

Digital Television—You Got Questions?

(NAPSA)—This is the first year that we're buying more HDTVs than traditional analog sets. If you're considering buying a new TV, you probably have lots of questions. Here are answers to six questions that Jim Barry, the Consumer Electronics Association's Digital Answer Man, is frequently asked regarding the new TV system:

1. I'm in the market for a new TV. Should I buy an HDTV and is that the same as a digital TV?

You definitely want to consider a digital television (DTV). The new system of broadcasting (like cable and satellite) is digital, meaning it sends pictures and sound as computer code as compared with the old "analog" system, which sends signals as magnetic waves. The best DTV is high-definition (HDTV).

2. I've heard that I'll have to buy an HDTV eventually. Is that right?

Not exactly. You won't have to buy an HDTV, but soon we'll all buy digital television. The FCC requires that all TVs sold in the U.S. must include a digital tuner beginning in 2007. That's in advance of the broadcasters ending their analog broadcasts and switching exclusively to digital transmissions. That date has been set for February 17th, 2009.

3. What if I haven't bought a digital TV by February 2009?

If you have digital cable or digital satellite, you'll be able to receive the new digital broadcasts and watch them on your analog TV. If you rely on over-the-air signals, you'll be able to purchase an inexpensive box that will convert the digital signals to display on your analog set. The government has proposed supplying two coupons worth \$40 each for households that don't get cable or satellite and can't afford to get a digital TV or converter.



4. Is HDTV really that much better and what are SDTV and EDTV that I see advertised?

Think good, better, best. The new digital system can be standard definition (SDTV), good; enhanced definition (EDTV), better; or high-definition (HDTV), best. SDTV is probably fine for 27-inch and smaller screen sizes. And yes, HDTV is truly better! Depending on the measuring method, HDTV is five to 10 times as sharp and clear as our old analog broadcast system. Especially on larger screen sizes (over 30 inches) and in wide-screen with digital surround sound, it's a spectacular new home entertainment system. Take a look and listen in a store and I think you'll agree.

5. Do I need digital cable or satellite to get HDTV?

No, you don't. You can get digital HDTV on cable, satellite or over the air using a rooftop or set top antenna, depending on whether you live in an area that can get local broadcast reception. For more information on using an antenna, go to <http://www.antennaweb.org>.

6. Is it really expensive to get HDTV?

Good news. It's getting less expensive every day. HDTV is still the top-of-the-line DTV, but prices start at around \$500 for the smaller screen sizes. DTV sets are now available for under \$300.