

# SmartWi to Conquer Provider Market

*Readers of this magazine have been familiar with wireless card reader manufacturer SmartWi for years. In TELE-satellite issue 06-07/2007 we published the first report on this Danish company which has come up with a glorious idea: How about transmitting data from a pay TV provider's subscription card to a second card in the same household? All of a sudden your viewing pleasure can be extended from the living room all the way to the bedroom, den or any other room at your place. Pay TV wherever you like – and a smart idea like that deserves a proper name too: smart Wifi, or SmartWi in short.*



Kruså  
(Padborg)



smartwi®



Kurt Olesen is the smart brain behind SmartWi. He founded the company in 2005 and when we visited him for the first time in 2007 he was riding a gigantic wave of success. 60,000 SmartWi products were sold in 2007, but sales figures gradually decreased in the years to follow. "In 2010 we will sell approximately 35,000 SmartWi devices."

Still, Kurt Olesen has an extremely confident outlook on the future – and for a reason: "Around the publication date of this issue of TELE-satellite and at the IBC exhibition we will launch the second generation SmartWi," Kurt Olesen explains and proudly shows us the new SmartWi model. "It works the same way as the first generation," he continues. "Customers simply plug the pay TV card into the unit and are then able to watch pay TV on a second TV using an additional card which is connected to the main device via radio signals."

The new SmartWi has made a quantum leap, which can be clearly seen even from the outside. Kurt Olesen's son Jens Glad is responsible for technology and design within the business and has determined the stylish looks of the device. While the first generation reeked of computer geek, the new SmartWi boasts a winning design that almost cries out for presenting it with pride, rather than hiding it deep behind the cabinet. It's a style asset and will easily win over the lady of the house as well – so don't expect objections against yet another technical gadget.

It goes without saying that looks are not deceiving in this case. Just listen to Jens Glad listing all the innovations that have taken place inside: "The main thing is the faster processor and the new program memory, which has doubled in capacity from the previous version." This makes the second generation SmartWi

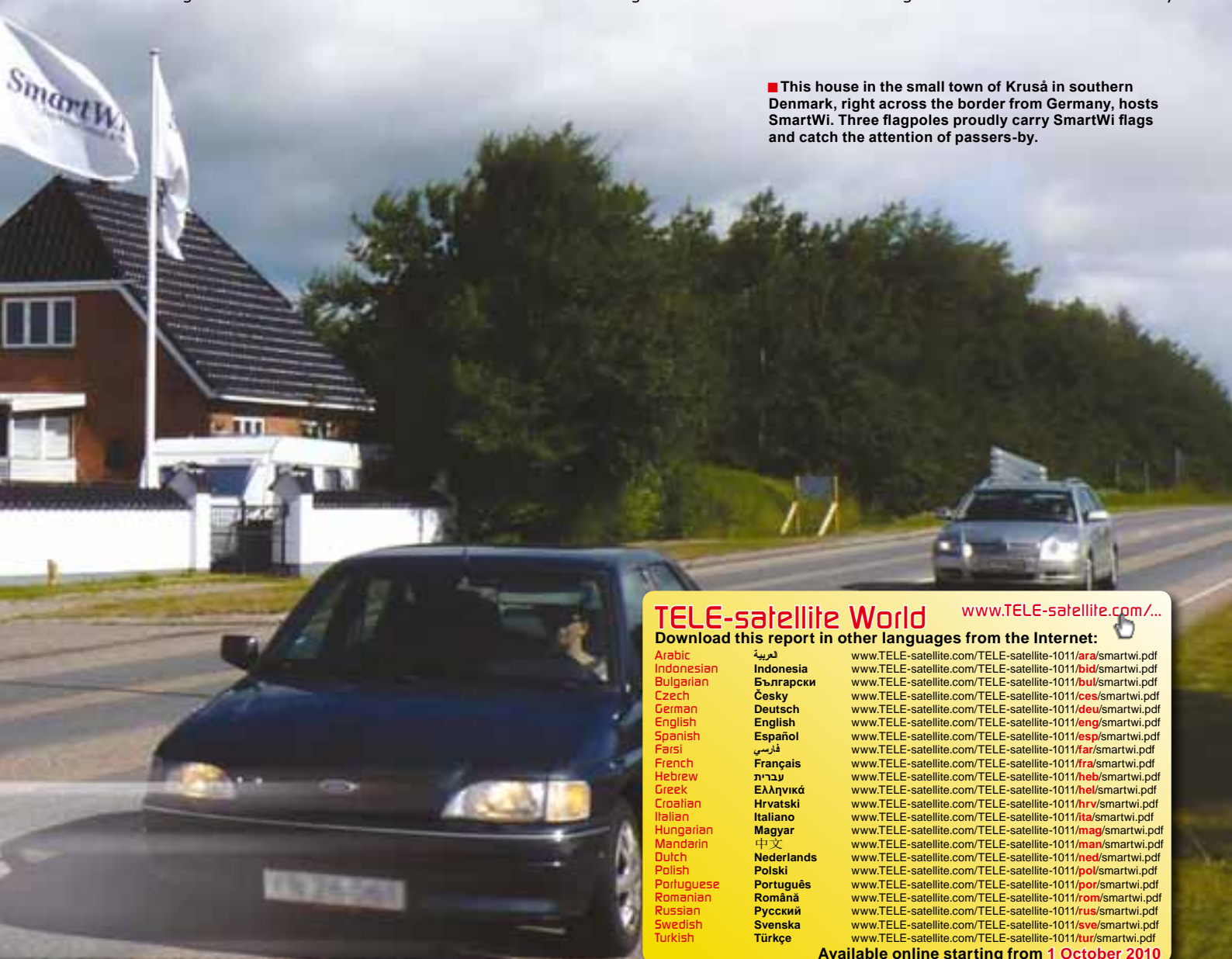
considerably faster and much more responsive. But there is more.

"The built-in antenna is now arranged in a layout that lets it run all the way along the longitudinal side of the device, which makes for decidedly better transmission capacities when compared to the older layout," Jens explains.

Another highly interesting feature is the second card slot on the box. "The new SmartWi has all the hardware required for using two smartcards at the same time," according to Jens Olesen. Models that are currently shipped are not activated for dual card use, but a software update will unlock that feature shortly.

SmartWi products of the first generation were mainly sold to end customer, and Kurt Olesen is determined to enter uncharted territory in this area too. The second generation SmartWi is clearly

■ This house in the small town of Kruså in southern Denmark, right across the border from Germany, hosts SmartWi. Three flagpoles proudly carry SmartWi flags and catch the attention of passers-by.



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Available online starting from 1 October 2010

■ Kurt Olesen is the founder and managing director of SmartWi. Here he shows a latest generation SmartWi. This enhanced version is intended to win over content providers and consequently boost the company's business significantly.



targeted to the provider market. "This is also why we have changed the design and switched to black," adds Jens Glad, who is responsible for that decision. "With the new design content providers will be able to offer the SmartWi under their own brand name."

Incidentally, he is absolutely right when

■ Preview images of the new SmartWi: the first generation device with its uninspiring design on the left, and the second generation SmartWi and its stylish looks on the right. The old SmartWi takes in the subscription card on the side, while the card completely disappears in the new version, creating a more subtle appearance.



stating that providers stubbornly ignore a huge market in terms of second or third TVs in homes. "Do you really know anybody with only one TV set?" Kurt Olesen wants to know. Still, most providers leave these customers in the dark because they either force them to order a second subscription at full price (which is out of the question for most), or offer a



second smartcard at somewhat reduced rates – but then again there's no way of knowing who will actually use these additional cards and no way of making sure they stay in the same household.

If, on the other hand, providers decide to either directly offer the SmartWi to their subscribers or at least officially licence it, each subscriber will be able to use his second or third TV in a legal way, as the wireless range of the SmartWi only covers a single home. This way content providers need not fear illegal card sharing, as this is not possible with the SmartWi system in the first place.

Kurt Olesen is absolutely convinced that „content providers could tap into a huge new market.“ On the other hand he is also aware of an underlying dilemma: „Technicians at provider companies are usually open for the SmartWi, but the marketing departments – which could not care less about technology – simply don't grasp what our product is all about.“

However, one thing Kurt Olesen is sure of: The new design will catch the attention of marketing people as well, which is actually the first step on the way to launching the second generation SmartWi in the provider market.

As a matter of fact, the SmartWi is a product which only covered a small



■ Jens Glad is the son of founder Kurt Olesen and is in charge of technology. Here he can be seen programming SmartWi's. Each product is tagged with a unique software code and labelled with an individual serial number. This way it is possible to track each single SmartWi.



■ Ejgild Lund is the administration manager at SmartWi. He takes care of office work, invoicing and bookkeeping.



market niche when it was first introduced. This niche, though, was constantly extended thanks to a spirit of innovation and a strategy of perseverance.

A company that started out with a staff of three has meanwhile turned into a 6-person operation. And this number is set to rise even further as soon as SmartWi will get a foothold in the provider market.

The first sign of success is already manifest: „Slovak provider SATRO is already using SmartWi even today,“ Kurt Olesen says and provides testament to the company's new course of action.

SmartWi is firmly set on its journey from humble start-up to established market player thanks to a gradual yet consistent development of an initial niche product. Another exciting success story!



■ Slovak content provider SATRO is already offering the SmartWi system to its subscribers.