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ZoomTown streams to Channel 25's rescue



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UPN affiliate Channel 25, the low-power station with limited distribution, has found a high-tech solution to its problem — video streaming on Cincinnati Bell's ZoomTown broadband Internet service.

WBQC-TV (Channel 25) can be seen in “real time” — without any delay, in other words — by 45,000 ZoomTown customers through its CoolCast streaming media service.

“This is groundbreaking. I think we're one of the first to do this in the country,” says Elliott Block, Channel 25 owner and general manager.

ZoomTown executives contacted Channel 25 about video streaming last month after reading *Enquirer* stories about Time Warner's refusal to carry the low-power UPN affiliate. The Federal Communication Commission does not require cable systems to carry low-power stations, although Northern Kentucky and Delhi Township cable companies include Channel 25 in their lineups.

Mr. Block jumped at the chance to partner with ZoomTown, which competes with Time Warner's Roadrunner Internet service.

“We're very happy we could work with UPN Channel 25 with a partial solution to getting them distribution, and it's good for us as well,” says Kurt Frehner, ZoomTown sales and marketing director.

UPN's weak signal here has troubled fans of Sarah Michelle Gellar's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Roswell*, which move from WB to UPN this fall.

UPN will launch *Enterprise*, a new *Star Trek* series starring Scott Bakula (*Quantum Leap*, *Murphy Brown*), this fall on Channel 25, which also airs *Star Trek: The Next Generation* reruns.

“Young people really like these shows, and they're Internet savvy, so they're perfect users for this technology,” says Tressie Long, a Cincinnati Bell spokeswoman.

CoolCast offers ZoomTown users the option of either watching a UPN show on the entire computer screen, or in a smaller picture in the corner of the screen while doing other tasks on the computer, Mr. Frehner says.

ZoomTown will provide all Channel 25 programming around-the-clock in real time, at no extra charge to customers, he says.

“For people who can't get (Channel 25), it's a way they can get us now,” Mr. Block says. “It will be interesting to see the feedback on this.”

Hi, guy: Fox's *Family Guy* cartoon returns after an 18-month absence with new episodes for summer. In the season premiere, Brian the dog helps police (9:30 p.m. today, Channels 19, 45).

Cincinnati help: Jack Samad from the Finneytown-based National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families was a consultant for Tuesday's *Dateline NBC* report about teens and sex.

Mr. Samad worked for about three months with NBC News producers, providing them with names of teens interviewed for the one-hour program. No Tristate teens appeared on the show, he says.

The Cincinnati organization was founded in 1983 as the National Coalition against Pornography by the Rev. Jerry Kirk.

Emmy note: Nominations for the 2001 Prime-time Emmy Awards will be announced at 8:30 a.m. Thursday on the E! Entertainment channel. *The Early Show* also will broadcast the news on CBS, which broadcasts the Emmy Awards Sept. 16.

Around the dial: Baseball fans shouldn't miss *Shot Heard Round The World* (8 p.m. today, HBO), a one-hour documentary about Bobby Thompson's dramatic home run in the 1951 Giants-Dodgers National League playoff game.

Oh, brother: Watching the *Big Brother 2* housemates bicker may be fun, but it's no cheap thrill.

Specifically, it's a \$19.95 one. That's the price viewers will have to pay to catch the 24-hours-a-day live video streaming of the CBS reality show, which premiered Thursday.

CBS has partnered with RealNetworks, which will offer the feed for a one-time fee of \$19.95 through CBS.com (www.cbs.com/primetime/bigbrother/) or for \$9.95 per month for those who subscribe to its GoldPass service.

But CBS will not Web cast the weekly challenges and the eviction nominations. Clips will be available after the live Thursday *Big Brother* broadcast.

New ingredient: Robert Urich (*Spenser: For Hire*; *Vega\$*) best known for his dramatic work, will join NBC's new *Emeril* sitcom as the pal/personal manager of Emeril Lagasse, who plays himself as a TV superchef.

Emeril, to launch in the fall at 8 p.m. Tuesdays, was created by Linda Bloodworth and directed by Harry Thomason. The wife-husband team worked together on *Designing Women* and *Evening Shade*.

What about Bob: ABC also has recast two supporting roles in *Bob Patterson*, the new Jason Alexander sitcom about a neurotic motivational speaker.

Jennifer Aspen (*Party of Five*) will play Bob's ex-wife, with Phil Buckman (*City of Angels*) as his dorky assistant.

The Philadelphia Inquirer and Zap2it.com contributed to this report.