

Information and communication technologies to expand borders

16th International *Media in Belarus* Exhibition first organised jointly with 19th International *TIBO-2012* Forum on Telecommunications, Information and Banking Technologies

By Vasily Kharitonov

The combination of the two fairs promotes wider application of contemporary IT and Internet by the printed media while expanding their readership.

This year, the two forums have been working in creative union to expand the presence of the Belarusian media online. Opening the event, Belarus' Information Minister, Oleg Proleskovsky, noted, "In our modern world, information is of vital importance. The Belarusian media is keeping up with the times by mastering new IT opportunities. The media's main task is to find and preserve its readership, so it needs to offer a high quality media product."

The First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Alexander Radkov, admits that technological development is continuous but that it does have definite phases of decline and growth. "For Belarus to move forward, it needs to develop its information and electronic technologies," he underlines. "Moreover, following world trends, we should develop e-trade and various types of information carriers (printed and digital). Tablet PCs are already in use across various spheres but the Internet has failed to drive out our desire for hard copy newspapers. Nothing can replace live com-



Printed media still popular in Belarus, occupying market niche

munication; the more opportunities we have for virtual communication, the greater our need for live communication."

Over 40 exhibitors — from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, China, Cuba, India and Turkey — took part in the *Media in Belarus* exhibition, sharing experience and demonstrating their achievements in the world information space.

The Belarusian printed media already has a presence

online, although, according to Belarus' Deputy Information Minister, Vladimir Matusевич, full potential is yet to be mastered. He asserts, "It's not enough to place articles from the paper format online. We need to use social networks and regularly update our resources. Unfortunately, not everyone is yet capable of updating newsfeed promptly. To have a future, the media must use interactive portals."

The event saw profession-

als discussing how best to extend information sharing online and how to promote a country's image via the media. Seminars and round-table discussions were used to share ideas. TV companies were inviting viewers to comment via Skype (assisted by the *TIBO* exhibition, which demonstrated over 200 companies from 14 states). Meanwhile, world famous brands such as Huawei, Nokia and Siemens, as well as Beltele-

com and all domestic mobile operators, presented their latest innovations.

"Our country has reached a high level of information development," notes Belarus' Communications and Informatisation Minister, Nikolai Pantelei. "Now, we need to join forces with countries boasting the highest level of IT development. To do so, we need to change our approach towards the provision of electronic services for

businesses while encouraging state authorities to take part. We should prepare for this psychologically, although I'm confident that results will be positive."

At present, not enough attention is being paid to pensioners' potential to use the Internet; young people remain the target audience in Belarus, being gradually joined by those of middle-age. According to Mr. Pantelei, pensioners don't tend to use the Internet to tackle everyday tasks.

Speaking of the role of information and communication technologies in society, Mr. Pantelei uses the country's automobile market as an example. In Soviet times, few drivers existed in Belarus, as most people used public transport. Now, most Belarusians can't imagine their life without a personal car. "The same is true of information and communication technologies," he stresses, explaining that much depends on accessibility of services. Some were available to Belarusians back in the 1990s and early 2000s but their quality and price were unattractive to many. As fees have dropped and quality has improved, demand has significantly increased.

The Minsk forums have accentuated the potential of IT in our modern world, showing that communication is important as never before.

Belarusian satellite to be sent into orbit in first half of this year

Belarusian scientists prepare new national space programme jointly with Russian specialists

By Olga Belova

The major areas of the new programme cover the development of a remote Earth sensing system and space communications. "The formation of a single navigation and time field for Belarus is also planned," explains the Director of the United Institute of Informatics Problems at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Alexander Tuzikov.

This year, Belarus is completing its national space programme, adopted in 2008. Its key aim has been to establish a national Earth remote sensing system, including satellite launch. "I hope that all our



Belarusian Space Congress hosted by Minsk for fifth time

plans will be fulfilled in the first half of the year," notes the Director of the Institute.

Mr. Tuzikov also notes that Belarusian scientists have designed modern

target equipment. "It will be used for the Belarusian and Russian satellite, being launched together," explains Mr. Tuzikov. "Technologies have also been created to manufacture

higher resolution optical equipment."

The Belarusian satellite is to be sent into orbit alongside the Russian satellite Canopus-B (via a cluster launch from

Baikonur in H1 2012). The satellite will be able to fully survey Belarusian territory and will be lighter and more manoeuvrable than the last, weighing about 400kg and boasting a resolution of about 2 metres. With the satellite in orbit, Belarus will gain independence in gathering data, alleviating its need to purchase this from other countries.

Satellite data is useful to the forestry and agricultural industries, as well as to ecologists, map specialists and geodesists. It can also be used to assess emergency situations such as fire and flood, allowing more effective action to be taken.

Police support book-exchange

Free libraries across Gomel Region's interior affairs departments

Gomel Regional Executive Committee's Interior Affairs Department has joined the book-exchange, as have district and city departments, the State Road Inspection Department and the Patrol Service. Staff can leave newspapers, magazines and books at exchange points, allowing them to pick up other editions.

The organisers of the project note that crime fiction (modern and classic) is proving most popular. However, historical novels, sci-fi, romance and popular fiction, healthy lifestyle books and cookery books are also readily available.

The movement is gaining momentum in Belarus, with the Gomel Region's cultural and educational establishments joining the project, alongside some enterprises.