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Press release



SWITCHOVER TEAM TO SUPPORT RETAILERS

Digital UK unveils range of initiatives for TV suppliers this summer

Television retailers will be supported through digital switchover by a team of specialist staff, as part of a package of measures announced today by Digital UK, the body in charge of the switch.

The development follows publication yesterday (April 24) of the report into the UK's first switchover in Whitehaven, Cumbria. One of the report's leading findings was that retail sector readiness was a major factor in the successful transition from analogue to digital broadcasting.

Digital UK, in partnership with field marketing agency Gekko, will now deploy a dedicated **Retail Support Team** to assist stores in the lead switchover regions of Border, West Country and Wales. They will visit TV retailers in each region, starting one year before switchover.

The team will develop relationships with – and offer a point of contact for – store managers and their staff, helping to ensure switchover communication is effective and accurate. They will supply point-of-sale material, offer staff training and recruit new stores to the 'digital tick' scheme. Gekko, which has worked successfully with Digital UK on field marketing, will manage teams in each region.

Also today, Digital UK unveils two further initiatives for retailers and manufacturers, designed further to improve the information available to shoppers during switchover. Products that are simple for viewers to set up and retune will be promoted through the '**Easy to Install**' recommended mark.¹ This symbol, promoted by Digital UK, identifies products that have been judged easy to install, through independent testing by consumer body Ricability.

The scheme follows research² revealing that **58%** of people are not confident in setting up their own digital TV equipment, rising to **74%** among over-65s. In Whitehaven, retuning was the leading line of enquiry during switchover.

Digital UK will also promote a new '**Digital Scoreboard**',³ an extension of the familiar 'digital tick' logo. This voluntary scheme, which manufacturers will use to label digital TV equipment packaging and TV screens, identifies key features in a product, including power consumption in standby mode.

The quality of digital-switchover advice given by retailers is already improving, according to recent research. 'Mystery shopping' by GfK NOP on behalf of Digital UK found that overall customer satisfaction rose, staff were more confident in answering switchover enquiries, and more were aware when switchover took place.⁴

Digital UK's retail activity will now focus on improving understanding of the 'digital tick' logo and what happens to recording devices after switchover, while also encouraging greater use of the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk.⁵

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Jane Ostler, Director of Industry at Digital UK, said: "One of the key findings in the Whitehaven report is that retailers have a vital role to play in helping us prepare the UK for switchover – from making sure people buy the right equipment, to training staff in offering good advice.

"The Retail Support Team is designed to build on the very good start we made in Whitehaven, helping stores offer even better service to their customers throughout switchover. The new Scoreboard and 'Easy to Install' campaign will make it more straightforward for shoppers to find the digital TV products they need, especially ones they can install themselves."

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Notes to editors

1.



3.



2. Source: Digital UK/Ofcom Switchover Tracker.

4. GfK NOP conducted assessments in 420 stores between November and December 2007. Average overall 'mark out of five' from shoppers increased from 3.3 to 3.5. Proportion of staff appearing confident in answering questions about switchover was up from 64% to 73%. Proportion of staff able to say when switchover took place rose from 82% to 85%.

5. In the same survey, only 20% of staff carried out postcode checks. Around half (47%) gave an accurate explanation of 'digital tick' logo. A similar proportion (53%) were able accurately to explain that, after switchover, analogue video and DVD recorders will not record one channel while another is being watched.

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 seven 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 region.

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

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