

# TV OF TOMORROW



*BY CHRIS ACKER AND HENRY PYE*

TELEVISION SENT THROUGH BROADBAND INTERNET CONNECTIONS OFFERS PLENTY OF PROMISE—BUT ONLY FOR COMMUNITIES WITH MODERN AND WELL-MAINTAINED WIRING.

**M**ultifamily service providers delivering video over existing infrastructure are trying to squeeze more and more data through finite pipes as residents demand more high-definition TV, Internet access and other bandwidth-hungry services.

Fortunately, a solution is available to them. It's called IPTV.

Internet Protocol television (IPTV) is the delivery of video programming via the underlying language of the Internet. Essentially, it means sending the full array of today's digital television services, and more, over a broadband Internet connection, such as a cable modem or Digital Subscriber Line (DSL). For the purposes of this article, we are excluding over-the-top video services that are typically delivered via the Internet connection through a special box or service (such as Netflix Online or Apple TV) and focusing on the managed delivery of IPTV services.

Almost every video provider already provides most, if not all, of its service via digital signals. However, these digital services are predominantly delivered via radio frequencies (RF) over the coaxial cables. Put simply, probably too simply for many technophiles, IPTV promises to be more efficient, flexible and feature-rich, as well as cheaper in the long run, than traditional digital RF television.

There is one caveat. IPTV enables service providers to get far more out of twisted-copper and coaxial cables only in buildings with fairly modern wiring, installed correctly. Where the infrastruc-

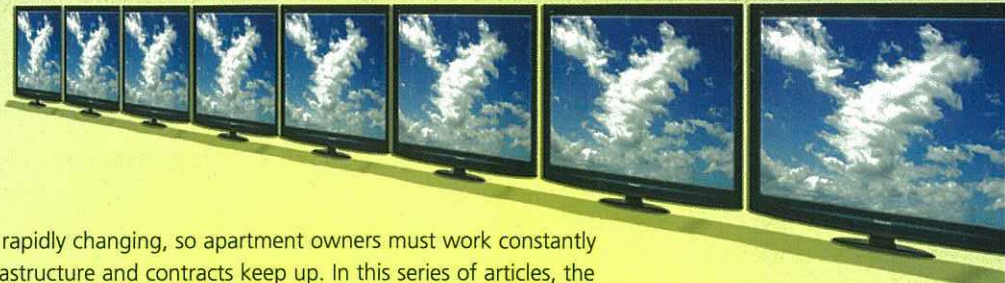
ture is antiquated or installed poorly, owners will find themselves falling even further behind the communities across the street.

## FLEXIBLE SERVICE, LOWER COST

In theory, IP should be cheaper for both the provider and the consumer. In addition to requiring far less bandwidth than traditional cable TV, it also uses the same network as high-speed Internet access. Thus, a provider can use the same equipment, tools and processes to provide IPTV rather than supporting multiple technologies. In the long run, even the set-top boxes should be cheaper, as many of the boxes' components are common to today's high-speed Internet access solutions.

The future of cable is on-demand services over multiple platforms. Instead of watching "True Blood" at 9 p.m. EST on Sunday, consumers want to watch it whenever it fits their schedule, on their televisions, personal computers or smart phones — and naturally, they would prefer to purchase the programming once for all of those devices. At the same time, content creators need to protect their investments from piracy.

Many video providers offer some on-demand service over multiple platforms today by combining digital cable television, video on demand and online content. However, the efforts are cumbersome and difficult to scale. As a result, IP is probably the only way to cost-effectively allow users to purchase a program across multiple platforms while also providing protection for the content creators.



## The Future of Cable TV


### About This Series

The world of cable TV and video service is rapidly changing, so apartment owners must work constantly to ensure that a community's services, infrastructure and contracts keep up. In this series of articles, the authors will discuss the future of cable television and what owners need to know to ensure they have the capabilities to meet resident demands. Part I ("The Future of Cable TV," pp. 44-46, September 2010) dispelled myths about the death of Cable TV. This article, part II, discusses the promise of IPTV. Future articles will cover TV Everywhere, Google TV, and over-the-top video.

### INTERACTIVE ADVANTAGE

IPTV also promises to deliver, or at least simplify, interactive television and other services. For more than a decade, technologists have hyped the promise of interactive TV. Consumers have repeatedly been told how they will be able to click and purchase the outfits worn by their favorite television characters. Sports fans have been promised the ability to change camera angles. Although these promises have not yet been fully realized, interactive TV is beginning to take baby steps.

For example, many interactive features are being rolled out this fall for National Football League games. The Verizon FiOS NFL RedZone widget alerts subscribers when their teams are inside the 20-yard line so they can tune in to RedZone channel. DIRECTV allows fantasy football fans to select and track up to 18 players on their television screens, customize game updates and participate in interactive trivia contests.

While the promise of IPTV has yet to be fully realized, its flexibility and efficiency will transform the way we look at cable TV. Owners should make sure their infrastructure is installed and maintained properly so their residents can enjoy the benefits of IPTV as it evolves to meet its potential. 

*Chris Acker is Director of Velocity Advisory Services for RealPage and can be reached at [Chris.Acker@realpage.com](mailto:Chris.Acker@realpage.com).*

*Henry Pye is Vice President of Velocity Advisory Services for RealPage. He can be reached at [henry.pye@realpage.com](mailto:henry.pye@realpage.com).*



# ARE YOU COVERED?

More than 12,000 communities use the National Lease Program.

#### THE MOST WIDELY USED RESIDENTIAL LEASE IN THE MULTIFAMILY HOUSING INDUSTRY

- Eliminates Errors
- Increases Efficiency
- Continual Review by Expert Attorneys
- Free Tech Support and Training
- Completely Web-based Program



VISIT THE **NATIONAL LEASE PROGRAM** AT [WWW.NAAHQ.ORG/LEASE](http://WWW.NAAHQ.ORG/LEASE)