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Press release

digitaluk

WEST COUNTRY SWITCHOVER DATES ANNOUNCED

Digit AI starts 12-month countdown at Eden Project

The dates for the start of switchover to digital television in Cornwall and parts of Devon have been announced today by Digital UK, the independent body leading the process.

The **Huntshaw Cross** transmitter group, serving North Devon, will begin the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting on **Wednesday 1 July 2009**. Shortly afterwards, the **Redruth** transmitter group, serving west Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will start the switchover on **Wednesday 8 July 2009**. Finally the **Caradon Hill** transmitter group, serving Plymouth, parts of Devon and east Cornwall, will start changing on **Wednesday 12 August 2009**.

Digital UK's South West Regional Manager, Bill Taylor, teamed up with campaign mascot Digit AI to launch the official 'one year countdown' at the Eden Project, near St Austell earlier (pictured).

Next year, five main TV transmitter groups in the West Country will switch to fully digital signals, making Freeview channels available across the region for the first time - nearly a million households will then be able to receive digital services via their aerial.

Information leaflets explaining switchover and the options available for going digital are being delivered now to every home in the West Country TV region.

Bill Taylor, Regional Manager for Digital UK in the South West, said: "Today is a real milestone in the programme for switchover in the West Country – the Caradon Hill, Redruth and Huntshaw Cross transmitter groups will start the switch from analogue to digital broadcasting in a year's time. Every household will need to ensure their televisions are set up to receive a digital signal. Viewers can check the services available in their area by calling the Digital UK helpline or visiting our website."

Latest statistics from the Digital UK/Ofcom Tracker survey (to March 2008) indicate that 95% of viewers in the West Country are aware of switchover, and 79% know what they need to do. More than eight in ten households have converted one television set; and over half have converted all televisions in their household.

Bill Taylor continued: "Our biggest concern is reaching elderly and vulnerable people during this process and making sure that they understand what needs to be done ahead of switchover. We will be working hard to provide advice and help where it is needed most."

Viewers in the West Country can check their options for digital TV by visiting Digital UK's website at www.digitaluk.co.uk and entering their postcode. This gives details of the services viewers can expect before, during and after switchover. The Digital UK helpline can also be contacted on 08456 50 50 50.

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Notes to editors

How switchover will happen:

- Six months before the switchover of a transmitter group, captions reminding viewers to get ready for digital will appear on all television screens receiving analogue broadcasts. These will last for two weeks, increasing in size and frequency as switchover approaches.
- At the start of switchover, BBC Two will cease broadcasting in analogue and the first group of Freeview digital channels will become available. Following a transition period, the remaining analogue channels will be permanently switched off and replaced with additional digital services. The transition period at the Beacon Hill and Stockland Hill transmitter groups will last two weeks. The Huntshaw Cross, Redruth and Caradon Hill transmitter groups will have a four-week transition period.

Transmitter group:	Area:	Start date:	End date:
Beacon Hill	Serving Torbay and south Devon	8 April 2009	22 April 2009
Stockland Hill	Serving Exeter, parts of Devon, Somerset and Dorset	6 May 2009	20 May 2009
Huntshaw Cross	Serving north Devon	1 July 2009	29 July 2009
Redruth	Serving west Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	8 July 2009	5 August 2009
Caradon Hill	Serving Plymouth, parts of Devon and east Cornwall	12 August 2009	9 September 2009

*After switchover, virtually all UK households will receive approximately 20 of the most watched free-to-air digital channels and text services. These will include the public service channels BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, C4 (plus S4C in Wales) and Five, plus associated digital channels such as ITV2, E4 and BBC Three. Households that receive their television signal from a main transmitter will receive approximately 40 digital channels. These will include Freeview channels plus optional subscription services such as Top Up TV and Setanta Sport. Viewers can use the postcode checker at www.digitaluk.co.uk to check which channels are available in their area.

Digital Television Switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Between now and 2012, analogue channels will be switched off region by region and replaced with free-to-air digital TV and radio services (Freeview). Switchover will extend Freeview coverage to the whole of the UK and free up airwaves for new services such as ultra-fast wireless broadband and mobile television.

Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation established in 2005 to implement digital switchover. It is jointly owned and funded by the public-service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, S4C and Teletext), and the digital multiplex operators.

The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC by agreement with Government to offer help to an estimated 7 million households in making the switch to digital television. Every eligible person will be offered practical help to convert one of their TV sets to digital in the run-up to switchover in their television region.

Images and video clips are available to media free of charge from vismedia.co.uk

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