

THE DIGITAL TV SWITCHOVER

OBSTACLES TO AVOID ALONG THE WAY



Digital switchover is in full swing across the world and there are no signs of technology developments slowing down, so getting the switchover right is important.

I'm Nick Markham, Chairman at Inview and I have worked in Digital TV for many years and been part of DTT projects with Top Up TV, and now NBC Nigeria. I'm going to walk you through some of the challenges you may come across and how to keep your switchover on track. There are many ways to make the most of your country's digital TV switchover experience and how to make the most of the long journey you've already been on.

My top tip is to plan, plan and plan and then communicate, communicate, communicate. Inevitably things will go wrong, but a great plan has the flexibility to absorb issues and right-size without causing major delays or budget issues.

I hope you are enjoying your switchover experience!

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TIME & BUDGET

Sticking to a designated timeframe is key, but we also know this isn't always possible and that challenges get in the way. Being prepared is key and understanding where there may be challenges is important. Making sure everyone involved has a reasonable timeframe to work towards manages expectations.

The same goes for the budget. Infrastructure and technology is a significant project cost and everyone should be realistic about the associated costs. Full analysis of infrastructure and technology needs to be put in place from the outset and any opportunity for government subsidies should be explored.

LEADERSHIP

It's essential to appoint a project manager or project group, someone to co-ordinate everyone involved from government, broadcasters and operators, industry governing bodies and technology partners. The benefit is that having an organization to help oversee the entire project helps push it to completion, as well as ensuring a constant flow of money is going in the right direction at the relevant time.

In the UK, the government led the charge and Paywizard and Inview assisted the UK government alongside Digital UK from 2008 – 2013 with switchover service support, seamlessly switching the entire country, region by region, to digital TV. There was someone to run the project and others ensuring quality throughout (from a support and public facing point of view).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Don't fail to lay the groundwork for your

switchover journey. Once this is complete it will help everything else fall into place.

Infrastructure can include digital access transmitters, digital signals or power. It's important to become knowledgeable about existing infrastructure in all regions of your switchover country; there can be extreme differences between city, towns and countryside (for instance, some areas in Africa have portable solar power). Determine what's needed to digitise the masses and how much it will cost - this information needs to be available for smooth running of a switchover. Key infrastructure not in place can cause a huge delay on the overall project and become a burden on money if not budgeted for.

MEDIA

Use this to your benefit and become a headline in all the right ways...

The digital TV switchover is big news mainly because it's mandatory and it affects everyone. Early engagement with local media helps to get viewers thinking about the switchover in advance and to debunk popular myths, such as the need to buy a new TV or a so-called 'digital aerial' to receive Freeview.

Additionally, quality control and PR control is beneficial but not essential. Take advantage of available articles and other resources to learn from the mistakes of those that have been through it. While there is no need to focus on the negatives, it's worthwhile being aware of things to keep an eye on throughout the project.

Whatever stage you are at and whatever your country, there are different things to consider and acknowledge when it comes to the digital TV switchover. Staying ahead of the game and knowing the things to avoid is a benefit to everyone from broadcasters and operators to governing bodies and viewers.

For more information please visit digital-switchover.tv or get in touch:

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