



Satellites at the Forefront of the Digital Television Transition

The U.S. communications satellite industry plays a pivotal role in the shift to digital television. Commercial satellite operators transmit High Definition (HD) content nation-wide and around the globe to cable head-ends, network affiliates and satellite television providers for delivery in HD programming packages. U.S. Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) operators have invested in network upgrades and content enhancements to provide expanded and groundbreaking consumer access to HD digital programming, and are participating actively in industry efforts to educate consumers about HD and the digital transition. As of September 2008, there were over 31 million DBS subscribers in the United States.

- **Digital Transition Network Upgrades** – Consumers who receive their local signals from a DBS provider need not worry about the digital transition. They have nothing to do. To ensure that its subscribers continue to receive their broadcast signals after the digital transition, however, DBS satellite providers’ DIRECTV and DISH Network have to transition their backhaul facilities. DIRECTV and DISH are actively working with the broadcast community to coordinate the transition of broadcast stations on their systems from analog to digital. DBS has already begun this process of replacing analog equipment and antennas with digital equipment at each of local receive facilities in each local-into-local market, and will continue to do so through the transition.
- **HD Transmission** – Operators of Fixed Satellite Services (FSS) spacecraft have long provided the infrastructure platform to distribute analog broadcast content throughout the U.S. and around the world, and now ensure that HD content is delivered to cable head-ends, network affiliates and DBS broadcasters nationwide and globally. As of May 2008, FSS operators carried 1,353 HD channels for distribution, up 150 percent from year-end 2006. Satellite-delivered HDTV channels are forecasted to grow 350 percent by 2013, underpinning steady growth in the FSS industry’s revenues and ensuring ongoing HD content for the shift to Digital Television around the globe.

- ***HD Programming*** –DIRECTV and Dish Network today lead the video industry in HD programming. DIRECTV and DISH both offer over 100 national HD channels, with plans to offer up to 150 channels by year end. DIRECTV plans to offer local HD broadcast stations in 121 markets by year end, representing more than 88 percent of US households. DISH Network similarly plans to offer local HD broadcast stations in 100 markets by year end.

- ***Digital Transition Education*** -- DIRECTV and Dish Network have each instituted its own independent public relations, advertising and promotional campaign to further digital transition education, which includes:
 - ***Public Service Announcements.***
 - ***Print Advertisements***
 - ***Billing Notices***
 - ***Notices Accompanying Set-top Box Equipment***
 - ***Online Information***
 - ***Call Center Training***
 - ***Targeted Outreach to Wilmington Market:***
 - DIRECTV targeted communications to its subscribers via emails and auto calls informing them about the shut-down of analog broadcasts in that market and about how the transition may affect them.
 - DISH Network made similar efforts to notify subscribers about the test market. DISH Network also donated digital-to-analog converter boxes free of charge to nursing homes in Wilmington that were unable to participate in the coupon program under current NTIA rules.

- ***NTIA-Approved Digital-to-Analog Converter Box:*** DISH Network's DTVPal and TR-40CRA have been approved by the NTIA and are among a handful of boxes that currently include an analog pass-through capability.