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Dear Readers



When it comes to free satellite reception for each citizen, China has long been the last uncharted territory. But even there, things are going to change this year. Individual satellite reception will become possible with the introduction of China DTH, which also means satellite reception technology will tap into a huge consumer market. However, China has decided to launch its own new digital standard: ABS-S. You can read more about its technical aspects in this issue's feature story.

So this means the variety of digital standards is still on the rise. I remember very well the heated discussions we at TELE-satellite had many years ago, when digital satellite TV in MPEG-2 appeared on the horizon. Many of us feared that in future there would only be a single variety of receivers, because either they were digital, or not. Boy, were we wrong! If you look at the diversity of digital technology it by far surpasses everything we could ever dream of in the analog age.

At the same it has turned out that different standards can be integrated into a single product. For example, we justifiably expect that our shiny HDTV receivers with DVB-S2 can just as easily handle regular DVB-S transmissions. So it probably won't be too long until the new Chinese ABS-S standard will be integrated in DVB-S/S2 receivers as well. Just be prepared that the packaging of receivers will be decorated with even more logos, trademarks and labels than today.

The biggest advantage of ABS-S is that it's a very recent development, which means it works more efficiently than

DVB-S. That's the luxury of being patient and waiting. Technology progresses all the time and in most cases a new standard also means a step ahead. At any rate, it will be interesting to observe if and how ABS-S will gain a foothold in markets outside China. To some extent, this will depend on the licensing policy for ABS-S, but mainly it will be defined by Chinese manufacturers being able to further reduce costs now that they have the huge Chinese market right in front of their doorsteps. ABS-S might turn out to be a head-on competitor to DVB-S2, which also comes with the promise of reduced costs thanks to its lower bandwidth requirements.

The launch of China DTH at the same time opens the Chinese market for all other satellite companies – even though most players are already located in China anyway. What's for sure is that the satellite industry will gain additional impetus, which in itself is good news amidst the current economic downturn. It all goes to show that there is always room for expansion – you only have to offer the right product at the right time for the right market.

**Yours,
Alexander Wiese**

P.S.: My favourite radio channel this month is Peppermint FM, a new station from Germany on Astra 19.2° East (12.633 H) with great non-stop music variety, no news and only the occasional bit of self promotion with the station's slogan 'Keep it fresh and young.'

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