



News Release

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Skylink to build on London Marathon success

A year after its launch at IBC 2003 the Skylink video relay service returns to the event on the back of a year of successes. Operating from a small fixed-wing aircraft flying at around 30,000 feet and able to carry multiple feeds, Skylink has been deployed at a range of high profile international sporting events, including the London Marathon, the World Rally Championship (WRC) and cycling's Tour de Suisse and Zurich Grand Prix.

BBC Outside Broadcasts has signalled its intention to use the service for the 2005 London Marathon, allowing viewers to choose which of the various camera feeds to watch. Skylink's ability to carry multiple live feeds from dispersed events, like the London Marathon, means viewers could, for example, follow the men's race for a time before switching to see Paula Radcliffe try to make up for her disappointments in Athens, increasing the interactive viewing experience.

The 2004 race provided a challenging environment with poor weather and an urban race location. With a low cloud base causing difficulties for the relay helicopters Skylink successfully flew at 26,000 feet, relaying robust digital video links from two of the BBC's camera motorbikes even through the built-up areas of the city.

Skylink's first deployment with BBC Outside Broadcasts was during the Wales Rally GB leg of the WRC in 2003. Required to simultaneously relay live video from four on-board cameras spread out across a long, heavily wooded course, Skylink allowed Channel 4 and ISC to broadcast the exciting conclusion of the event live to over 80 million viewers around the world.

Reflecting on the first year of Skylink, Stephen Watson, Skylink Product Manager at QinetiQ, said: "Although Skylink has only been available for a year, the antenna technology that underpins the service has been developed by QinetiQ over many years. That deep understanding and know-how coupled with the expertise of our Skylink partners has enabled us to hit the ground running and provide broadcasters with the right solutions to some very challenging outside broadcast problems."



Skylink will enable the BBC to offer its viewers a choice of camera views for the 2005 London Marathon

Watson continued: "We are delighted with the interest shown by the BBC in Skylink. The ability to increase the levels of interaction and choice offered to their viewers is key to their future strategy and we are pleased to be playing a part in delivering that."

The service continues to improve with a further Lions Air Pilatus PC-12 aircraft recently being added to the Skylink fleet. In a further capability improvement, the service has been also upgraded to enable an eight-beam relay from one aircraft, making Skylink a viable and cost effective option for the largest high profile events.

By using a single repeater platform, Skylink provides significant cost and performance benefits over current relay services, with the added benefit of being able to operate in all weather conditions and over any terrain. Ideally suited for geographically dispersed sporting events such as cycling, motor sport, marathons, sailing and other maritime sports, Skylink will also prove invaluable to electronic news gathering (ENG) and for security force reconnaissance. The service is provided through a unique partnership between GlobalLink, Lions Air and QinetiQ.

Visit the Skylink website at www.skylink.aero

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Notes for Editors:

- **GlobalLink:** GlobalLink specialises in mobile microwave communications and video transmissions, and has become a major contributor in the production of live and non-live broadcasts. GlobalLink own and operate five mobile satellite transmission vehicles, analogue and digital video equipment, antennas and production capabilities.
- **Lions Air:** The Lions Air Group is based in Zurich and has over 15 years of experience of charter air travel. Founded in 1986, Lions Air has expanded to become the largest PC-12 operator in Europe. The PC-12s are used to transport passengers quickly and safely, as well as to relay radio communications and microwave video links.
- **QinetiQ:** QinetiQ is Europe's largest science and technology solutions companies that employs nearly 10,000 staff, including many of the UK's leading scientists and internationally acclaimed experts. Founded from the laboratories of the UK Ministry of Defence, today QinetiQ operates in markets as diverse as marine, energy, telecommunications, automotive, rail, electronics, defence, space, health, oil & gas, aerospace and information technology. QinetiQ's heritage covers the pioneering research and development of many household technologies such as liquid crystal displays (LCDs), carbon fibre, the technology for flat panel speakers, infra-red sensors and microwave radar, a life saving foetal heart monitoring system, plus other significant advancements in the areas of passenger security and transport.
- **BBC Outside Broadcasts:** BBC Outside Broadcasts, a division of BBC Resources, is the leading outside broadcast facilities provider in Europe, offering a complete range of solutions from scanners and VT units to design of bespoke OB production units. Combining creativity and flair with technical expertise, project management and customer service skills, BBC Outside Broadcasts caters for both small and large scale events across all genres. Key clients include BBC Sport and independents such as North One, TWI and MTV. Further information can be found at: www.bbcresources.com/ob

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