



ARE YOU READY FOR THE digital REVOLUTION?

DIGITAL
READY

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW!

What is DTT?

DTT is digital terrestrial television (or digital terrestrial transmission). It is the broadcasting of television signal in a digital format. At the moment, terrestrial television in South Africa is broadcast in an analogue format. South Africa is advancing now with the planned implementation of a migration from analogue to digital broadcasting.

What is the major difference between analogue TV and digital TV?

Terrestrial television relays a signal across the country by using a transmitter network. Each tower has a specific area of transmission coverage, and in turn, through this network the television signal is provided across the country. The broadcast signal is sent via the various towers and if you fall within a tower coverage area, you will be able to receive the broadcast signal via your terrestrial aerial – either outdoor on your roof or indoor above your television set. In analogue, the signal transmission is in the form of electromagnetic waves and it is not the most efficient way of transmitting TV signals. In a digital format, the signal is encoded and compressed which allows for more channels to be broadcast. There is a minimum of eight new video channels that can be provided in the same frequency as one analogue channel. Satellite television signal uses satellites in the sky to relay the signal to earth via a satellite dish.

What is the reason for migrating from analogue to digital?

The main reason for the migration to digital is to release valuable spectrum which can be used for other services. Spectrum is scarce and therefore more efficient use of the spectrum is required so more terrestrial telecommunications and broadcasting services can be made available. Currently, analogue broadcasting is not subject to interference, but this will no longer be the case in 2015 and therefore the transition from analogue to digital has to be completed 2015.

Has this migration been implemented anywhere else in the world?

Yes. Examples of countries that are advanced in their migration process include the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Sweden, the United States, France and Mauritius.

Will I require a satellite dish to receive DTT?

A satellite dish will not be required to receive the DTT signal

Will I need a require a new aerial to receive DTT?

Some viewers may require new or upgrades to existing aerials. Aerial adjustments may also be required.

Will I require any other additional equipment to receive DTT?

Yes, You will need to have a DTT Set-Top Box. This Set-Top Box is different to the Multichoice satellite box or the current MNet decoder

What is a Set-Top Box (STB)?

A Set-Top Box is a receiver that will decode the digital signal to enable the channels to be displayed on your analogue television set and will plug directly into your television set

Do I have to have a Set-Top Box?

Yes. You need this device that decodes the digital signal received via a standard aerial antenna and supplies the TV set with a video signal. Without a Set-Top Box you will be unable to view the digital television services on your television set.

What is the approximate cost of a Set-Top Box?

It has been estimated that the retail cost of the free-to-air Set-Top Box will be in the region of approximately R400 - R700. This will be a once-off cost for purchasing the STB.

Do I require a Set-Top Box to receive the DTT services if I have DSTV?

Yes. Although your television signal via your DSTV will not be affected in any way by the DTT migration, if you would like to receive the DTT services and free-to-air channels you will require a STB. This is optional and entirely up to you.

Where can I purchase a Set-Top?

Set-Top Boxes are not available for sale to the public yet. They will most likely be available during the first half of 2010. Watch the press for details!

What are the installation requirements of a Set top box?

The Set-Top Box is a plug and play device. It is installed by connecting the cable from the TV aerial to the Set-Top Box (normally RF IN at the back) and then follow the Set-Top Box installation menu using the supplied manual. You could also get assistance for installation by a professional installer.

If I have five TV sets in the house, will I need five Set-Top Boxes?

Yes, if you require each individual TV set to view a different channel. Other models of Set-Top Boxes with functionality that allows you to connect more than one TV to a single Set-Top Box may be developed and made available at a later stage.

Is there a monthly charge for DTT like DSTV?

No, the purchase of the STB is a once-off cost and the free-to-air channels such as SABC and eTV will continue to be available for free – there will be no monthly subscription fee. However, you will still have to continue paying your TV license. You will also need to pay a monthly subscription fee if you choose to subscribe to M-Net.

Will I need to purchase a new television set to receive DTT?

No, you will not need to buy a new TV. All current analogue television sets will be capable of receiving DTT. You will also not need a high definition (HD) TV, LCD TV or Plasma TV to receive DTT. Remember, no television on the market will be able to receive the Digital TV channels without the STB.

REMEMBER

'Digital ready' or 'HD ready' does not mean that it can receive the digital TV broadcasting without a STB.

It is advisable not to purchase old analogue technology products just because it is cheap. Analogue technology is being phased out around the world.

How do I tell if my TV will be compatible to the Set-Top Box?

All television sets are compatible to the STB – either via the RF/Aerial input in older television sets, or via the RCA/audio and video inputs in modern television sets.

When will the Set-Top Box and the new DTT services become available?

It is expected that the service will be available to the public in 2010. However, there are a number of issues that still need to be resolved before the service is going to be made available to the public including testing of the service to ensure that everything works as it should before consumers spend money on purchasing Set-Top Boxes.

It is also important to remember that the digital network will be rolled out over a period of three years. Therefore, you will need to check when the digital signal will be available in your region. Information will be made available on exact areas of coverage and when these will be covered closer to the time of the public launch of the service.

What if I cannot afford the Set-Top Box? Does this mean that I will not be able to watch television after 2011?

In August 2008 Government announced its plans to establish a support for ownership scheme to assist poor households that cannot afford a Set-Top Box. More information will be available in due course about how to access the subsidy and how government will monitor the process.

Does this migration only affect the SABC channels?

No. The migration will affect all free-to-air channels of the SABC and eTV, as well as Mnet.

What are the benefits of digital TV?

Digital TV will give you access to more free-to-air channels, in addition to the current channels offered by SABC and eTV. The Broadcasters also intend to make a range of new services available on the additional channels, including interactive services such as games, weather and information services. Other benefits include better picture and sound quality, access to an Electronic Programming Guide (EPG) in the television screen, enabling you to view your TV guide on the TV screen.

The DTT test signal was switched on 1 Nov 2008, What happened on this date?

On 1 November 2008 the digital signal was activated by Sentech, making the digital signal available to test DTT and STB technology enabling the broadcasters, manufacturers and Sentech to begin tests on the DTT services and technology. The trials are being conducted with a small sample of viewers. This means that the public will not be able to go out and buy a STB to receive the signal as yet. Once the services and technology have been tested adequately, and all other related processes are in place, STBs will be made available in retail stores. The actual date will be confirmed and communicated to the public as soon as all relevant logistical, legal, technical and policy issues have been addressed – this is anticipated to be during early 2010.

Why is the DTT launch taking so long?

The digital migration is an extremely complex process and requires the cooperation and agreement of several stakeholders in the industry. Significant progress on many key issues has been made but there are still areas that need to be completed before a full DTT launch can take place. This includes the finalisation of DTT regulations and the issuing of licences to terrestrial broadcasters by ICASA, the finalisation of a frequency plan, the roll-out of the DTT technology by Sentech, the technical specifications for STBs, the manufacturing of STBs, and the development of channel content by broadcasters. This is expected to be completed during the first half of 2010.