

Atria to invest Rs 450 cr in IPTV services in 2009

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Bangalore-based multi-system operator Atria Convergence Technologies plans to invest Rs 450 crore next year to launch IPTV services in its stronghold - Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

This comes at a time when most media companies are deferring or canceling their pre-determined expansion and diversification plans.

Atria plans to launch services in the states by mid-January, and will follow it up with a pan-India rollout. It will fund the activity through equity infusion,

debt and internal accruals.

"The basic idea is to democratise interactive services. Currently, only 5% of our total population has access to the internet. Through our model of IPTV service, we intend to target the remaining 95% of the population. We intend to accomplish this through converting the television set into a highly interactive device," said Sunder Raju, managing director, Atria Convergence Technologies.

The company provides cable TV services, broadband services, digital TV services and soft-launched its IPTV services three months ago.

"We will offer easy e-

mail services that can be delivered through TV sets and can be used by elderly people and those unaccustomed to computer usage. We also want to bring interactive educational content for school children through our IPTV services, for which we are collaborating with educationists."

Atria is also betting on its video-on-demand service, where it feels it will have a distinct edge over DTH services.

Although the price structure is yet to be firmed up and will depend on the services a customer subscribes, an email service may cost less than Rs 20 per month. Atria is looking at an ARPU of Rs 500.