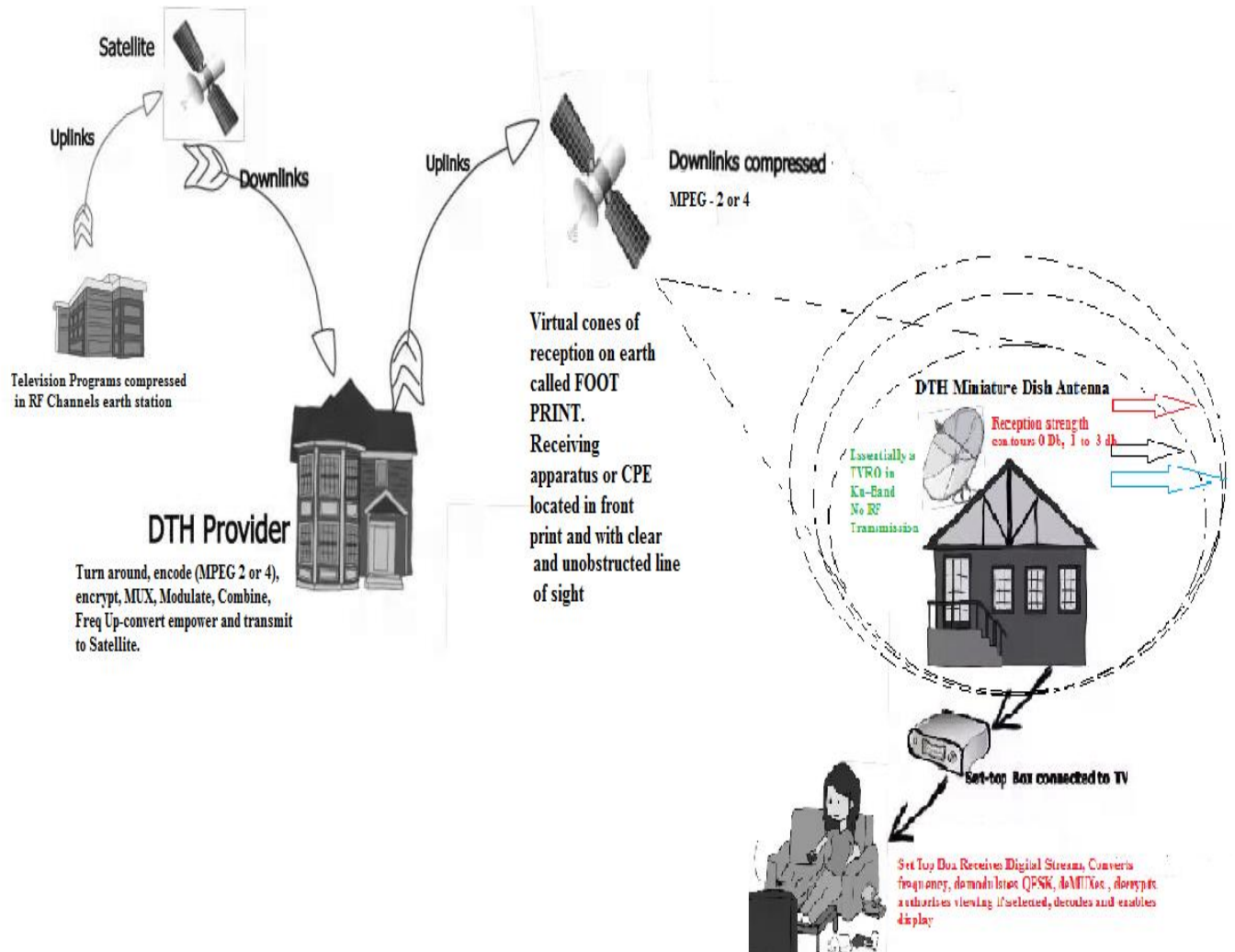


COMMENTS ON TRAI CONSULTATION PAPER ON
KYC of DTH SET TOP BOXES

Lt Col VC Khare (Retd) Cable TV industry Observer

Introduction

1. Figure 1 in the CP is not correctly depicting the DTH schematic. It should have been :-



2. What needs to be stressed , and understood, from the schematic above, is that DTH is a satellite cast of aggregated and addressable TV content, direct to a subscriber, without an intermediary like a Cable Operator (unlike CATV DPO comprising of a Headend Service Provider, popularly called MSO + a Cable Operator connecting the subscriber through a wireline network). This service too, like CATV, is uni-directional, pre-paid and more DAS compliant. DTH is NOT a TELCO service because the receiver does not communicate with

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Headend in electronic mode. Hence, location of receiver, after activation of service, if changed, cannot be detected except that by a physical location verification visit.

3. When ordered, subscriber calls up the customer care/marketing outfit of DTH service provider, places order with payment remitted in advance, gets a conformation in terms of location and easement permissions for the residential complex. The CPE, is released from service provider ware house, with subscriber name, allocated ID, address where to be installed and a viewing card paired with the STB Ser No and Subscriber ID. Then a team of 2-3 installation staff arrive, by prior appointment, with (a) Customer premises Equipment (mini dish antenna, LNB, about 25 mtrs of RG-6 coaxial cable with connectors, set top box and viewing card) (b) instruments for satellite tracking (azimuth & elevation) and finding (c) Subscriber Application Form (which captures KYC) i.e. SAF and (d) Installation Report to be got signed by the subscriber. After installation, subscriber is informed ID and Account No and customer care details. SAF containing subscriber KYC is carried by installation team, scanned and uploaded to Headend at the Earth Station where the details are punched into subscriber page in the SMS. Initial choice of programs is punched as in SAF, which can be changed any time through Customer care.

4. DTH is essentially a broadcast, where content is just thrown in wireless medium in RF carriers for listeners/viewers to receive with appropriate receiving equipment, provided threshold level signal strength to drive the receiving device is available at that PoP(Point of Presence). Broadcaster is not supposed to know where and who is receiving the broadcast. This aspect of knowing the customer has assumed significance in context of PAY content transported by DTH services.

5. After installation service remains active by way of pre-payments, the STB remains viewing enabled, in accounts and SMS. But if the receiver location is changed, without informing and associating the service provider, the STB continues to receive content, as long as located in the foot print contours of the satellite and enabled in the SMS. These locations can be off shore(in countries outside India too).

6. DTH being a uni-directional service, i.e. TVRO(TV Receive Only), in principle, and not communicating back to headend through wireless mode, GPS tracking is NOT possible. Carriage of TVRO to a location, other than that where initially installed, can only be based upon SNEAKING, i.e. information by paid informers. Upon information, recorded installation premises have to be visited/raided and service de-activated if equipment is NOT found there.

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7 Unlike mobile telephones, user location cannot be tracked by GPS because the TVRO does NOT transmit for LAT/LONG plotting to enable location detection.

Answers to Issues For Consultation

Q 1. Is there is a need for KYC or e KYC of Set Top Boxes to address the concern raised by MIB in their letter mentioned in paragraph 1.5 of this consultation paper ? Give your answer with justification.

The concern is NOT so much of MIB, as of PAY TV content Broadcasters. It is a fact that some DTH receiving devices, while supposedly active in the SMS in terms of pre-paid subscription, have been moved to locations other than those where initially installed, including, but not limited to off-shore locations, where they could be displayed over CATV or TVoIP/OTT systems. DTH service is under a tacit B2C agreement with the subscriber through a SAF and implied terms and conditions. One such condition could be prohibition of change of location of CPE, without information to service provider, and prosecution on violation if detected.

In the existing practice too, KYC is captured in the SAF. Hence, there is no need for introducing any separate KYC. If adhar number is to be mandated, it could be incorporated in the SAF.

Therefore, as long as DTH remains a Broadcast, NOT TELCO service, there is no need for capturing KYC other than, perhaps, including Adhar No in the SAF.

Q2. If your answer to Q 1 is in the affirmative , then what process is to be followed ?

The answer is NOT in the affirmative.

Q3. Whether one time KYC is enough at the time of installation or verification is required to be done on periodic basis to ensure its actual location ? If yes, then what should be the periodicity of such verification ?

The answer is NOT 'yes'.

One time KYC, which is ratified by the installation team, commissioning the CPE in the location and KYC filled up in SAF, should suffice on principle of TRUST and NOT distrust. For violation of T&C in the SAF, the culprits should be debarred from service provision, STB disabled for life, and culprits prosecuted as par law of the land.

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Q4 Whether KYC of existing STBs is required to be done along with new DTH STBs? If yes, how much time should be given for verifying existing STBs for DTH ?

If location, as per installation report, is same as in SAF, then 'NO'. Action of reported/suspected change in location , with intent to defraud, should be treated by exception and NOT as routine.

Q5 Whether location based services (LBS) needs to be incorporated in the DTH set top boxes to track its location? Will there be any cost implication ? Give your response with supporting data and justification.

No !

In Broadcast environment, there is no return communication path with transmitting agency. Broadcast, in principle, is ONE to MANY bi-directional wireless communication.

LBS as being envisaged, implies RF transmission from the STB detectible in GPS. This is bound to add costs to STB, besides pushing it into TELCO domain, which is point to pint communication, vastly different from Broadcast and outside jurisdiction of MIB..

Q6 Any other issue relevant to KYC of DTH Set Top Boxes ?

No !