

PAC BELL CASTS BIG ROLE FOR 'CINEMA OF FUTURE'

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Highlight: **Pacific Bell** is continuing to develop its "**Cinema of the Future**" technology for digitized movies and entertainment

Body

ABSTRACT:

Pacific Bell (San Ramon, CA) is continuing to develop its "**Cinema of the Future**" technology for digitized movies and entertainment. The technology, called the Advanced Broadcast Video Service or ABVS, would allow for the transmission of digitized signals to movie theaters by means of fiber-optic cables, network servers and high-definition television projectors. The technology would incorporate asynchronous transfer mode and MPEG compression technology to send signals to sites with HDTV projection systems. The technology would avoid the duplication of movie reels and the transportation of the reels. Distribution costs account for 30% of gross receipts of a film. In addition, transmission by a server at preselected times reduces the chances of illegal copying of a film.

San Mateo, Calif.

Pacific Bell, pushing forward with its "**Cinema of the Future**" for delivering digitized movies and entertainment, sees a bright future for the technology.

Pacific Bell, San Ramon, Calif., is developing the technology with the ultimate aim of delivering digitized movies and live broadcast to movie theaters through a fiber-optic cable, networked servers and high-definition television projectors.

Referred to as Advance Broadcast Video Service, or ABVS, Pac Bell's system uses asynchronous transfer mode and MPEG compression technology to send to and HDTV projection system.

Transmitting movies through a digital pipeline holds many advantages over conventional distribution, which involves duplicating reels of film and transporting theme by courier service throughout the country, said Richard Mizer, Pac Bell manger of advanced video services.

For instance, the costs of the existing distribution method ca gobble more than 30 percent of the gross receipts of a film, bolstering the case for delivering through fiber optics, he said.

Electronic distribution also can mean that movies are shown only during times when they are transmitted by a central server, which combats unauthorized showings, as well as unaccounted-for box-office receipts and film copies. Piracy such as this typically hurts profits and the commercial viability of the movies.

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Linked to a digital network, theaters can boost attendance during periods when theaters are relatively empty by showing broadcasts of live sporting events or other special-interest activities, according to Mizer.

And in an Orwellian twist, the system may also let studios quickly edit a move digitally--for example, changing and ending--to suit audiences' tastes.

Guy Powell, a vice president at The Business Depot Inc., a reseller in Norcross, Ga., said mass adoption of Pac Bell's technology creates a need for integration and support services that eventually may reach the channel. "Clearly there are some neat business opportunities there," he said. Those opportunities may also help resellers form a closer relationship with the telephone company.

According to Pac Bell, the technology may be used to broadcast live events, such as sports, as early as the end of this year. Full implementation will take more than a decade.

Still, theater owners with slim profits must be convinced to make the huge capital investment needed for the system to be a success. Ultimately, the audience may decide the outcome.

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