

These are businesses I would be looking at starting, and software I would look at writing if I were so inclined.

Instead, I decided to throw them out free for all. Maybe someone has already thought of the ideas, maybe someone hasn't. Doesn't matter.

If I were a patent terrorist like some, I could probably even patent these ideas. Isn't it a shame that in this country today, you can have nothing more than an idea, do nothing with it, but still have a chance to make money?

All you have to do is be the first to file and get approved on a patent for your idea or process. Then send it to the lawyers to steal money from companies that have enough brains to come up with the idea independently of you, with no idea of who you are, or what you did. They are able to do what the patent terrorists couldn't turn an idea into a product or service and make a business out of it. That's a crime in and of itself...but I digress.

Here are the ideas (Patent away):

1. When is the one time we all stare real hard at the TV and give 100% of our attention? When we are fast forwarding using our TiVo/PVR units. TV never has a greater share of our attention because we all want to stop the fast forward right when the show starts back up. It would be real easy to write software to pull one of the 30 frames per second that are marked for the device, and hold that as a billboard ad for the product being sold until the commercial is over. The viewer won't see it if they don't fast forward, and if they do, they see the equivalent of a billboard for the product being sold. Viewers staring hard at your ad. That can't be a bad thing.

If PVR providers want to get fancy, in a high-def world, they can pull identified frames and bits and reassemble a full ad at lower resolution...again, not difficult at all to do.

2. When I had broadcast.com we were testing software that let the user program their own TV stations. Just take any of our programs that were available on demand from our site, and plug it into a schedule that you create for your station. You can even insert a live program as part of the schedule and the software just changes the channel to the one you want.

Today, with PVRs and Media Center PCs, this doesn't have to be about the net. With very simple software, you could pull content from the net, or more importantly Video on Demand sources and program your own personal TV schedule.

Search through your Comcast or Charter VOD programming guides, and schedule the shows you want, when you want.

Of course, this is not different than an MP3 playlist from any music player, so it would just be days till PersonalTV station playlists would be shared. Want to watch Mark Cuban TV (don't know why, but if you did), just subscribe to my TV Sched PlayList RSS output from my blog, and you can watch what I watch, when I watch it.

3. Here is the one app that I think could really mess things up. The cable network emulator.

I don't know if it ever happens, but it could really toss a wrench into things. If you can schedule your own TV network, you can emulate someone else's. So if I wanted to recreate the schedule of Spike TV, USA Networks, etc, etc., it would take minutes to download their upcoming schedule and then run a search through your local cable provider IPG and see what they have on demand. The program will then come back to you with which hours from the emulated schedule are available VOD and schedule it the same time as Spike, USA, whichever network you are emulating. Voila' you have created your version without subscribing.

The more programs available on demand and online, the more the power of the program expands.

Where the real trouble starts is as more TV shows and movies are available via VOD and the net, then the programs will also be able to do a cost comparison. Is it cheaper to buy programs on your own and emulate your favorite network or buy the network?

Could it be better to buy basic digital cable, the SVOD package, an external source of content like Netflix or an internet content service then it is to buy more expensive packages?

It's going to be fun to find out and to see if and when these software programs appear.