

DEVELOPERS NO LONGER SPECIFYING TV SYSTEMS IN NEW BUILD SCHEMES

It has come to our attention that a few developers are looking to specify data only networks in some new developments, probably due to misleading information from ISP's or consultants. This is simply an attempt to increase their margins at the expense of their customers, although probably due to the misinformation they receive. We believe that developers should be made aware of the following before reaching similar decisions:

- Based on research from 3Reasons, Ofcom project 10.15 million homes will still use DTT as their primary source of viewing in 2032.
- There are currently c 10 million homes viewing Sky TV, the vast majority via a dish.
- When customers move into a new home, they will expect to be able to view TV from day one, not wait for a broadband connection, and be able to use their existing Freeview, Freesat or Sky equipment.
- Putting PSB's (BBC, ITV, Ch's 4&5 and S4C) behind an effective paywall is not a decision developers should be taking on their customers behalf – anyone paying a licence fee should have access to these services FOC.
- Many groups of consumers will not, or are unable to, use streaming services as their primary source of viewing including older customers, some disadvantaged ones and some with certain disabilities, developers are potentially discriminating against these groups by refusing to provide a TV service using DTT or satellite.
- Customers may take matters into their own hands, including installing their own dishes and aerials, affecting the appearance and, potentially, the fabric of new developments. The return of "dish blight", something that's largely disappeared, will be a real concern.
- If customers do take it into their own hands, and the developer decides they want to have a TV system installed after all, it will be very expensive, difficult and sometimes impossible to reverse the initial decision.
- Most families want more than one TV in their home, multiple users in one home provide issues with broadband contention and speeds, especially if customers are watching UHD services, increasingly available from the BBC and Netflix.
- In the "cost of living crisis" the UK is currently experiencing, consumers are cancelling streaming services or rationalising their services, and will rely on DTT more, at least in the short term.
- DTT and satellite are both highly reliable services with almost zero lost hours of broadcasting per year, yet broadband suppliers cannot yet say the same. Even 1% outage means over 3 days of lost viewing a year. An IRS system offers access to DTT, satellite and radio, and the failure of one platform does not affect the others, if broadband develops a fault, then ALL viewing and listening is lost, and in the event of a national emergency DTT is the most reliable mass communication.

- DTT broadcasts are unlikely to cease before 2034 at the earliest and, if they follow the progress of DAB for example – where FM was supposed to have a definite cease date announced some time ago, which has been indefinitely postponed so far – DTT may well continue beyond that date.

All the above will lead to disputes, increased costs, and customer complaints for developers along with the return of dish and aerial blight. Accusations of discrimination against some sections of our society will also directly impact developers with a potential loss of business. All of which could be easily avoided simply, and relatively cheaply, by installing TV distribution systems alongside data ones. Until broadband services in the UK become much more reliable and accessible for everyone, a TV distribution system will remain a vital piece of infrastructure that should be provided as a matter of course.

We also would encourage all installers to engage with their local planning departments and local councillors to remind them why TV systems are essential infrastructure for new developments, while CAI continues to lobby at a national level.

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