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BBC iPlayer gets update

Promising higher quality video streaming

by Katie Scott published on 13 August 2008

It had a complete overhaul in June - combining radio and TV content all on one page - but now the Beeb has again updated its iPlayer VoD service.

The BBC is migrating iPlayer to using the open standards H.264 and AAC+ which basically means better video and audio quality for iPlayer fans.

And faster streaming as stream quality is reported to have shot to 800Kbps from 500Kbps as a result of the update.

The iPlayer media player now supports hardware acceleration in full-screen mode, giving a greatly improved image at lower CPU usage than before, the broadcaster explained.

This latest move follows on from the BBC's decision to make the iPlayer available for iPod and iPhone owners, as both of these Apple devices get the iPlayer content streamed in H.264 and AAC.

"The BBC has always been a strong advocate and driver of open industry standards. Without these standards, TV and radio broadcasting would simply not function," wrote BBC director of future media and technology Erik Huggers on the company's internet blog.

"I believe that the time has come for the BBC to start adopting open standards such as H.264 and AAC for our audio and video services on the web. These technologies have matured enough to make them viable alternatives to other solutions.

"The advantage for the audience will be a noticeable improvement in audio and video quality. Furthermore, it should become easier for the media to simply work across a broader range



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of devices," he added.