

Digital Answer Man

Common Questions About High Definition TV

(NAPSA)—A growing number of people are buying—or are considering buying—high-definition televisions (HDTV). Many questions still remain about this technology, however. Here are answers from Jim Barry, the Consumer Electronics Association's Digital Answer Man:



Jim Barry

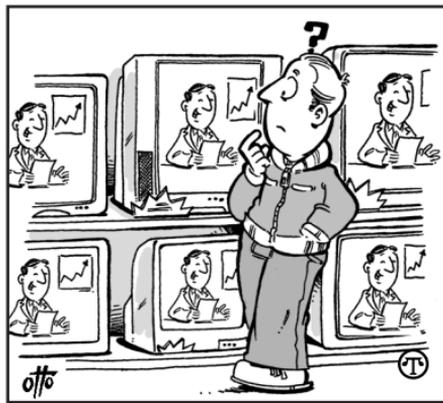
1. I'm in the market for a new TV. Should I buy an HDTV? And is that the same as digital TV? You definitely want to consider a digital television (DTV).

The new broadcast system (like satellite and many cable systems) is digital, meaning it sends pictures and sound as computer code, as compared to the old "analog" system that sends signals as magnetic waves. The best DTV is high definition (HDTV).

2. Is HDTV really that much better? Yes, it is. Depending on the measuring method, HDTV is five to 10 times as sharp and clear as our old "analog" broadcast system. Especially in larger screen sizes (over 30") and in widescreen with digital surround sound, it's a spectacular entertainment system.

3. What are SDTV and EDTV? Think good, better, best. The new digital system can be Standard Definition (SDTV), good; Enhanced Definition (EDTV), better; or High Definition (HDTV), best.

4. Do I need digital cable or satellite to get HDTV? No, you don't. Depending on where you live, you may be able to get HDTV over the air using a rooftop or set-top antenna.



When it comes to digital television, consumers still have a lot of questions.

5. Is it really expensive to get HDTV? Good news. It's getting less expensive every day. DTV sets are now available under \$300, while HDTV sets start at around \$500.

6. Are all flat panel LCD and plasma sets HDTV? No. Be sure to check whether they're EDTV or HDTV. The EDTV versions will be considerably less expensive.

7. What are "HDTV-Ready" sets? HDTV-Ready (aka HDTV Monitor) means the set doesn't have an HDTV tuner built in. You must connect a digital HDTV tuner to receive HDTV.

8. Is there much to watch on HDTV? Yes, and more every day. Most of the prime-time network TV programs, many cable channels and virtually all major sports events are now produced and delivered in HDTV.

9. I've heard that I'll have to buy an HDTV eventually. Is that right? Not exactly. The FCC will require that all TVs sold in the U.S. must include a digital tuner beginning sometime in 2007. So if you buy a new set after that, it will be at least SDTV.