

DIGITAL ADVICE TO SHOPPERS ‘MUST IMPROVE’

Customers given poor information as big switch approaches

Millions of shoppers are being given poor advice in stores on how to go digital, just weeks before the digital TV switchover begins, new research reveals.

Digital UK, the body in charge of switchover, has uncovered a lack of understanding among retail staff about the process, which begins in Whitehaven, Cumbria in October and then rolls out across the entire country, finishing in 2012. Every household will need to make sure all their TVs are capable of receiving a digital signal.

To help address the retail problem, Digital UK is announcing a package of measures to help retailers improve their advice, after completing a national retail audit which found that:

- **56%** of stores were unable to explain what will happen to VCRs at switchover ¹
- Just **27%** of stores ran a postcode check on the customers' TV reception options ²
- While 69% of stores were using the 'digital tick' logo, only **32%** knew what it meant ³

However, there were some encouraging signs. The study also revealed that:

- Stores have improved since the last survey. **66%** of assessors would recommend the retailer they visited for buying digital TV equipment – up from just 48% last time
- **71%** of staff were confident in advising on switchover and digital TV, up from 64%
- Independent retailers performed best, with **84%** of their staff offering confident advice, compared to 33% in unassisted stores such as supermarkets
- And **97%** of licensed stores found the 'digital tick' logo scheme beneficial

Ford Ennals, Chief Executive of Digital UK, said: “With just weeks remaining until the first analogue TV signals are turned off, retailers have an indispensable role to play in helping people get ready. But the quality of in-store advice must improve if switchover is to be a success.

“Our range of new initiatives, running in partnership with the retail trade, is designed to further improve the level of switchover knowledge and understanding among staff.”

The new measures will include:

- New promotion for the 'Ask Digital' advisor scheme, which has already trained 6,500 staff to answer switchover questions, and changes to make it more accessible to stores
- Developing pocket cards for staff explaining issues such as analogue recording
- Partnerships with the leading unassisted stores, principally supermarkets, to increase the availability and prominence of leaflets and point-of-sale material
- Trade advertising and new point-of-sale designed to explain the 'digital tick' logo

- ends; notes follow -

Notes to editors

1. After switchover, VHS recorders and analogue DVD recorders will not be able to record one channel while another is being watched.
2. Retailers and consumers can use the postcode check at digitaluk.co.uk to check whether they are likely to be able to receive digital satellite, cable or Freeview.
3. The 'digital tick' logo identifies products which are designed to work before, during and after digital TV switchover. Customers should look for this logo when buying any TV equipment.



About the research

- GfK conducted 256 assessments in stores for Digital UK, using a panel of trained 'mystery shoppers', between May 26 and June 10, 2007.
- The assessors were of mixed ages, including a small sample being hearing or visually impaired.
- Samples were upweighted in the lead switchover regions of Border, West Country, Wales and Granada, with a national sample also included.
- This was the second wave of Digital UK's national retail audit. The first was completed in September 2006.

Contact

The press office can provide additional data from the audit programme, and further detail on Digital UK's extensive planned work with retail partners.

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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

digitaluk.co.uk/press