

Submission to the **Inquiry Into the Uptake of Digital TV**

As the deadline for the turn-off of analogue television draws near it has become clear that many mistakes have been made by the industry in their promotion of digital television. This submission highlights some of those errors.

Incorrect interpretation of the role of television

Primarily the television industry has made a major misinterpretation about the future role of television in the household.

Publicity about digital television has often propounded the advantages of digital television as being

- Multiple viewpoints
- Use of multiple screens
- Interactivity
- Linking to the web
- etc.

However most people simply want to be entertained. They want to sit passively and watch. To most people interactivity is not a big incentive to buy a digital television receiver.

Lack of helpfulness by retailers

In recent years, many potential buyers have been apprehensive about the purchasing of a new digital television set. It is quite common in the retail shops to hear potential customers asking (nervously) basic questions about the digital technology.

The answers they receive are often most unsatisfactory. The salespersons would rave about the high-end functions of digital television that might become available. They ignore the basic answers that the potential buyer craves.

Indeed, when in a branch of a nation-wide retail store I asked about digital television, I was told by the frustrated sales manager (frustrated by the many questions being asked) to take a brochure and go away and read all about digital television. This was not what I wanted.

Difference between television and the internet

Some publicity material suggests a convergence of television and the internet. This is a false connection. Watching television and using a computer are quite different human functions and serve quite different purposes.

For example:

- 1. Television watching is usually a group activity – computing is usually an individual activity.** Families often watch a game or watch a film together. Using the internet is governed by the personal requirements of the individual. Group use of the internet is not practical
- 2. Watching television is a distance activity - using a computer (and the internet) is a close-up activity.** Television programs are best watched from several metres to get the full effect of

the whole image. When using a computer the viewer usually wants to examine only certain selected parts of the screen – usually the relevant text. Using a computer while sitting several metres from the screen is impractical.

Confusion over the function of the set-top box

The set-top box is often mentioned. However there is little explanation about its purpose. The very name “set top box” conjures up negative images of plane crashes and black box recorders.

Households with lots of sets.

Rightly or wrongly, the impression seems to be that a set top box will be required for EACH analogue television set in the house. Most households have several analogue sets.

The capital outlay to simply **maintain** access to television programs on these sets is daunting.

Consumer driven changes

It is clear today that changes to our communications systems are controlled by the consumers. It is the consumer's money, not the big corporation's money, that is financing any changes in technology.

Changes today must be made with the APPROVAL of the consumer, not at the dictates of the government or the electronics industry (as happened with the change from analogue to digital mobile telephones).

Despite the introduction of the digital wrist watch thirty years ago, 95% of watches sold today are analogue. The consumers preferred that style.

Resentment caused by the deterioration in the quality of the analogue signal

Already there is a noticeable deterioration in the quality of the analogue signal being transmitted as production moves to digital widescreen, and the analogue signal being transmitted is produced secondhand. This breeds resentment; a feeling not conducive to buying a new set.

This submission is made by **B.A.N.D. (Beautiful Analogue Not Digital)**

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B.A.N.D. Fighting to preserve the quality of analogue television

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analogue.

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