

18 MILLION TVS NOT READY FOR SWITCHOVER

Latest research reveals which regions are lagging behind

With the UK switch to digital TV about to get underway, new research has revealed that nearly one-third of the UK's 60 million sets are still analogue. The research also shows which TV regions are in front and which are lagging behind in the switchover league.

The research for Digital UK, the independent body established to lead implementation of switchover, suggests that while most viewers have converted their main set to receive digital channels via Freeview, satellite or cable, there remain approximately 18m analogue TVs in use - 30 per cent of the total.

The figures also reveal digital "hotspots" and places where conversion is lagging behind the national average. Top TV regions for embracing the digital age include Tyne Tees, Meridian and STV Central. Areas with the lowest proportion of sets ready for switchover include Yorkshire, Anglia and STV North.

David Scott, Chief Executive of Digital UK, commented:

"While nearly nine-out-of-ten homes have switched to digital on their main TV, it's no coincidence that many of the places lagging behind in the conversion of all sets are those where Freeview services are currently patchy. The good news is that switchover will allow us to boost Freeview signals so they reach virtually all households, offering many viewers more choice in how to get digital TV."

TV region	Switchover date	% of all TVs which are digital	% of homes currently able to receive Freeview*
National	2008-12	70	73
Tyne Tees	2012	89	91
STV Central	2010/11	77	91
Meridian	2011/12	76	61
Granada	2009	74	94
Central	2011	74	76
West	2010/11	71	81
Wales	2009/10	70	63
Ulster	2012	69	66
Border	2008/9	68	51
West Country	2009	67	63
London	2012	67	88
STV North	2010	66	70
Yorkshire	2011/12	63	57
Anglia	2011	53	83

*After switchover 98.5% of UK households will be able to receive digital TV via an aerial (Freeview)

There are three main ways to go digital – by converting your existing TV with a digital box, opting for a digital service via satellite or cable, or by buying a new TV with a built-in digital tuner. For more information, check www.digitaluk.co.uk.

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

1. All data from Ofcom and Digital UK Switchover Tracker Survey; Switchover Tracker Report: Q2 2008 (fieldwork dates 1 April -30 June 2008) other than Ulster figures which combine Q1 and Q2 figures. Source: GfK NOP Media
2. Report available online at www.digitaluk.co.uk/press
3. It is estimated that there are 60 million TV sets in use in the UK. The average UK household has up to three televisions.
4. Latest research by Ofcom suggests that 88% of UK households have digital TV on at least on set (source: Ofcom Digital TV Progress Report, Q2, 2008).

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 at the request of the 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

Contacts

Jon Steel
020 7462 5428
jon.steel@digitaluk.co.uk

Chris Cain
020 7462 5442
chris.cain@digitaluk.co.uk

Fishburn Hedges (PR)
Rosie Strachan, Paul Hodgson
020 7839 4321

digitaluk.co.uk/press