

What is *Pro:Idiom*?

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Pro:Idiom is a digital content protection system tailored for the hospitality industry. It allows a central decoder in a hotel to decrypt video from a headend or satellite feed and re-encode it for secure delivery to TV sets in each room.

Pro:Idiom eliminates the need to use set-top boxes with special TV sets from LG, Samsung, Panasonic, Sharp, and Philips. It's apparently a big plus. The growing list of who's deploying **Pro:Idiom** now includes Comcast, Time Warner, Cox, Charter, Brighthouse and RCN.

Cox Business, for instance, began offering HD to hotels in all markets last November using the technology. The standard offer was 24 channels, although in some markets such as Northern Virginia, that number had jumped to 40 by December.

Pro:Idiom is widely used in both hotel and hospital environments. Most TV sets sold to the hospitality industry now have **Pro:Idiom** because it eliminates the set-top and all of the headaches that go along with it. It is installed on about 1.5 million out of the 5.5 million total screens in the U.S. hospitality industry.

It is a content protection technology that can be used in both bi-directional and one-way systems. Other hospitality content protection schemes require authentication and two-way handshaking, which makes them more expensive for the hospitality industry.

"It is a significant challenge for the guy that fixes door locks and beds to have to manage a two-way network," said Richard Lewis Senior VP of Research and Technology for Zenith.

Content protection was not as big a concern when all of the content was analog. But as hotels move towards HD, digital rights management is being required as part of the transition.

"Content providers told us that they did not want to transmit high-def without protection," Lewis explained. *"On the flip side the hotel management does not care whether it is 128 or 256-bit AES, they want to know if they can get high-def HBO or not."*

As indicated above with respect to authentication and handshaking, however, costs are a concern for many in the hotel industry. Two comments posted to a hospitality story that ran last October made that point. One noted a trend of hotels dropping cable or satellite-fed programming in favor of providing high-speed Internet and free over-the-air HD.

– George Lawton – Cablefax.com

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