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IPlayer to get Apple TV launch?

Ashley Highfield talks up possible Mac platform solution

by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 17 January 2008

The BBC's iPlayer service - that was condemned at launch for only being operational on Windows computers - may soon be available through Apple's recently revamped Apple TV service.

Ashley Highfield, director of Future Media & Technology for the BBC, has expressed an interest using the home cinema device, that will now not need a computer in order to operate, and can download rental content, as part of the Mac platform for the service.

iPlayer was not available to Mac users at all at launch, but a recent re-jig of the service means that those using the Mac operating system can use the BBC-run website to stream recent programming while Windows users can also download shows to watch at their convenience.

"The announcement from Macworld about the effective relaunch of the Apple TV (Jobs: 'we tried with Apple TV, but its not what people wanted. So we're back with Apple TV take two - no computer is required') is encouraging", says Highfield on the BBC Internet Blog.

"This, coupled with Apple's (long anticipated) move to a rental model, means that we can look to getting BBC iPlayer onto this platform too, as we should be able to use the rental functionality to allow our programmes to be downloaded, free, but retained for a time window, and then erased, as our rightsholders currently insist."

The Apple TV "take two" rental revisions have obviously made an impression on Highfield, as in a recent post, he had criticised the product:

"Apple TVs have hardly been flying off the shelves either. When the boss describes one of his products as a 'hobby', be warned."



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"The problem with the Apple [Apple TV] solution is that it is geared around their business model of downloading and owning files via iTunes, not streaming A/V from a multitude of websites, or using other formats such as DivX, XviD, MPEG2, and WMV."