building apps out there as we speak, it's don't forget to include video in it," he said. "Because that is what America loves." America's love of moving images was also why Comcast decided to focus its interactive efforts initially on VOD, he explained. Hess went on to explain that he believes "this year could be the year of interactive television" in the US--the year in which

"we're finally going to wrestle that Loch Ness Monster down"--because "we're now on the verge of having a platform. One of the key things that was announced this week by GuideWorks, for example," he continued, "was that the next version of its guide will have open API's that application providers can work with. Then there's OCAP. If you go to the show floor, you'll see that OCAP is real. The reason we made the decision to purchase the assets of Liberate was to get more software engineers around that platform." He concluded by stating that Comcast and the other US cable MSO's plan to "take the learnings from the people that have done ITV in Europe" and push to create video-rich ITV that will appeal to a US audience.

**Scott Higgins, Director of Interactive Programming, EchoStar**



Playing on the metaphor that Comcast's Mark Hess had employed in his speech, Scott Higgins pointed out that EchoStar has been offering interactive TV for some time now: "I love hearing Mark--he's a smarter man than I'll ever be," he said, "but I am your Loch Ness Monster, because we are real. We take great pride in what we've done." He added that interactivity has not only helped EchoStar reduce churn, but has actually helped it drive subscriptions. While acknowledging Hess's points about the necessity of having a stable platform for ITV, Higgins argued that the importance of developing reliable applications should not be overlooked--because television is not as fault-tolerant a medium as the Internet: "We're in TV, we're not the Web," he said. "So you have to have 100 percent success. You cannot have your service go down. The first thing that will kill ITV is when, all of a sudden, your customer support group starts calling with uncommon trends because the data for your weather application is not running. So, once the product is launched, you've got to keep going back and checking it. Because, as you all know, it is the consumer that's going to decide if ITV is successful."

**Ryan O'Hara, President of TVG Network**



Ryan O'Hara began by stressing the importance of BSkyB's successful and long-standing implementation of interactive TV to the industry as a whole (note: O'Hara was formerly director of interactive TV strategy and development at BSkyB: among other things, he was responsible for



integrating Open? a 400-person company which BSkyB purchased in June, 2000, and which became the core of the company's ITV operations): "Sky's been seen for a while as the gold standard for interactive TV," he said, "And the fact that ITV has worked in the UK, and that Sky has done it so well makes the US players more comfortable with it. If it had never worked in the UK, its prospects would be kind of iffy." He added that there are three things that have made Sky a beacon to the ITV industry: "The first is that they do hundreds of millions of dollars a year in interactive revenues-- you can't argue with a revenue stream like that," he said. "The second factor is churn: Sky's churn is just 10 percent, whereas most domestic or international cable or satellite operators hover around 22 to 25 percent. While part of that is that they have a great suite of channels, and part of it is marketing, at least a couple of percentage points of that churn reduction are due to interactive television." Thirdly, he said, Sky has not only developed numerous interactive applications of its own, but has "cut reasonable deals" with broadcasters, making it easier for the latter to offer "creative interactivity," and has also "let the small guys on their platform. The small guys," he continued, "are often very innovative, and this pushes everybody else, so the ITV services on the platform get better and better." After giving an overview of TVG's own recent launch of an ITV wagering and information service on EchoStar's DISH network, a move which he said had been strongly supported by the latter ("We had a partner in DISH that was hungry and aggressive, and that really wanted to work with us," he recalled. "As badly as we wanted to launch the service, they were pushing us to develop it, hit deadlines and be ready to go"), O'Hara went on to outline some of the risks currently facing interactive TV: "One of the risks is that the multiple interdependencies that exist could potentially squash interactive television," he said. "You have the content players, you have the software players in the middle, and you have the distributors. So it's tough getting the deals done, if you don't have people who are reasonable and who really want to do something. The second risk factor is that venture capital companies in the US won't touch interactive television, because they think that the bigger players will capture the value. If you don't have new, outside-the-box thinking and R&D spending, and you just rely on the giants to deliver product, this could squash innovation. Thirdly," he continued, "we have to be aware that the TV will never be the PC, and that trying to compete with the PC is a losing game. I think we have to be very careful that we don't try to create dumb computer

applications for the TV. They'll fail. Lastly--though I think this is something we can reverse--I don't think there are enough true ITV success stories in the US yet. While the guides have done well, I think we need more applications that are as successful as the ones offered by Sky." Nevertheless, O'Hara continued, "there are smart, creative, well-funded companies really focused on ITV, and that's important in any industry." In addition, he argued, innovation in interactive TV going forward will be driven by companies currently outside the television space: "I think the competition for the consumer is going to be fierce," he said. "You're going to see the game console guys do some innovative things, for example, and you're going to see the Yahoos of the world do innovative things in broadband. As an industry, whether we're distributors or content providers, we're going to be forced to be innovative in order to keep the leadership position. So, all said, I'm bullish, and I'm happy to be part of this industry with all you guys."



-- Robert Chua Production House Company Ltd.

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