
Is Your Broadband Router IPTV Ready?

You've probably been hearing about how major communications providers like Verizon, Bell South, Qwest and SBC are planning on offering digital TV services to your home in the very near future. They plan on deliver these services over a high-speed, broadband connection. How will they do it?

IPTV. IPTV uses a technology called multicasting. Multicasting is a way for a single sender (TV server) to "broadcast" to a number of recipient devices (your TV or media-center computer). Multicasting uses an Internet protocol called Internet Group Management Protocol (IGMP) that is the way member of a multicast group (TV subscribers) identify themselves to routers with the IP network (Internet).

IPTV, multicasting and IGMP all require a fourth technology - Differentiated Services or DiffServ to really make them "go". DiffServ is a protocol by which network traffic can be classified to give it precedence over the traffic types. Using DiffServ, voice (because it is VERY sensitive to delay) might get a higher precedence than email traffic, IPTV over a peer-to-peer file sharing application.

So, to really "ready" for IPTV in your home network, you might want to check and make sure your broadband router supports three "key" technologies.

1. Multicasting
2. IGMP (Internet Group Management Protocol)
3. DiffServ (Differentiated Services).

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