

STATE CONTROL

The broadcasting regulator mulls putting the top 100 content providers for over-the-top service platforms on a control list. **B3**

TECHNOLOGY

NBTC considers OTT control options



Facebook is one of the most popular OTT platforms in Thailand. PATTANAPONG HIRUNARD

Regulator seeks to set industry standards

KOMSAN TORTERMSASANA

The broadcasting regulator is considering putting the top 100 content providers for over-the-top (OTT) service platforms on a control list, as officials strive to establish industry standards and a level playing field.

Popular content providers on OTT platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, with more than 1 million followers or subscriptions are categorised as the top 100 accounts.

The plan is part of a regulatory policy by the National Broadcasting and Telecom-

munications Commission (NBTC), under which measures will be imposed on the local OTT market to curb internet content that is difficult to regulate, said Col Natee Sukonrat, chairman of NBTC's broadcasting committee.

"The 100 most popular content providers or users on social media who influence public opinion and perception will have to be reined in," he said.

The NBTC is on the verge of drafting a regulatory framework to govern streaming video-on-demand services on OTT platforms.

Col Natee said it is too early to identify the top 100 popular content providers or users on social media: "We need to ask them [OTTs] to register their companies with the NBTC, and OTTs may need to apply for operating licences."

A clearer picture of the regulatory framework for OTT is expected over the next two weeks, and take effect by August this year.

The NBTC held a forum for all parties related to the OTT platform last month to hear out opinions before concluding final regulatory measures for OTT providers.

The regulator called the 100 most popular YouTubers to participate in the hearing on June 6, followed by the top 100 Facebook content providers on June 7.

Col Natee said the NBTC's board in April resolved that video-on-demand from OTT operators falls into the category of broadcast business. The board approved the setting up of a subcommittee to determine regulatory policy.

Yesterday, Col Natee said OTT is clearly categorised by the subcommittee as a TV

broadcasting service that does not use frequencies, similar to existing cable TV and satellite TV services.

He said that streaming video on OTT platform only differs from existing cable TV or satellite TV in that users on OTT can post their content directly to viewers.

Previously, the NBTC's advisory company reported OTT services are commonly divided into two types: free platform (advertising-driven) and paid platform (monthly payment and pay-on-demand).

The free OTT platform includes Line TV, YouTube, and some digital TV channels that broadcast their programmes via OTT platforms such as Channels 3, 7 and 8 and the Workpoint channel.

Paid OTT platforms include Netflix, Iflix, Hollywood HDTV, PrimeTime, AIS Play and TrueVisions Anywhere.