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Next Generation of Television to Offer Expanded Audio Functionality for Wide Variety of Devices

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9, 2014 – As part of the move to a next-generation TV standard, the Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) today issued a Call for Proposals for a comprehensive audio system for the emerging ATSC 3.0 standard, offering a more immersive audio experience for living room and mobile viewers. Initial responses are due in January 2015.

The audio subsystem for ATSC 3.0 is expected to provide an enhanced feature set, improving upon the capabilities of the current broadcast digital television audio system. In doing so, this new system will provide the listener with both a personalized and an immersive experience, according to ATSC President Mark Richer.

"Personalization includes enhancement to the control of dialog, use of alternate audio tracks and mixing of assistive audio services, other-language dialog, special commentary, and music and effects. Plus, the system will support both the normalization of content loudness and contouring of dynamic range, based on the specific capabilities of a user’s fixed or mobile device and its unique sound environment," Richer explained.

ATSC 3.0 audio is expected to work with home theater AV systems, with television sets (both with and without "soundbar" audio systems), and also with personal audio systems such as tablets, smartphones and other handheld devices used both with and without headphones. The level of the immersive audio experience may vary depending on the platform in use.

"Immersive audio functionality envelops the listener with precise sound source localization in azimuth, elevation and distance, and provides an increased sense of presence. These features can be supported over the listening area, without the need for a large number of physical speakers," Richer said.
The goal of the ATSC.3.0 Audio System Call for Proposals is to identify advanced audio technology that satisfies the audio requirements for features, quality and low bit rate transmission in the ATSC 3.0 Standard. Systems proposed will be judged discretely and in their entirety, as comprehensive, end-to-end systems for emission of the ATSC signal.

The Call for Proposals requests that proponents submit only complete audio solutions that satisfy ATSC 3.0 system needs, because the ATSC does not intend to develop the ATSC 3.0 audio system out of independent components from multiple sources. The ATSC 3.0 audio system is expected to support both video/audio content and audio-only content.

The ATSC is in the process of developing a next-generation terrestrial television broadcast standard (known as ATSC 3.0) with advanced performance and functionality made possible by new technologies and strategies. This next-generation standard must provide improvements in performance, functionality and efficiency that are significant enough to warrant the challenges of a transition to a new system.

The new ATSC 3.0 standard should maximize the one-to-many (point-to-multi-point) attribute of broadcasting, which enables a highly efficient means for distribution of popular content to an unlimited number of receivers. ATSC 3.0 should also provide robust mobile services to untethered devices that move, such as phones, tablets, laptops and personal televisions. Since these devices are likely to move across borders, it is highly desirable that the specification contains core technologies that will have broad international acceptance and enable global interoperability. ATSC is continuing its efforts to facilitate cooperation among appropriate international organizations.

Initial responses to the call for ATSC 3.0 audio proposals are due Jan. 12, 2015. Details on the ATSC 3.0 Call for Proposals can be found on the ATSC.org Web site.
Advanced Television Systems Committee Invites Audio System Proposals for ATSC 3.0

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