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TELEWEST EXPANDS BROADBAND INTERACTIVE TV SERVICE

43 leading brands now signed up for Telewest Active Digital TV service

A further 14 companies have signed agreements to join Telewest Communications' 'Active Digital' interactive TV service, Telewest announced today.

The agreements mean that Telewest's digital TV viewers will soon be able to shop, organise their personal finances, watch video clips of holiday resorts before they book, order a pizza, play along with TV game shows, even have a bet on whether contestants will win the big prize, and more besides, all from the comfort of home.

The new content providers are:

Air Miles	Domino's Pizza
Air Tours	Flextech
Avis Europe	Telme Global Travel (Phonelink plc)
Blue Square	Iceland
Bristol & West plc	Thomson Holidays
Carlton Online	Two Way TV
Cheltenham & Gloucester	West Bromwich Building Society

Tony Illsley, Telewest's Chief Executive, said: "I am absolutely delighted that these leading companies have joined forces with Telewest for their interactive services. With those that have already signed up with Telewest, we will be in a position to offer a broadband interactive TV experience far superior to any other.

"Our interactive TV service will offer a wider and more exciting range of products and services, delivered faster and more dynamically over our broadband networks than is possible on any other platform."

Significantly, the agreements with Thomson Holidays and AIR MILES makes Telewest the only interactive TV service provider to have signed deals with the top six holiday companies in the UK.

Also signed up for Telewest's digital service is the market-leading interactive games provider, Two Way TV, which plans to use the Telewest platform to offer a range of online games, and to allow Telewest subscribers to play along live with TV gameshows and sporting events.

Forty-three named partners are now preparing to deliver interactive shopping, banking, information, education and entertainment services to customers over Telewest's digital cable TV system. This system is now the most widely-deployed in the UK reaching more than 1.5 million homes. Telewest will launch its interactive service before the end of March 2000.

The additional 'floorspace' available to service providers on broadband fibre-optic networks means Telewest will be able rapidly to broaden its interactive services to encompass online betting, high-speed multi-player computer gaming and true video-on-demand.

Telewest's interactive TV service will be available at no extra cost to its Active Digital customers. It will be delivered alongside the 150-channel digital TV service already received by Telewest's digital subscribers. From launch it will offer digital viewers access to financial services, groceries, holidays, books, music, software and many other goods and services.

Chris Townsend, director of interactive services for Telewest, said: "Content providers recognise that they will be able to use our digital broadband technology in ways that are simply not possible with more limited interactive delivery platforms.

"For example, we are working closely with many of our partners on using the capacity and speed of our broadband platform to incorporate extensive 'video-on-demand' features into their interactive services.

"Viewers will be able to visit a travel company's interactive site and call up an instant video replay of the resort they're thinking of going to, even of the hotel rooms that are available. Likewise, a CD buyer could watch an artist's latest video, or a grocery shopper could watch a video showing how to prepare recipes using ingredients on special offer that day. The possibilities are virtually endless."

The companies and brands already signed up by Telewest for its interactive service are:
1st Quote Insurance; Abbey National; Argos; Bloomberg TV; British Airways; Cosmos; Dorling Kindersley; Eagle Star; EMAP Online; First Choice; First Quench; gameplay.com; Hertz; Landmark Travel Channel; lastminute.com; Newcastle Building Society; Scoot; Screentrade; Shop!; Somerfield 24-7; TD Waterhouse; Teletext; Thomas Cook; Travel Choice; TV Travel Shop; WHSmith; Woolworths; yell.com (Yellow Pages); Yourscreen.com (part of EMAP).

Telewest launched its Active Digital service in October 1999. Its digital service is now available to more than 1.5 million homes in its Midlands, south-east and the south western regions. It will be extended to the north west and Scotland during February, and to all Telewest regions during 2000, becoming available to more than four million homes by the summer.

EDITORS' NOTES

Telewest Communications is Britain's leading integrated broadband communications company. Telewest's broadband cable networks now pass more than 4.6 million homes, with more than 1.5 million households choosing Telewest for their multi-channel television, telephone and Internet services. In the business sector Telewest's voice and data telecommunications links are used by over 54,000 companies and other public and private sector organisations. Revenues for the nine months ended 30 September, 1999, were £576 million, up 14.7 per cent from 1998. In the same period earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) grew 33.3 per cent to £165 million. Telewest's ordinary share capital is listed on the London Stock Exchange and on the US NASDAQ National Market System.

For more information please contact the Telewest press office on 01483 295281