

## BBC Worldwide's iPlayer - niche for now

LONDON, UK: BBC Worldwide's global iPlayer app will remain niche for now, but it does present long-term opportunities in the US market, says Nick Thomas, principal analyst for TV & digital media at Informa Telecoms & Media.



"BBC Worldwide's new global iPlayer app, allowing European iPad owners to subscribe to a specially curated 'Best of British' video service, is likely to remain niche for now, given the relatively small number of iPad users in the region (around 8 million by the end of 2011), the relatively high price (€6.99 per month), and the apparently limited access to the current shows that dominate viewing on the UK version of the iPlayer. But with a US rollout in the pipeline, this is a great opportunity for BBC Worldwide to find out how to build a successful premium service for non-UK audiences," says Thomas.

### **Needed: A way make these services work**

He says that tablet devices such as the iPad are generally seen as ideal devices for consuming high quality video but no major video aggregator has yet built a premium service targeted solely at iPad users. The industry needs to find a way of making such services work: Tablet manufacturers need strong video services to showcase the capabilities of their devices, while content providers need to find new app-based revenue streams.

"This feels like a soft launch of the global iPlayer, with the bigger long-term opportunities for BBC Worldwide lying in the US market. It remains to be seen what appetite there is for a service based largely around on-demand archive content, however high the quality, since most online catch-up TV services closely reflect linear TV schedules, but in the meantime the BBC's record of innovation in content distribution continues," he concludes.