

Digital Answer Man

HDTV And The Digital Transition

(NAPSA)—If you're thinking of buying a new TV, you probably have a lot of questions. Fortunately, Jim Barry, the Consumer Electronics Association's Digital Answer Man and a leading authority on HDTV, can help set the record straight.



Jim Barry

1. What is the difference between analog and High Definition TV?

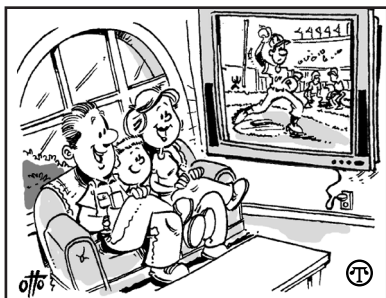
The real difference is between analog and digital TV. Analog, the technology we've been using in radio and TV for nearly a century, converts sound and pictures into magnetic waves. Digital technology converts them into the ones and zeroes of computer code, providing crisp, lifelike high-quality video and sound. The best digital TV is high-definition (HDTV). HDTV offers an image five times better than an analog signal and is transmitted in a wide screen (16:9) format with Dolby Digital surround sound, creating a much more realistic home theater experience that makes you feel as if you're at the stadium or in the movie scene.

2. Why switch to HDTV now?

All electronics are becoming digital. Among others, there are now DVDs for video, digital cameras, digital satellite and digital cable. Broadcast TV stations are required by the federal government to make the transition to digital television (DTV) over the next several years.

3. Are the new flat-panel TVs HDTV?

Some are and some aren't. Plasma displays and Liquid Crystal Displays can both deliver



High-definition TV is the best picture and sound available.

HDTV, but not all do. If you're shopping for a flat-panel, be sure to find out if it's a monitor (which means you'll have to connect a tuner), or a TV (which means it has a tuner built in). Then be sure to find out if it's capable of HDTV.

4. What is there to watch in HDTV and how do I get it?

More and more HDTV programs are available. Almost all CBS, NBC and ABC primetime shows are broadcast in HDTV; in addition, the WB network has a dozen hours a week, PBS does many shows in High Definition and almost all big sports events are now broadcast in HD. If you subscribe to cable or satellite, you can choose from a variety of programming from HBO to Showtime to 24-hour pay-per-view HD movie channels and more.

5. Do I need satellite or cable TV to fully enjoy HDTV?

Not necessarily. It depends on what you watch. You can get digital HDTV over the air using a set top or rooftop antenna, over satellite using a High Definition satellite receiver and dish, or through cable using a digital High Definition cable box.

For more information, check out www.CE.org/HDTVguide.