



Technology

In Our Lives

High-Definition TV: What Everyone Wants To Know

(NAPSA)—The expanding home electronics industry has left many consumers a bit dazed, so it may be helpful to take a few minutes to learn about a technology that is sure to redefine the way you watch TV: High-Definition Television (HDTV).

HDTV is the ultimate TV experience, delivering images with higher resolutions, brighter colors and enhanced clarity. Improving the way you view and hear TV, HDTV also offers high-quality, surround-sound audio.

Although HDTV signals have been available for several years (DIRECTV was among the first pay TV services to launch two coast-to-coast high-definition signals for consumers in 1999) there continues to be much confusion about it. Many consumers thought purchasing an HD television would enable them to experience HD picture and sound. They often end up frustrated when they get their new HD television home and the viewing experience is nothing compared to what they encountered at their local retailer.

There are two simple steps to get the true HD experience: choosing the right television and the right programming service.

The TV Evolution

Most TVs work the same way: a signal sends information at the rate of 30 frames per second. Each frame is still, but because of the speed in which they're displayed, the combined frames appear to be in continuous motion. This technology has been successful, but isn't capable of delivering the crisp images that today's big screen televisions deserve.

Today, consumers have four types of TV sets to choose from:

1. Direct-view (standard set);
2. Flat Panel (plasmas or Liquid Crystal Displays [LCDs]). Experts predict flat panels will

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- eventually dominate, thanks to dropping prices and large selection;
3. Rear Screen Projection; and
 4. Front Screen Projection.

Once you've chosen an HD television, selecting the right programming service and equipment is crucial. Just because a "Broadcast in HD" graphic appears during your favorite show, it does not necessarily mean that you are actually watching that program in HD.

The Service Evolution

Until recently, consumers watched standard definition television which has up to 480 visible lines of detail. Next came Digital Television (DTV)—digitally transmitting signals to the TV—resulting in better picture and sound. However, viewing digital doesn't mean you're watching HD. HDTV is the ultimate DTV broadcast with 1080 lines of detail and a noticeably sharper and clearer picture.

You must upgrade to an HD service or you won't be getting the most out of your new HD television. There are three ways to get HD programming—cable, satellite or over-the-air antenna. Each service option offers unique advan-

tages. To help you decide, here's a snapshot of each:

HD Service Options

- **Satellite**—With a satellite provider, there are hundreds of HD programs (movies, sports, pay-per-view and more), usually at a price that is more affordable than cable. Satellite providers such as DIRECTV offer set-top receivers that combine HD with digital video-recording services, enabling viewers to record up to 50 hours of HDTV programming. By 2007, DIRECTV will offer up to 150 national HD channels and HD local channels in most markets.

- **Cable**—Cable offers diverse programming and many providers are bundling TV services with Internet access. However, those in rural areas may have fewer choices and cable providers likely won't have the capacity to offer the number of HD channels that will be available with a satellite service.

- **Over-the-Air**—There are no monthly fees, but this service may require a set-top box or separate HDTV tuner to decode over-the-air HD signals and is fairly limited, enabling the viewer to see local programming in HD, but not specialty channels.

Ready, Set, Watch

Once you have a TV and service, your HD experience is just a program away. All major network and national channels, including ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, HBO and ESPN, offer HD programming that is sure to tempt you.

To learn more about high-definition programming, visit the Web site at www.directv.com.