For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit: [www.microsoft.com/casestudies](http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies)

**Customer:** BSkyB

**Web Site:** [www.sky.com](http://www.sky.com/)

**Number of Employees:** 14,900

**Country or Region:** United Kingdom

**Industry:** Media and entertainment—Satellite broadcasting

**Partners:** IOKO and AllofUs

Customer Profile

BSkyB Group owns and operates the Sky pay-tv platform in the United Kingdom, which now has almost 10 million subscribers. It generates around £5 billion a year.

Software and Services

* Technologies
* Microsoft Silverlight
* Microsoft PlayReady
* Microsoft Expression

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|  |  | CEP_Masthead_Blue1 |
| Microsoft SilverlightCustomer Solution Case Study |
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“The Microsoft–BSkyB partnership is all about extending choice and offering the best entertainment experience possible.”

Griff Parry, Director of OnDemand, Sky Player

BSkyB Group wanted to re-develop its existing Sky Player TV interface to enhance user experience and provide Sky TV from a variety of devices. It worked with Microsoft and digital agencies IOKO and AllofUs to develop an updated interface with Microsoft Silverlight powered by Microsoft PlayReady, which launched in December 2008.

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| AllofUsioko_logo |  |  | Microsoft |

Business Needs

BSkyB owns and manages Sky Player, its online TV service in the United Kingdom (U.K.). Sky Player originally launched in 2006 as a service that allowed customers to download premium video content—sport highlights and movies—onto their desktop computers through a broadband Internet connection.

BSkyB is continually expanding Sky Player services, delivering a growing range of channels and content and more freedom and choice over how and when customers watch it.

Griff Parry, Director of OnDemand, Sky Player, says: “As peoples’ lifestyles evolve, we want

them to be able to watch TV when and where they like—this includes on computer screens, mobile phones, and other connected devices in the future.”

With annual revenues in its core business of around £5 billion, protecting its digital content is crucial. “Not only do Hollywood studios have stringent protection requirements, we also need to protect our satellite subscription business. If people could access our content without paying for it, it would damage that core revenue stream,” says Parry.

When BSkyB decided to update its Sky Player service—extending user choice from just video on demand to the live streaming of selected Sky TV channels—it wanted to be sure its digital content was secure, while enhancing the user experience.

Solution

BSkyB worked alongside Microsoft, one of its technology partners, to re-launch the Sky Player service in December 2008.

The intuitive interface was redeveloped using the Microsoft Expression suite of developer tools to create a Microsoft Silverlight Web-based experience that is digital rights management (DRM) protected by Microsoft PlayReady.

Consumers can also access live Sky TV channels through the Windows Media Center, and only require a broadband connection and a computer running a Windows or Apple Macintosh operating system.

The interface has the same familiar Sky-branded menu and access controls as the satellite service, and consumers can access content that includes all the Sky Sports channels, Sky News, the Disney Channel, National Geographic, and British Eurosport.

AllofUs—a digital design and development agency based in east London—used the Microsoft Silverlight browser plug-in to add several new features to enhance the overall consumer experience. For example, users can search for a programme or film by an actor or genre category. Another feature, the “highlights” page, displays the highest rated programmes along with images, so users can decide what content is most interesting and relevant to them.

“With Microsoft technology, we’ve extended Sky Player to run on a games console.”

Griff Parry, Director of OnDemand, Sky Player

IOKO, a digital development agency based in the U.K., used Microsoft PlayReady as part of a broader security solution that allows access from a variety of devices. On-demand content cannot be copied to disc or played after the date specified by participating channels.

Benefits

Familiar, Sky-branded user controls and secure DRM technologies give BSkyB the freedom to extend Sky Player to other devices and continue to expand its user base and revenues. Parry says: “The Microsoft–BSkyB partnership is all about extending choice and offering the best entertainment experience possible.”

* **Successful partnership.** Microsoft and BSkyB both provide feedback on what works and what doesn’t from a consumer and security perspective. “Ultimately, digital consumers benefit from our ongoing partnership,” says Parry.
* **Familiar user experience.** Users operate Sky Player with the same branded controls regardless of the device from which they access the content. “Our controls are a big part of our brand. By having the same controls on different devices, consumers can navigate around the content with ease,” says Parry.
* **Easily expanded services.** BSkyB has already extended Sky Player to non-Microsoft devices and technology. Parry says: “The fact that Microsoft technology is used on many devices helps us to expand the distribution of our service.”
* **Greater choice.** Parry says: “With Microsoft technology, we’ve extended Sky Player to run on a games console—in addition, it can be accessed via the Windows Media Center on a desktop computer.”
* **Increased revenue.** Broader content, an updated interface, and extension to other devices drive greater use—the number of active users has increased substantially since November 2008.