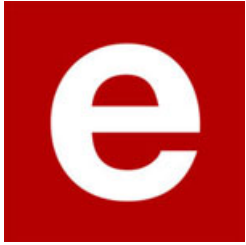


Free-to-air broadcasters not responsible for delays on DTT

e.tv wishes to correct any impressions created by certain statements of the Department of Communications in the wake of the South Gauteng court decision on the matter of set-top-box (STB) control for DTT.



Court case ruling

Last year e.tv applied for an urgent interdict against the decision by the Minister of Communications to appoint Sentech to manage the STB control system for DTT. The South Gauteng High Court ruled in e.tv's favour, finding that the Minister had acted unlawfully in appointing Sentech. It further ruled that the free-to-air broadcasters have the right to decide on the STB control system for DTT.

If the Minister were to abide the decision of the High Court, the free-to-air broadcasters would be in a position to put the DTT process back on track with immediate effect. Unfortunately, the Ministry has proceeded to issue media statements which misrepresent the nature of the ruling and which imply that free-to-air broadcasters are responsible for the delays on DTT.

No resolution

Much has been made of meetings arranged by the Ministry with broadcasters to "resolve" the issue.

This is reportedly untrue, as the Ministry has used these meetings merely to restate its original position (which the court ruled against). In addition, the Ministry has not taken several solutions proposed by e.tv both during and after the litigation (including at this week's meetings), which would allay many of the Ministry's concerns into account. Instead, the Ministry's statements imply that free-to-air broadcasters would be responsible for the delay in issuing the set top box tender.

e.tv hopes that the solutions that will be presented to the Ministry by the SABC and e.tv will be taken seriously, so that the process can get back on track without further litigation and inevitable delays.

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