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Press release

digitaluk

TV SWITCHOVER TURNS VIEWERS ON TO NEW TECHNOLOGY

Older people get more confident with new gadgets

One-in-three older viewers says that getting ready for digital TV switchover has boosted their confidence with new technology.

Research published today by Digital UK found that 31 per cent of over-65s in areas where analogue TV has been switched off felt more tech-savvy as a result of converting to digital. Among all ages, 26 per cent said they felt more confident.

Most late converters to digital TV (64 per cent) said they now want to try other gadgets, from the latest TV recorders to surfing the web. The full list of devices and proportions of people keen to give them a try was as follows:

- Digital TV recorder: 36 per cent
- Digital camera: 29 per cent
- Internet: 28 per cent
- Mobile phone: 28 per cent
- Red button service: 25 per cent
- MP3 player: 21 per cent
- Computer games: 13 per cent
- Sat-nav: 12 per cent

Nearly eight out of ten (78 per cent) said they were confident making the switch to digital TV and ninety per cent said that digital TV was better or as good as analogue. One-in-three said they wished they had made the switch sooner.

Most people (53 per cent) said the main benefit of digital TV is having additional channels. Other benefits include improved reception, with nearly two thirds (60 per cent) saying that they have noticed this, and nearly one in three (30 per cent) saying that they were enjoying improved picture and sound quality.

When asked to rate the importance of digital TV as a source of entertainment most said that if forced to choose, they would rather give up going to the cinema, listening to the radio or having a mobile phone than lose digital television.

The new findings have been published on the day that Digital UK delivers a progress report on the region by region TV switchover which has now reached around five million homes. By the time the project is completed in 2012, a further 20 million households will have been through switchover.

David Scott, Chief Executive of Digital UK, commented:

“It’s still early days for TV switchover but there is clear evidence that the benefits of digital TV are welcomed by the vast majority of those who have upgraded, most of whom have found it a

straightforward process. It's also pleasing to see evidence that switchover leaves a positive legacy with significant numbers of viewers gaining the confidence to try other technologies."

Michelle Mitchell, Charity Director at Age UK, the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged, added:

"TV is a really important part of many older people's lives, and it's clear that for many, updating to digital has brought not only more choice but also increased confidence when it comes to dealing with technology. This research confirms our view that, with some encouragement, support and experience of the benefits of being online, more of the 6.4 million people over the age of 65 who have never used the internet will choose to come online.

"It is therefore vital that training and ongoing support is in place to ensure that those people who are interested in getting online can receive help along the way."

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Notes to editors

1. All data from BRMB/TNS telephone omnibus survey across all regions that have switched to digital TV (Border, West Country, Wales, Granada and West). Fieldwork dates 30 April – 3 May 2010 and 7 May – 9 May 2010. Sample: 479 TV homes across all regions switched including 216 late converters.
2. Late converters are defined as those who upgraded to digital TV because of digital switchover.
3. Full research report available online at www.digitaluk.co.uk/annualreport.

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

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

The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC under an agreement with the Government to help older and disabled people make the change to digital TV. More information is available from helpscheme.co.uk.

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

Follow us on Twitter for live updates on switchover: twitter.com/Digit_AI

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