



LESSONS GARNERED FROM THE SWITCHOVER IN FINLAND

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN DIGITAL SWITCHOVER



CREDIBLE ROADMAP

Roadmap to ASO must be hold. Decisions taken must also be kept: dates, technological solutions and exhaustive coverage around the country are the key factors that may not waver.

All changes undermine consumer confidence in the process, the long-term plans of television companies need to be respected and the financial risk in the changes is borne by retailers and importers.



SUCCESS IN CLOSE COLLABORATION

Seamless cooperation between all operators is vital to success i.e. all TV-companies, network operator, cable TV-companies, consumer agency, viewer monitoring service, home appliance importers and retailers, antenna installation contractors, ministry of social affairs and health and association of regional or municipal authorities



NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

Licensed network operator pay the cost of new infrastructure.

Investment is financed by service charge paid by licensed content providers.

License period from 7 to 10 years. Technological development is so fast, that all doors must be kept open to ensure keeping up with progress.



SINGLE-CARD SOLUTION

Government should also make a statement, or include it in the law concerning pay-TV:

When pay-TV services are provided in terrestrial network the operators shall in collaboration strive to commit to a single-card service solution and consistent customer and subscriber administration that best serves consumer.



PAY-TV STRONG BOOSTER

Pay-TV can be a booster during the period of transition to digital television.

In Finland 2 pay-TV operators in DTT exploded the "bank".

In 16 months time more than 300 000 new subscribers, 25% of terrestrial audience. We recommended set-top box with conditional access to audience, although they had no idea right now to order pay-TV services. May be tomorrow!



SUBSIDIES?

Decisions on subsidies from society, if any, to the population as well as on taxation policies concerning devices and the requisite installation and deployment work must be taken already at the launch stage to guarantee fair attitude to all citizens.

In Finland no subsidies. The price of set-top box 40-50 euros.

Social service authorities in some municipalities supported in the form of income support.



HIGH LEVEL ADVISORY BOARD

A maximal versatile advisory organization shall be set up for the switchover to digital television.

A combination design with representatives of broadcasters, network operator, consumer agency, ministry of social affairs and health, association of aerial installation companies, content providers and device importers is recommended.

The government employee must chair all advisory groups.

Companies involved in the switchover to digital must also commit to internal measures.



GEOGRAPHICAL SHADOW

The geographical coverage of the multiplexes must be equal at the very outset. Citizens do not approve lack of balance between regions i.e. it is not fair that some people will have more services available than the others.

Get ready for surprises. Although in theory transmitter will cover certain region in practice it does not. It is far-sighted to include in investment plans also certain amount of gap fillers.



SURVEYS, SURVEYS...

In addition to the development of the penetration rate of digital reception, survey data must also be obtained at regular intervals on citizens attitudes, device development and challenges pertaining to use.

Transparency is the beginning of wisdom. Regular information about results to the media is recommended.



TASK FORCE

Task Force is a coordination group. The task is to promote digitalization, including the conceptualizing and implementing the necessary practical arrangements, coordination of digital television measures by all operators, contact with the target demographics and stakeholders in the reform, organization of any advisory and installation services to be provided and coordination and productions of digital television follow-up surveys and studies.

Group is chaired by government employee and staffed with representation of central operators.



IS THE MARKET READY?

A sufficient number of validated set-top boxes and integrated television set must be available on the market in all price ranges from the very launch of the digitalization project.

Regular contact with importers and retailers secure the rear.

Importers produce their own sales statistics. A excellent source of information.

Cooperation with consumer agency fruitful.



EVERYTHING IN ORDER?

Once the distribution network has been completed and measurements and advisory services are in progress, the necessary additional decisions can be taken to provide service in shadow areas in accordance with legislation and the terms of licenses.

The role of Communications Regulatory Authority is important. The Authority is supervisor which will make remarks about the fulfillment of licenses.

Quality of signal needs own standards. Government specify in the licenses.



BRAND IMAGE

The switchover to digital must be branded.

In Finland the brand was created by well-known Finnish male actor, age 60! He was main character in humorous TV-spots (how to install set-top box!) and printed leaflets.

Sweden and Great Britain chose animated character.

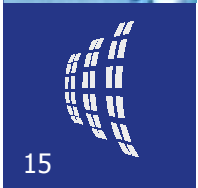


MEET THE NATION

Meet the people where they are. Bus tours around the country were success. In the bus several set-top boxes and competent staff to give people advices about the boxes and installation of boxes.

Outside the bus experts in distribution network issues. Households had 30 years old aerials which did not recognize digital signal!

And one to listen to opinions and complaints about ASO!





REGULAR MONTHLY CONTACT TO STAKEHOLDERS

To avoid rumors it is necessary to have regular meetings with key stakeholders and publish in the format of e-mail monthly bulletin describing recent and upcoming events and surveys related to digitalization. Task Group's responsibility.

All questions that come up must be answered also in the ministry of communications. We are for the citizens.



DIGITV INFO - HOTLINE

Operators, including set-top box importers, decided to offer citizens an advisory hotline 4 years before switchover. Hotline was financed by operators!

A highly professional service team answered more than 600 000 digital questions from public by phone or e-mail.

Questions: installation of set-top boxes, subtitling, shadow areas and antenna alignment.



REMEMBER THE MINORITIES

Special interest groups must be taken into account:

- the elderly alone people, often unable to move
- the disabled, deaf people and the visually impaired

In Finland public broadcaster has audio subtitling services in foreign programming for the visually impaired and also subtitling in domestic programming for hearing impaired. About 30% of domestic programming is subtitled.



COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The Communications Group was in charge of media communications as well as planning and monitoring publicity for digital television. The Group also coordinated responses to letters to the editor. Group produced nine TV-spots about switchover. Spots were transmitted free of charge on all TV-channels in Finland.

The ministry of transport and communications was chairing three joint venture groups to promote switchover: high level advisory group, communications group and task force group (TV2007).



RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE

Project responsibility does not end with the switch-off of analogue broadcasts.

People need advice and instruction also after the switchover.

In Finland all broadcasters have sworn that citizens can utilize present devices at least until the end of 2016 and existing channels will prevail in DVB-T, MPEG-2 format.

Some HD-channels will be launched in two years time but those channels create only additional benefits.