

# MultiChoice increases channels as competition hots up



By [Walter Wafula](#)

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Pay television company MultiChoice Uganda plans to add three more channels to its lower tier bouquets in its effort to respond to customer needs.

The DStv service provider is expected to add two local free-to-air channels including; Wavah Broadcasting Service Television (WBS-TV) and Bukedde TV to its Access, Family and Compact bouquets before the end of this year.

"They are still in the pipeline but once we have ironed out the agreements, we will be good to go," said Tina Wamala, the public relations officer MultiChoice Uganda in an interview on 15 August 2011. "The other channel is still under wraps but it will be launched within the next few weeks."

## An increase of local channels

DStv currently airs only three local free-to-air channels including; Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) TV, Nation Television (NTV), and Citizen Television.

The news closely follows the addition of Select Sport on DSTV on 28 July. Wamala said the sports channel was added to give lower tier customers a chance to watch some of the English Premiership League football games that are broadcast on DStv's premier bouquets.

By increasing its local channels, MultiChoice will attempt to match the offering of local competitors such as Start DTV, which operates StarTimes. The Chinese company has several local channels including; WBS, UBC, Record, Channel 44, Star, Nile Broadcasting Service (NBS), NTV, and Bukedde Tv.

## Competitive edge

The offering gives StarTimes a competitive edge over DSTV in terms of local content but not foreign programming. In the past two months, Mary Karooro Okurut, Uganda's minister of information and national guidance has made several calls to local broadcasters to increase local programming in order to be more relevant to Ugandan television viewers.

The minister urged the broadcasters at the launch of Zuku Television in Uganda by Wananchi Group, a multi-media company in Kenya. The pay-Tv company entered the market with a promise to broadcast some of the English Premiership games on its Arsenal Tv channel.

Prior to its entry, only DStv and Smart, another pay-TV service by Digital Broadcasting Uganda, had the television rights to broadcast the matches in Uganda, despite the presence of six pay television companies in the market.

In a related development, Vision, the group behind Bukedde TV, announced that it will re-open its English station branded Urban TV on channel 43, this week. The opening of the station which failed to take off about two year ago, will follow the re-launch of the Group's XFM which failed to make it in the market as Vision Voice radio.

## ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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