

# Best Satellite Companies in Thailand

## INFOSAT Intertrade, Bangkok

**Niran Tangpiroontham** started the company INFOSAT Intertrade in 1996 with four partners. This was actually done as the result of an emergency: his previous employer SAMART, one of the largest telecommunications companies in Thailand, had just laid him off along with many of his coworkers.

It was quite a stroke of luck for Niran: 10 years later he has 60 employees. "In 2006 sales for INFOSAT reached US\$ 7.5 million and for 2007 I am expecting a 20% increase",



**Niran Tangpiroontham, founder and president of INFOSAT, wearing one of his company's 10-year anniversary jackets.**

comments Niran quite proudly and with good reason.

Most of INFOSAT Intertrade's sales, namely 60%, were of their dishes, LNBs and receivers. 25% were from cable system accessories with the remaining 15% connected to coaxial and fiber optic cables.

80% of sales are delivered within Thailand's own borders; the rest is exported primarily to the neighboring countries Laos, Cambodia and also to the extremely closed-off Myanmar. "The shipment must first go to Singapore before it goes to Myanmar even though the border is so close to us", complains Niran about this unnecessary detour.

Niran is very active in educating his customers: the dealers. Every two weeks he holds seminars and once every quarter also in Laos. "Laos is a natural export market for Thailand because the language is 90% identical to Thai", explains Niran, "In Cambodia, 40% of the language is related to Thai and in Myanmar there are many ethnic Thailanders."

Niran enjoys visiting his customers on a regular basis. Of course he could fly, "but I enjoy driving to all the neighboring countries", explains Niran as he points to the old off-roader he uses to get around.

According to Niran, INFOSAT currently has 35% of the total TVRO market share in Thailand; there are only two other similar wholesalers in Thailand.

As far as cable technology goes, INFOSAT



**INFOSAT occupies four blocks of a five-story building on the heavily-used Tiwanon Road in the Banmai Industrial area. The brand-new Toyota directly in front of the main entrance belongs, of course, to the boss: "I would have preferred the BMW X3, but in Thailand that would have cost me over US\$ 100,000."**

sees itself as number 1 in Thailand. That's quite an achievement for a company that's only 10 years old!

## JSAT.TV, Bangkok

**Not too long ago**, a fruit juice manufacturer in New Zealand used the slogan "Just Juice" as part of its ad campaign. This inspired Jon Clarke to name his company "Just Satellites", or JSAT for short.

Jon is a true old-timer in the satellite scene. He was the first in New Zealand to start with satellite reception back in 1980. "That led



**Jon built up his company in his old vacation home near Sukhumvit Road. Every available space is occupied with a satellite dish so that he can easily show his customers what channels can be received.**

to my first job", explained Jon: he ended up working in the IT department of HSBC bank. He retired in 2002 and decided to pick up on his hobby where he left off.

He started JSAT.TV in a vacation home he used to use in Bangkok and already in 2003 he managed to sell 300 complete systems. In 2006 it was 600 systems. "Today JSAT has eight full-time employees plus an additional five sub-teams to handle the installation work", explains Jon.

His TVRO customers are primarily ex-patriots in Thailand that simply want to watch TV from home or, at the very least, TV in English. 32 satellite positions can be received in Thailand with the most popular satellite being AGILA 2 at 146 east with its Dream TV package. Also popular is MEASAT 1 at 91 east with its ASTRO package from Malaysia.

Not far behind is ABS on 75 east with the Max DTH package with such popular channels as MTV, VH1 and Fashion TV. For English speakers the Granada channel from England is the choice. Max acquires its signal from the ART package. "You can see that in the commercials" comments Jon. At the moment all of the channels are still FTA although the change-over to Irdeto is expected to happen soon.

Jon finds it very unfortunate that the Australian Network chose to use a poorly positioned satellite for Thailand: PAS 8 at 166 east is not easy to receive although it carries all of the Australian ABC channels as well as BBC World and STC, and all FTA.



**Jon Clarke in front of his demonstration wall. Every monitor is always on displaying one channel from each of the 11 satellite dishes.**

There's also ASIASAT 3 at 105 east with channels such as Bloomberg, Al Jazeera, NOW TV from Hong Kong and the CNAI news channel from Singapore.

Jon sees a steady increase in his business: "The ex-patriots prefer to deal with an expatriot since he would have a better understanding of their wishes."

Not a bad business model since so many foreigners have discovered Thailand.