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Cable Industry Contest at JavaOne to Search for Latest ITV Applications



OCAP™ Development Competition Sponsored by Advance/Newhouse Communications, Cablevision, Comcast, Cox, Discovery Communications, G4techTV, Sun Microsystems, Time Warner Cable, and Vidiom Systems with guidance from the American Film Institute

The cable industry is sponsoring an application development contest to raise awareness of the OpenCable™ Applications Platform (OCAP™) and to encourage the active participation of the Java development community in the interactive television market. The contest will challenge application developers who use Java to exercise creativity as well as programming skills to come up with brand new OCAP applications that will serve and entertain the cable television viewers. The contest will begin today at the JavaOne Conference taking place at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California.

OCAP is a Java™-based software platform for digital television that uses the worldwide Multimedia Home Platform (MHP) standard. OCAP will enable applications to be portable and interoperable across all cable networks. OCAP allows all TV programmers and iTV developers to create new interactive television applications that were not possible before.

"Now is the time to begin spreading the significant news about OCAP and the coming implementation of true standards-based interactive television in the U.S.," said Juan Dewar, Senior Director, Marketing and Business Strategy Consumer, Mobility and Strategic Solutions Group, Sun Microsystems. "The OCAP specification, which is maintained by CableLabs, Inc., the standardization and R&D arm of the North American cable industry, has been publicly supported by major U.S. cable operators as the next-generation software platform for interactive digital cable television devices serving their 70 million-plus customer homes. Developers should not only be aware of it, but they should start exercising their skills and creativity today, to prepare for the commercial opportunities which are fast approaching."

"Cable television is the next frontier for java developers and the open cable platform is a blank canvas for iTV artists," said Kevin Leddy, Time Warner Cable Senior Vice President of New Product Development. "For serious developers there is no richer medium than cable."

"Discovery Interactive Media is delighted to work with our distribution partners and Java developers to create the next generation of television," says Bill Allman, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Discovery iMedia. "With the coming richness, depth, and fun promised by OCAP-enabled iTV, Discovery's viewers will have even more opportunity to explore their world and entertain their brains."

The contest will consist of four categories: Stand-alone (virtual channel); Advertising; Live events (sporting events, award shows, game shows); and Innovation (for standard programming). All application development can be completed on a standard PC using Vidiom Systems' VISION Workbench OCAP Simulator, which will be provided as part of the Entry Kit, together with the developer's Java IDE of choice. VISION Workbench provides the industry's only OCAP client and headend simulation tools. A variety of video clips will be provided for contestants to design applications or contestants may provide their own video. The contest closes October 1st giving contestants 90 days to develop the application.

Winners of each category will receive a cash award of \$1,000 and the overall winner will obtain a DLP HDTV. In all the contest categories contestants are encouraged to think beyond existing iTV examples in terms of functionality, presentation, and concepts. Contestants will be given broad leeway to exercise their unique vision. The four categories are not meant to restrict the creativity of the contestants, but to roughly group entries. Contestants should follow these guidelines for each category:

- **Stand-alone**

This category challenges the Java programming community to develop exciting and innovative approaches to stand-alone iTV applications. The video programming may be playing in the background on full screen or partial screen but the application is not associated with the video that is playing. The application may also fully occupy the TV screen. Some existing examples include electronic programming guides, instant messaging (either with other TV's or other devices), information ticker (news, stock market) and games. The stand-alone application should address the potential needs of the TV viewers.

- **Advertising**

Here contestants should come up with an interactive application that utilizes the rich visual media of television to achieve the goals of a TV ad such as increased sales, branding, product awareness, entertainment, etc. Some existing examples include TV commerce application, targeted advertising, electronic coupons, and product brochures.

- **Live events**

In this category one should develop applications that are associated with live TV such as sporting events, award shows, game shows, etc. Some examples include interactive score boards, multiple camera angles, playing along with a game show, predicting winners, voting out a contestant. These applications would have to address time sensitive presentation and execution of information associated with live TV programming.

- **Innovation**

This contest category emphasizes creativity above others. Any interactive television concept associated with the video programming playing in the background will be allowed. The contestants are free to create their own video streams for their applications. Examples include recap of previous episodes, interactive storylines, linking to additional video programming.

Contestants may enter the contest by downloading the entry kit from the Java.net project page at <https://ocap-developers-contest.dev.java.net>. Submission instructions can be found on the project page.

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About Advance/Newhouse Communications

Advance/Newhouse Communications is the seventh largest US cable company serving over 2 million customers. Advance/Newhouse Communications is a privately held company headquartered in Syracuse, New York. The Advance/Newhouse partners' other interests include Conde Nast magazines such as the New Yorker, Vogue, Vanity Fare, and Wired; PARADE magazine; daily newspapers serving 26 cities; American City Business Journals, which publishes business journals in over 45 cities; and significant interests in Discovery Communications, Inc. and Time Warner Telecom, Inc.

About the American Film Institute

AFI is the preeminent organization dedicated to advancing and preserving the art of film, television and other forms of the moving image. Now entering its 7th year, the American Film Institute's Enhanced TV Workshop creates opportunities for television networks, producers and operators to explore the digital and interactive future of their programming. Each year AFI serves as Executive Producer on 8 jury-selected productions and unites cutting-edge companies, broadcast designers and interactive technology experts to build enhanced TV prototypes.

About Cablevision

Cablevision Systems Corporation is one of the nation's leading entertainment and telecommunications companies. Its cable television operations serve 3 million households in the New York metropolitan area. The company's advanced telecommunications offerings include its iO: Interactive Optimum digital television offering, Optimum Online high-speed Internet service, Optimum Voice digital voice-over-cable service, and its Lightpath integrated business communications services. Cablevision's Rainbow Media Holdings LLC operates several successful programming businesses, including AMC, IFC (The Independent Film Channel), and other national and regional networks. Rainbow also is a 50 percent partner in Fox Sports Net. In 2003, Cablevision's Rainbow DBS launched its VOOOM satellite service, the first service to offer a comprehensive array of high-definition (HD) television programming. In addition to its telecommunications and programming businesses, Cablevision is the controlling owner of Madison Square Garden and its sports teams, the New York Knicks, Rangers and Liberty. The company also operates New York's famed Radio City Music Hall, and owns and operates Clearview Cinemas. Additional information about Cablevision Systems Corporation is available on the Web at www.cablevision.com.

About Comcast Cable

Headquartered in Philadelphia, Comcast Cable is a division of Comcast Corporation, a developer, manager and operator of broadband cable networks and provider of programming content. With a presence in 22 of the top 25 United States markets, Comcast is one of the leading communications, media and entertainment companies in the world. Providing basic cable, Digital Cable, high-speed Internet and telephone services, Comcast is the company to look to first for the communications products and services that connect people to what's important in their lives. The company's 59,000 employees serve more than 21 million customers.

About Discovery Communications, Inc.

Discovery Communications, Inc. is the leading global real-world media and entertainment company. DCI has grown from its core property, the Discovery Channel, first launched in United States in 1985, to current global operations in 160 countries and territories with one billion cumulative subscribers. DCI's 60 networks of distinctive programming represents 19 entertainment brands including TLC, Animal Planet, Travel Channel, Discovery Health Channel, Discovery Kids, Discovery Times Channel, The Science Channel, Discovery Wings Channel, Discovery Home Channel, Discovery en Espanol, Discovery HD Theater and FitTV. DCI's other properties consist of Discovery.com and 120 Discovery Channel retail stores. DCI also distributes BBC America in the United States. DCI's ownership consists of four shareholders: Liberty Media Corporation (NYSE: L), Cox Communications, Inc. (NYSE: COX), Advance/Newhouse Communications and John S. Hendricks, the Company's founder and chairman.

About G4techTV

Formed by the May, 2004 merger of G4 and TechTV, G4techTV is the one and only 24-hour television network that is plugged into every dimension of games, gear, gadgets and gigabytes. The network is available to more than 44 million cable and satellite homes nationwide and airs 24 original series. Headquartered in Los Angeles, G4techTV is owned by Comcast Corporation. To learn more, log onto www.g4techtv.com.

About Sun Microsystems, Inc.

Since its inception in 1982, a singular vision -- "The Network Is The Computer" -- has propelled Sun Microsystems, Inc. to its position as a leading provider of industrial-strength hardware, software and services that make the Net work. Sun can be found in more than 100 countries and on the World Wide Web at www.sun.com.

About Time Warner Cable

Time Warner Cable owns and manages cable systems serving 10.9 million subscribers in 27 states, which include some of the most technologically advanced, best-clustered cable systems in the country with more than 75% of the Company's customers in systems of 300,000 subscribers or more. Utilizing a fully upgraded advanced cable network and a steadfast commitment to providing consumers with choice, value and world-class customer service, Time Warner Cable is an industry leader in delivering advanced products and services such as video on demand, high definition television, high-speed data, wireless home networking and digital video recorders. Time Warner Cable is a company of Time Warner Inc.

About Vidiom Systems

Vidiom Systems Corporation is an established leader providing technology solutions to the cable, satellite and consumer electronics industry. Vidiom's staff are pioneers in the digital television and advanced media industry with expertise in software engineering, iTV application design, consulting, technical documentation and training, offering a unique set of skills for any technology project. Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Broomfield, Colorado, Vidiom Systems has additional offices in Portland, Oregon, and Des Moines, Iowa. For more information about our television technology products and services please visit our website at www.vidiom.com.

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