

Technology In Our Lives



Television For The Future—Today

(NAPSA)—It's available in 97 percent of U.S. homes with television sets, according to the Federal Communications Commission, but most people still find digital television (DTV) confusing.

"DTV, and High-Definition in particular, is the most significant advance in TV since color was introduced fifty years ago," says Edmund Williams, of the IEEE Broadcast Technology Society. "HDTV offers stunningly sharp resolution, a wider, movie-like screen, and superior sound."

But he adds that digitally broadcast TV is not compatible with analog sets. "People who want to use their analog sets to watch television after the industry transitions to all-digital programming will have to purchase a digital-to-analog adaptor or subscribe to digital cable or satellite," he says.

Part of consumers' confusion began when the FCC promised all-digital TV transmissions by the end of 2006. "Unlike color and black and white broadcasting technologies, DTV and analog are not compatible," says Garrison Cavell, also an IEEE Broadcast Technology society member.

"The DTV marketplace is still evolving," says Williams, "as manufacturers and cable companies resolve questions about standards and compatibility." The industry is making progress, however. For example, manufacturers and cable operators recently agreed on a "plug-and-play" standard that should smooth the transition to all-DTV broadcasting for both consumers and industry.

Is now the time to move to DTV or HDTV? While both are cur-



Programs such as PBS' award-winning "Nova" are looking and sounding even better now that they're broadcast in HDTV.

rently being sold as separate components, Cavell observes "As with any new technology, there's some benefit to waiting a while for continued technical refinements as well as further price reductions."

Williams says consumers seeking a top-quality home viewing experience should consider HDTV now. "A great deal of HDTV programming is available, including most prime-time programming."

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