

Glossary of Terms

AVC (Advanced Video Coding) – a new generation of video compression standards that offer greater compression and more cost effective transport of digital images.

Application – a program that adds enhanced functionality for the user. Applications can be downloaded over-the-air or loaded onto the set-top box at point of manufacture, examples include games, widgets and Electronic Programme Guides (EPG)

Catch-up TV – online TV portals that carry TV operators' content allowing consumers to watch programmes that they may have missed. Examples include BBC's iPlayer and SkyPlayer.

CA (Conditional Access) – refers to the encryption technology that allows TV operators to securely control access to Pay TV services. The most popular form is via smart card though card-less CA systems are now starting to enter the market.

Decoder – part of the CA system located in the set-top box that specifically decrypts encoded pictures.

DiSeqC™ (Digital Satellite Equipment Control) – a piece of technology integrated into the set-top box that can allow users to control multiple LNBs allowing access to different satellites and a greater variety of programmes.

DLNA® (Digital Living Network Alliance) – a universal software specification that enables conforming devices to share data over an Ethernet network. Often used in connected homes for sharing video between devices.

DOCSIS® (Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification) – refers to the specification of the high bandwidth return path technology that is often integrated into cable products, allowing operators to offer enhanced two-way services such as video-on-demand.

Dolby® and Dolby® Digital – company that has defined a set of standards for the encoding and compression of digital audio signals. Standards such as Dolby® Digital enable consumers to receive a high quality cinematic experience receiving sound from a number of channels or speakers located around a room.

DVB (Digital Video Broadcasting) – controls and develops standards for the transmission and reception of digital television on behalf of its members. Though predominantly a European body, its standards have been adopted in other countries throughout the world.

DVR or PVR – (Digital Video Recorder or Personal Video Recorder) a device that allows consumers to record digital television onto an integrated hard disk drive (See HDD) for playback at their convenience.

EPG (Electronic Programme Guide) – an application resident in set-top boxes that gives the user access to programme information and television schedules.

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Encryption – refers to the ‘encoding’ of digital information (sound and pictures). The encrypted information can only be viewed by individuals who are given an appropriate key, such as a smart card, so the data can be decrypted and viewed. Often referred to when discussing conditional access or CA.

Ethernet – allows a connected device to connect to a network such as the Internet, using a broadband modem.

FTA (Free-to-air) – refers to TV operators who broadcast their programmes with no encryption or conditional access system so that access is free-to-all. Examples include FreeSat or FreeView in the UK.

GUI (Graphical User Interface) – refers to the on-screen representation of data that allows consumers to access, set-up or control a particular device.

HDD - (Hard Disk Drive) a digital data storage device made up of a number of disks, used in connected devices to allow users to record TV programmes see DVR and PVR.

HDTV – (High Definition Television) – allows consumers to view television at very high resolution. In high definition TV the number of lines that makes up the picture is increased to 720 or 1080.

Head-end – refers to the part of the broadcast network where broadcast services are amalgamated and then broadcast to the consumer, typically includes encoding equipment, down-link and uplink services though exact configuration changes according to the broadcast medium.

IDTV (Integrated Digital Television) – where digital television reception technology is integrated into the TV casing.

IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) – a method of delivering TV services to consumers using Internet Protocol sometimes referred to as TelcoTV and WebTV as it uses Internet technologies.

Java – computer programming language based on Internet standards often used for writing applications in the digital TV space.

LNB (Low Noise Block) – a device used for capturing signals from a parabolic antenna (dish).

MHEG-5 – an open standard specification for writing interactive television software and applications written by the Multimedia/Hypermedia Experts Group part of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). The standard has been adopted by many free-to-air broadcasters particularly in terrestrial TV.

MHP (Multimedia Home Platform) – an open standard for writing interactive television software and applications written by the DVB. The standard has been adopted by some cable TV operators in Europe.

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Middleware – a layer of software or applications programming interface that allows applications to be written and used on a connected device.

MoCA® (Multimedia over Coax Alliance) – alliance working on the distribution on content around the home using coaxial cable as the distribution medium.

MPEG – the Motion Picture Experts Group, develops compression standards for digital video and audio used predominantly in the broadcast space.

MPEG-2 – an international standard that enables the conversion of moving pictures into a highly compressed stream of digital data for transmission. This was the first standard used for the broadcast of digital TV.

MPEG-4 – a more efficient version of MPEG-2, or advanced video coding solution, with higher compression ratios. Allows operators to squeeze more channels into a given broadcast space, reducing bandwidth requirements. Has been widely deployed to support higher bandwidth services such as HD TV and bandwidth constrained markets such as IPTV.

OTTTV (over-the-top TV) – refers to Internet based video services that are often supplied over-the-top of traditional broadcast services.

Pay TV – Television services to which users can buy access usually via monthly subscription or rechargeable smart cards.

PIP (Picture in Picture) – allows consumers to open a second viewing window over the top of another.

RS-232 – an interface featuring on a connected device that is used predominantly for uploading new software.

SCART – a common European connection interface for connecting video devices together, the solution consists of 2 connectors located in each device and connecting cable.

SDK (Software Development Kit) – a set of tools developed to allow software programmers to write application programs for digital TV. Each flavour of middleware usually has a corresponding SDK.

SDTV (Standard Definition TV) – the base level picture quality used in digital TV transmissions.

Smartcard – a card which allows users to access digital TV services. The card carries an individual key that unlocks, or decrypts Pay TV services. Often used with a corresponding CA system, see CA.

S/PDIF – a connector/interface often used on connected devices to allow the transfer of digital data.

STB or IRD – a consumer electronic device that enables consumers to watch digital entertainment services. The primary function of the STB is to decode and receives the broadcast signal and transfer to the TV.



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S-Video (Super-Video) – an interface specification for transferring video signals between devices at high quality.

USB (Universal Serial Bus) – an interface that allows the plug and play installation of peripherals onto a connected device.

VC-1 – Microsoft's specific version AVC software.

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) – allows voice communication to be transferred digitally across a network. Is the system employed by various Internet based telephone communications carriers.

WEEE (Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment) – directive concerning the appropriate disposal and handling of waste generated from electronic devices, also concerns the control of certain substances during device manufacture.