

MultiChoice launches DTT in Namibia

A new digital broadcast system will bring remarkably better television signals to Namibians in Windhoek when it is launched in mid-February by DSTV. The system uses the same frequencies as the current analogue transmission, but provides much clearer pictures and better audio quality.

Known as digital terrestrial transmission (DTT), it allows for six channels to be broadcast on the same frequency as previously used for one analogue channel. With a global scarcity of available radio frequencies - also known as spectrum - DTT has emerged as a new means of broadcasting more effectively and more efficiently.

MultiChoice, which is the leading digital satellite broadcaster in Africa, is launching this system on 18 February 2005 for its Namibian terrestrial subscribers in Windhoek.

"The quality of the broadcast is better, especially the audio which is comparable to CD quality sound," says Nolo Letele, CEO MultiChoice South Africa. "It's easier for the consumer to tune in and even if the signal gets weaker, it doesn't give that snowy picture which is seen on the analogue system."

The digital system allows MultiChoice to use sophisticated digital compression technology that makes it possible for more information to be broadcast - meaning more effective use of the spectrum, says Letele.

"From a government or regulatory perspective, the world was running out of frequencies. Digital technology allows you to use the same frequency much more efficiently. In the past an analogue transmitter gave one channel per frequency, while the new digital system gives six channels per frequency," he says.

What's more, DTT has many of the same digital features that were previously only available to satellite subscribers, or what the industry calls direct to home (DTH) users.

This includes the electronic programming guide (EPG) which is an extremely useful way to stay abreast of what programmes are broadcast at what times and on which channels. This even allows you to set reminders for your favourite show that can either pop up on the screen or change the channel for you.

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