

Five Enters Canvas Partnership

UK public service broadcaster **Five** today confirmed it had become the latest partner in Project Canvas – the proposal to deliver broadband-connected television to the living room.

Five joins two fellow PSBs, the BBC and ITV, as well as internet service provider BT, in committing to the project which will, subject to approval by the BBC Trust, create a next generation platform augmenting the freely-available Freeview and Freesat on digital terrestrial or digital satellite television.

With internet-connected TV set to be a major technological advance in broadcasting, Five sees Canvas as critical to the long-term future of subscription-free TV, as well as a significant opportunity to provide next-generation services to viewers.

Dawn Airey, Chairman and Chief Executive of Five, said: “Project Canvas is an important step forward because it will extend choice and significantly improve the television experience for viewers. Its widespread adoption is central to driving Digital Britain.

“It’s vital for broadcasters and other industry stakeholders to form partnerships such as Canvas if they’re to open up new commercial opportunities and thrive in the digital world.”

Canvas project director **Richard Halton**, speaking on behalf of partners BBC, ITV and BT, said: “We’re delighted that Five has joined the consortium. Canvas aims to unlock the huge potential of internet-connected TV. By democratising access to the living room, we create real choice for consumers, a future for free-to-air broadcasting and important commercial opportunities for content providers.”

About Project Canvas

Project Canvas is an internet protocol TV (IPTV) joint venture between the BBC, ITV and BT. The proposed open TV platform, delivered to UK households via digital terrestrial or digital satellite and broadband connections, represents the web-enabled extension of current Freeview and Freesat services. The platform, requiring enhanced set-top box technology and broadband connectivity, will offer viewers a new electronic programme guide with seamless access to both linear and video-on-demand, web-based content, HD, and potential commercial applications such as internet based advertising, micro-payments and subscription to pay-TV services over the internet. Canvas remains a brand-neutral distribution mechanism that will not own or aggregate content. It will be a new distribution outlet for existing free-to-air channels and could carry pay services currently delivered by satellite or other cable operators.

The proposal has been prepared by the BBC, with partners ITV and BT and has been submitted to the BBC Trust for approval. The BBC Trust is currently consulting on the proposals and is expected to make a decision later this year.