



COGECO GETS INTO IPTV GAME

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Cogeco has launched Epico, its first foray into IPTV, as consumers continue to integrate connected viewing into their TV habits.

Epico enables customers to access live and on-demand content through a single interface. Integrated with the Android TV interface, customers have access to streaming services such as Netflix, YouTube, Disney+ and other applications via the Google Play Store. It is also an internet-and-cable bundle package, offering live TV from between 35 to 55 channels, depending on the package a customer pays for.

Other features include a personalized interface, user profiles, voice command and a 4K wireless cloud PVR that can record up to 1,000 hours of content to be watched with or without an internet connection using the EPICO mobile app.

In a conference call discussing the company's Q1 results on Friday, Philippe Jetté, Cogeco's president and CEO, said the service would be available in approximately 85% of Cogeco's Canadian footprint. Roughly 12,000 Cogeco customers have already signed up for Epico during a pilot phase.

Cogeco did not disclose total customer numbers in its most recent financial report, but says it is the second-largest cable provider in Ontario and Quebec. That status was helped in December when it closed its acquisition of Quebec-based DERYtelecom, adding roughly 100,000 customers.

An advertising campaign for Epico started on Monday and will be running during the next few weeks in Cogeco territory in Québec and Ontario on radio, TV and online.

By bundling it with internet and SVOD services, Epico helps Cogeco make its TV offering (and the ad opportunities there) more relevant in a Canadian market that is becoming less reliant on traditional pay TV services. According to the latest MTM figures, 70% of Anglophone Canadian households have a cable or satellite subscription, compared to 72% who subscribe to an SVOD like Netflix, while multi-screen viewing is becoming an entrenched norm rather than an emerging trend. Meanwhile, 63% of households have the kind of internet-connected TV that an IPTV service like Epico runs on.