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Press release

## **DIGITAL UK PREPARES RETAILERS FOR SALES SURGE AS IT ACCELERATES SWITCHOVER COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN**

A major campaign is being launched to help retailers respond to an increase in demand for digital TV in the lead up to this summer's World Cup.

Digital UK, the independent, not-for-profit organisation co-ordinating the UK's switch to digital television, is launching the campaign to prepare retailers, manufacturers and the electrical service industry for a rise in sales and enquiries about digital television as the UK prepares for the championships in Germany.

Ford Ennals, Chief Executive of Digital UK said: "Every World Cup sees a surge in demand for new televisions and this one will be no exception. We are launching our first major national communications programme in May and want to work with retailers to meet the demand for products and information that it will create."

Digital UK's programme of activity is led by a national retailers' and manufacturers' accreditation scheme, which was successfully piloted last year in the Border TV region - the first to begin switching over in 2008. In the region, over 89% of retailers found it useful for explaining switchover to customers.

This is a free scheme that enables retailers to use a digital "tick" logo, which shows customers what products and services will work through switchover. Retailers that sign up will receive a pack of merchandising materials for use at point of sale, including informational leaflets, posters, branded window stickers, product cards and staff information leaflets.

Retailer communications will start again in the Border TV region in May, and will begin in Wales, the Westcountry and Granada, which are the next regions to start switching over in 2009. This will complement Digital UK's plans for consumer communications, which will begin in each ITV region three years before switchover commences and which involves leafleting every UK household twice before the switch takes place.

Digital UK has already been in discussions with national retailers about increasing the use of the logo in multiples and mass merchandisers. It is also seeking to replicate this by working closely with the Radio Electrical and Television Retailers' Association (RETRA) and other store groups and independents nationwide, prior to the national advertising campaign.

Additionally, it is planning to deploy a team of field merchandisers to encourage more retailers to use the logo. This plan includes offering staff digital switchover training sessions so that they can be identified as in-store "Digital Advisors" and stores which employ enough trained staff will be able to badge themselves as "Digital Advice Centres". In the bigger multiples, some of this training may be provided in-house. The intention is to create a network of experts on the high street that can spread the word about digital television and reassure customers about what they need to do and when in order to get set for digital.

The "tick" logo is also available to electrical equipment manufacturers, platform operators and installers to certify their products and services that will work through switchover. Digital UK is working in partnership with an industry supply chain group to drive up industry enrolment in the scheme.

In tandem with this activity, Digital UK is working with other organisations to support accreditation for the electrical service industry, which will assure the public that it is receiving professional and high standard services. In particular, a digital aerial installers' scheme is expected to be launched by the spring with

Digital UK's support, and Digital UK is ramping up its ongoing dialogue with other trade bodies including RETRA and the Confederation of Aerial Industries (CAI) to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to helping the public with switchover.

Ian Adams, Head of Business Development for Digital UK, said: "Working in partnership with retailers, manufacturers and service providers is essential for the switchover programme. Although we know that two thirds of households have already got a digital connection on their main TV and that sales of integrated digital televisions more than doubled in 2005, there's still an estimated 40m television sets out there that require upgrading or conversion. This is a huge challenge, but a great opportunity for the electrical industry, which can increase sales whilst helping us educate the public about the switch. Those companies who join the logo scheme will have a competitive edge in the market as customers will seek trusted advice and service from the industry. "

Mark Hayward, Chief Executive of RETRA, has endorsed the digital "tick" accreditation scheme. He said: "I'd encourage all electrical retailers to join the digital logo scheme. It's going to play a key part in driving customers to stores."

**To join the scheme or for further information, retailers can contact the digital logo helpdesk on [digital.logo@aeat.co.uk](mailto:digital.logo@aeat.co.uk) or 0870 190 2851.**

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About switchover**

Starting in 2008 and ending in 2012, TV services in the UK will go completely digital, region by region. The old analogue television signal will be switched off and the digital signal boosted to make digital television via an aerial available to virtually every household. The process of switchover will require all television equipment to be capable of receiving a digital signal, either via a built-in tuner or separate set top box.

Switchover will make it fairer, as more people will be able to access more digital services than they can today. Currently, 1 in 4 UK households cannot get the full range of digital TV services available free through an aerial and the Government wants everyone to have a choice of affordable digital TV options. Only switchover can change this. Switchover starts in each of the television regions throughout the UK in the following years: 2008: Border; 2009: West Country; Wales; Granada; 2010: Grampian, West; Scottish; 2011: Central; Yorkshire; Anglia; 2012: Meridian; Carlton/LWT; Tyne Tees; Ulster

### **About Digital UK**

Digital UK was launched in September 2005 and is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that is co-ordinating the UK's switchover to digital television. Its main responsibilities are:

- Co-ordinate the technical roll-out of digital terrestrial television across the UK, region by region, to a timetable agreed by Government.
- Communicate with the public about digital switchover to ensure everyone knows what is happening, what they need to do, and when.
- Liaise with TV equipment manufacturers, retailers, digital platform operators and consumer groups to ensure understanding of and support for the switchover programme

Digital UK was set up at the Government's request, in recognition of the fact that switchover would require cross-industry co-ordination. The company is headed by Ford Ennals (Chief Executive) and Barry Cox (Chairman) and its board members are:

- The public service broadcasters the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, five, S4C and Teletext;
- The digital terrestrial multiplex operators Crown Castle and SDN; plus
- Two Representative Director positions from 'The Supply Chain Group' (manufacturers, retailers and aerial installers).

It is wholly funded by its board members the public service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, five, S4C, Teletext), and the digital terrestrial multiplex operators (Arqiva and National Grid Wireless).

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