

A guide to

launching your channel on DTT



DigitalUK

Introduction

Welcome to the Digital UK guide to launching a channel on digital terrestrial television (DTT). Here you can find details of the steps you'll need to consider when planning a new service for the UK's most popular TV platform.

About DTT

Digital terrestrial TV is broadcast from more than 1,100 transmitters across the UK and can be received by virtually all homes.

Launched in 2002, Freeview offers viewers more than 60 subscription-free TV, radio and interactive services on DTT. It is managed by DTV Services Ltd, a company owned and run by its five shareholders – BBC, BskyB, ITV, Channel 4 and Arqiva.

All standard Freeview channels are also available on YouView, BT, TalkTalk and EE TV.

What is Digital UK? DigitalUK

Digital UK provides day-to-day technical management of the Freeview Electronic Programme Guide (EPG), allocates channel numbers and manages the launch of new services onto the DTT platform. We also support Freeview viewers, providing people with information about their options for receiving terrestrial TV and advice on reception and equipment.

The company is owned by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Arqiva. Digital UK and Freeview work together to ensure successful delivery and management of multiplexes on the DTT platform.

Launching a new channel

To launch a channel on terrestrial television the following relationships and agreements need to be in place:

1 Carriage agreement

Services on DTT are carried on multiplexes and you will need to negotiate carriage of your channel with a multiplex operator. This applies to both broadcast and streamed (internet-based channels) which require a Logical Channel Number (LCN). National commercial multiplexes are currently operated by Arqiva and SDN. For information on the capacity available, commercial terms, pricing and timescales you will need to contact these companies directly (see page 7).

Channel providers planning to launch a local TV service should contact Comux (operated by Canis Media), which holds the licence to operate local TV multiplexes in parts the UK (see page 7).

2 Broadcast licence

Before a channel can launch on a commercial multiplex it is required to hold a valid broadcast licence. This can be obtained from Ofcom. For further information on the application process and costs, contact Ofcom at tv.licensing@ofcom.org.uk

3 Digital UK LCN Allocation Terms and Conditions

Channel providers are required to sign up to Digital UK's LCN Allocation Terms and Conditions and submit an LCN Application for each channel being launched. This allows the services to be allocated a channel number. You will also benefit from Digital UK's LCN Policy and be able to publish schedule information on the Freeview EPG. We will need to work with you to verify your schedule data four weeks before launch, with all configurations agreed and in place two weeks out.

Programme information

Programme information must be passed to Digital UK in order for it to appear in the Freeview EPG. You can do this yourself, through your multiplex operator, or via a third party specialist schedule provider. Information is passed through a central collator and either you or your provider will need to complete an EPG data connectivity agreement. Fees for connecting to the collator are levied in accordance with Digital UK's standard rates.

As well as general information on programmes, Digital UK requires channels or their designated schedule provider to include the following in their schedule data:

Subtitles and audio description

A flag should be signalled via the schedule data when subtitles/audio description features are available for certain programmes. The signalling can enable receivers to display related manufacturer icons.

Audio and video formats

Flags should be included in the schedule file to provide information on the format of the audio and video, such as video aspect ratios (4:3 and 16:9) and audio stream formats (stereo and Dolby 5.1).

Optional features

The Freeview platform supports a range of services that you may want to discuss with your schedule provider to enhance your channel. These include:

Accurate recording

A trigger is sent as programmes are broadcast (instead of when they are scheduled), ensuring recordings always start at the correct time.

Clash management

Information on scheduled repeats is provided along with each programme. If a recording clash occurs, viewers can be offered the option of choosing a later showing – e.g. an hour later on a +1 channel.

Guidance

Additional information about the content of a programme can be provided, flagging things such as the use of flashing imagery, violence or sexually explicit themes.

Pin protection can also be added to recordings made post-watershed. Viewers will be prompted to enter a code if playback begins before 9pm (Freeview+ HD only).

Recommendations

Offers recommendations to viewers based on the programmes they select to record from the EPG (if you like X, you may like Y).

SD/HD linking

Where programmes are being broadcast in HD as well as standard definition, viewers can be offered a choice of which to record.

Series Record

Allows viewers to record a whole series at the touch of a button.

Split events

Where one programme is split by another (a movie split by news, for example), a flag can be added so that recordings pause before and restart after the break.

Freeview Trademark Licence



The Freeview brand can be used for marketing purposes. If you would like to advertise the fact you are broadcasting on Freeview, you will need to apply for a Channel Operator Trademark Licence (TML). This can be applied for by contacting Freeview directly.

You can find out more about the TML at freeview.co.uk/marketing

You should allow two weeks to obtain your licence.

Timings

Once you have obtained a broadcast licence and agreed carriage with a multiplex, the following processes must to be completed to ensure your channel launches:

12 weeks before intended launch

- Sign up to the Digital UK LCN Allocation Terms and Conditions
- Submit an application for a channel number
- Confirm your launch date

One month before launch

- Submit a channel integration and launch request

Two weeks before launch

- Provide confirmation of your schedule provider
- Provide schedule information for validation
- Sign Digital UK's connectivity agreement or ensure that your designated schedule provider has done so

Further information

For further information on working with Digital UK to launch your channel, schedule provision and associated costs contact Sarah Fox on **020 7462 5451** or email sarah.fox@digitaluk.co.uk

Multiplex contacts:

Arqiva

Sara Barsby

Sara.Barsby@arqiva.com

Jacqui Bozeat

Jacqui.Bozeat@arqiva.com

SDN

Tim Cadbury

tim.cadbury@itv.com

Canis Media

Stephanie Morello

Stephanie.Morello@canismedia.com

Comux

Aaron Chamberlain

Aaron.Chamberlain@comux.co.uk