To whom it may concern,

I am a PVR owner that watches and records digital FTA television. For the most part I am quite satisfied with digital TV, reception (in the Melbourne metro) and its continued rollout. I have no interest in 'interactive' digital TV. There are however two major improvements that could be made to digital broadcasting that currently no network is addressing. These are:

1) Each channel broadcasts an individual GMT TimeStamp so that digital receivers can set the time. This used to be very glitchy but has improved recently. However it is unfortunate that each channel uses a different time source. So changing channels can change the 'time' by up to 10 minutes.

2) Of considerable disappointment is the lack of a meaningful Electronic Program Guide (EPG) being broadcast. Currently most networks broadcast "Now & Next" (i.e. two shows) despite publishing guides up to a week ahead on the internet. But even this simple amount of information bears little resemblance to what is broadcast - at its worse showing unrelated shows but more often, due to show overruns and schedule changes, it is usually incorrect for 10-30 minutes as shows change over.

Unfortunately there is currently no incentive (indeed there are disincentives) for networks to address these two issues and I would expect legislation to be the only way for improvements to be made in this area. I view television broadcasting as a 'key public service' and in much the same way that, say, private train operators have performance criteria mandated and penalties imposed if they are not met (i.e. fines for too many late trains) I would like to see a similar regimen applied to FTA broadcasters in this area.

In particular I believe digital FTA would become much more 'attractive' over analogue TV if the strengths of a digital broadcasting were used, rather than just relying on 'its a slightly nicer picture' to drive uptake. In particular:

1) Networks were required to broadcast an accurate and single source GMT Time stamp.

2) Networks were required to broadcast what is ACTUALLY currently showing, rather than set up a theoretical EPG days in advance.

3) Networks were required to broadcast if a show is a repeat or first showing for that network

4) Networks were required to provide a 5+ day EPG that is updated on a fairly regular basis (i.e. every hour or so).

5) A final (and perhaps unlikely) improvement, would be for networks to broadcast a program IDSTAMP and a series IDSTAMP so that shows could be identified by this rather than the (very variable) text name.

All these things are technically achievable now and could be provided at relatively little cost. They cannot be provided for analogue television and would therefore help to differentiate digital TV from its analogue counterpart.

Thank you for your consideration

Regards

Peter Gillespie