



Zappware scores high marks for Unitymedia in usability and functionality study

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Zappware, a leading developer of off-the-shelf and custom designed interactive digital television (iDTV) solutions, was recognized for the outstanding functionality and look and feel of its user-interface (UI) design for its partner Unitymedia in the recently released HD PVR Benchmarking Study. The study was conducted by thebrainbehind, a strategic consultancy based in Berlin and Munich, that specializes in product development, product marketing, and strategic market entry strategies.

The Unitymedia entry, featuring software from Zappware, scored the overall highest aggregate score in the study, which focused on usability and functionality, richness of data provided, and visual design characteristics. Among the categories that featured Zappware's contribution, Unitymedia received the highest score for usability and look and feel of the menus and the second highest ranking for the electronic program guide.

"The Zappware way is to focus on the marriage of superb design and advanced technology," explained Patrick Vos, Zappware's CEO. "Our ultimate goal is to provide our customers and partners with a beautiful interface that subscribers can enjoy using and is full of valuable features. It's gratifying to see our efforts recognized by the editors of this benchmarking study."

The study included comparisons and critiques of eight high-definition personal video recorders that were launched this year or playing an important role in the German market and have recently made UI updates. The operators studied (set-top-box manufacturer in parentheses) were Unitymedia (EchoStar), Kabel BW (Humax), Sky Germany (Pace), Tele Columbus (Kaon Media), T-Home Entertain (Cisco), maxdome (Winbox Technologies AG), VideoWeb (VideoWeb HD+ Hybrid), and KDG (Sagemcom). Each entrant was compared in categories such as configuration and set-up, general look and feel, electronic program guide (EPG), and several others.

"Unitymedia's user-interface with Zappware supports menu animation that makes browsing more fun than nearly all the other HD PVRs in the German market," the study states. "Unitymedia's good results were in particular due to attractive animation and consistent design wherein items are clearly arranged with well chosen colors and highlights."

Zappware's design methodology, focused on working closely with partners to customize a solution based on the unique aspects of a given project, also provides enormous benefits.

"The EPG design is innovative for the German market in that it imitates the layout of program listings printed in TV guide magazines," the study continues. "This is smart because this format is well established in the German market."