

# Shape-shifted TV – NM2 at IBC 2006 in Amsterdam



Peter Stollenmayer  
Eurescom  
stollenmayer@eurescom.eu

The collaborative research project NM2 successfully demonstrated its first results at IBC 2006 in Amsterdam. NM2, which stands for “New Media for a New Millennium”, is a project co-funded by the 6th EU Research Framework Programme. The project will provide tools and technology for building interactive media forms that can be delivered over broadband to a TV screen.

IBC is one of the largest events for everyone involved in the creation, management and delivery of content for the entertainment industry. This year, IBC took place from 7 to 12 September at the Amsterdam RAI conference centre. About 45,000 attendees from more than 120 countries participated in the exhibition and conference. NM2 contributed with a conference paper and a stand on the exhibition floor. Both the paper and the stand created substantial interest amongst visitors.

## An attractive new form of media

Visitors were very interested in the new media form becoming possible with the NM2 tools. “The new media genre will allow stories to be adapted, on the fly, for an individual viewer. We think this will be immensely attractive for viewers and for advertisers” explained Dr. Doug Williams from BT, NM2’s technical project manager. Dr. Williams calls this new media form “Shape-shifted TV” to stress that the user decides interactively what he or she wants to see, and how the related clip, delivered through an individual broadband channel, looks like.



The NM2 stand at IBC 2006



## Working tools and a prototype production

Both a demonstrator of the NM2 production tools, and a real media production, demonstrating how the NM2 production tools will work, were presented at the NM2 stand. “Gods in the Sky Choice” is one of eight interactive production pilots by NM2. Visitors could see, explore, and understand how this repurposed Channel 4 mini-series on the mythology and science of ancient cultures was structured. Viewers could select “Sit-back Entertainment”, “Education”, or “Information” mode, and choose topic and length of programme as well as level of educational suitability. Every viewing was unique. The economy of process and cost as well as the flexible format created keen interest. Ludvig Lohse of the Digital Studio, University of Cambridge, the producer of this interactive documentary, stated after the conference that

“we were overwhelmed by the positive response to our demonstration in this production of how to successfully incorporate coherent stories into truly reconfigurable frameworks.”

Visitors were not only interested in the productions, but also in technical details of the NM2 production tools, which allow producers and editors to prepare the new shape-shifted media.

## Conclusion

The large interest, which the NM2 presentation evoked at IBC, showed clearly that it is high time for new digital media genres, which are better suitable for broadband than the current forms of television.

You can find more information on NM2 at <http://www.ist-nm2.org> and on IBC at <http://www.ibc.org>