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Tata Sky Customers Would Now Be Able to e-Pay for DTH

By [Sonal Desai](#), NWC, June 20 2007, 1330 hrs

Tata-Sky, one of the providers of direct to home services in India, is considering breaking the conventional pre-paid service delivery chain with that of electronic remittance.

The solution will enable Tata Sky customers make advance payment for the bouquet of TV channels and programs they wish to view. They would thus replace traditional vouchers with electronic remittance system.

The company is in final stages of discussion with Bharti Telesoft to deploy PreTUPS— a prepaid mobile solution. Bharti would take care of the electronic recharge from physical vouchers and also take care of the back-end system.

The project would essentially be the company's strategy to promote micro selling methods following its success with the Grameen Phone in Bangladesh.

The solutions would largely be focused on micro transactions since this segment has not been touched by the credit and debit card industry.

Affirming this, Raghuvveer Singh Rathore, product director at Bharti Telesoft said the company would provide software and the recharge facilities to Tata Sky customers. The facility could break the conventional prepaid service delivery chain and replace scratch cards, allowing operators to vend prepaid talk time in electronic form over existing distribution channels.

PreTUPS can replace scratch cards and equip intermediaries in the prepaid value-chain with a multilingual SIM-based menu to perform role-based functions to distribute airtime. Retailers can use their phone menu to replenish a subscriber's account over the air while distributors can check the retailer balance, withdrawal limits, and invoices from the handset. In addition, the solution facilitates transfer talk time from prepaid-to-prepaid and prepaid-to-postpaid subscribers over SMS. The system deducts requested amount from a sender's account, and adds it to the receiver's prepaid account or postpaid bill.

It also provides telecom operators with an end-to-end platform to simplify management and administration of prepaid service distribution, Rathore claimed.

PreTUPS could help Tata Sky substantially reduce the cost of offering prepaid services by eliminating costs incurred for items such as printing, packaging, transportation, warehousing, insurance, inventory and sales tracking. SMS based recharge also helps operators save on IVR expenses.

Operators can improve accessibility and availability of prepaid services to the economic benefit of individual subscribers, and in time, the overall economy. For the operator, avoidance of a stock outage negatively impacts revenues, but for a rural subscriber, this can translate into the loss of livelihood.

Constant availability of top-up and the opportunity for micro-prepaid options ensure sustainability of the operator's monthly ARPU, he said.

Rathore stated that company would primarily focus on the telecom segment, but would gradually penetrate the utility bill payment, m-commerce and retail sectors.

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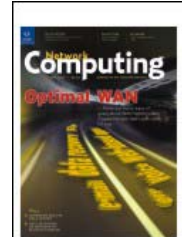
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