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Internet TV proving a hit

CHANNELS: Television shows available to be viewed on Sony's 24 Bravia internet video channels are attracting more than a million views a month, a year after the service was launched, according to Sony Australia.

The TV maker said internet TV — which in Sony's case may be viewed alongside the free-to-air broadcast channels on Sony TVs, Blu-ray players and Sony PlayStation games consoles that are hooked up to the internet — would become the normal way of watching TV within three years.

The company, which is understood to have knocked Korean arch-rival Samsung off its perch as the top-selling TV brand in January, will launch as many as 10 new IPTV channels this year, six of which will be local channels. They will include news, children's programs and movies on demand.

"We're approaching just over a million views a month on just Bravia in Australia," Sony technology spokesman Paul Colley said. "I think the industry is going to be surprised by how quickly this takes over."

The commercial TV networks are already facing the fragmentation of their audiences from new digital TV channels as

well as video viewed over an internet connection. But so-called smart, or internet-connected, TVs will increase that fragmentation by enabling consumers to watch internet video on their TV sets with the push of a remote-control button.

Already, a quarter of the smart TVs that Sony sells are hooked up to the internet, and the company expects this figure to rise to 80 per cent by 2014.

"In three years, I'd say that internet TV would be the normal way that people watch TV," Mr Colley said.

"The National Broadband Network will speed that up."

YouTube is the most popular internet TV channel on Sony's internet protocol TV platform followed by the local catch-up TV services of Australian free-to-air broadcasters.

Two weeks ago SBS chief operating officer Richard Finlayson told an advertising forum in Sydney that the SBS channel was attracting between 30,000 and 40,000 views.

Mr Colley said Australia was the most advanced market in the region, excluding Japan, in terms of its range of Sony IPTV content.

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