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Press release



TOURISM SECTOR 'MUST DO MORE' TO PREPARE FOR DIGITAL SWITCHOVER

Three quarters of UK hoteliers and B&B owners say that availability of television is important in letting their rooms, yet a majority are unprepared for the forthcoming switchover to digital TV and run the risk of their guests being stuck with blank screens, according to research released today by Digital UK.

Forty-seven per cent of those questioned said that they had not switched to digital yet. Fifty-four per cent of those who have not fully converted their properties to digital TV said they have no plans in place to do so. The figures were particularly high in the Border TV area, West Country and Wales – which are the first UK regions due to switch.

The research, which was carried out for Digital UK, the organisation coordinating the national switch to digital television, shows that smaller hotels, B&Bs and caravan site owners are the least prepared, while larger chains have taken more steps to convert their equipment.

Of those establishments which have already switched, ninety per cent said that they had found the process easy or no harder than they had expected and eighty per cent found the costs were in line with what they expected. More than three quarters were also satisfied with the new multichannel television they were now able to offer to their guests.

Jane Ostler, Digital UK's Director of Housing says: "Eighty-five percent of British households now watch digital TV at home and they expect it when they stay at a hotel or guest house. Our research shows that, with switchover gathering pace over the next twelve months, the tourism sector must do more to avoid guests coming downstairs to complain that there really is nothing on TV!"

"And it's not as difficult as you might think. The vast majority of hotels, guest houses and B&Bs who've already made the switch have found it easy and say that their guests have been happy with the extended choice offered by digital television."

Digital UK has set up a special hotline and website for tourism property managers, which gives details on when switchover is occurring region by region, how to switch and the likely costs. Letters will also be sent directly to tourism businesses with advice and information.

The hotline is: 08458 455 455; website is: www.digitaluk.co.uk/propertymanagers

Digital UK's research shows that:

- 47% have not switched to digital television
- 77% still have at least some analogue only sets
- 33% have switched fully to digital television

- 54% of those who have yet to switch say that they have no plans to upgrade their equipment to digital. Some of the regions with lowest take up of digital are those which are the next in line to turn off analogue: the Border television region in November 2008, and the West Country, Wales and Granada region in 2009.

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Notes to editors

Digital UK is the independent body implementing the UK's switch to digital television. The company communicates switchover to the public; manages the upgrade of 1,154 transmitters for digital; and works with industry to ensure understanding and support for switchover. Digital UK was set up by the public-service broadcasters, and offers independent switchover advice to the public through its helpline (08456 50 50 50) and website (digitaluk.co.uk).

Switchover will create a fairer situation in which everyone has access to a choice of affordable digital TV services. Between 2008 and 2012, all TV services in the UK will go completely digital, region by region. The UK's old analogue television signal is being switched off and replaced with a digital signal, a process that will also allow the UK to remain a world leader in broadcasting.

Images of switchover and Digital UK are available to media, free of charge, from vismedia.co.uk

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