High satisfaction with digital free-to-air television

Thirteen per cent of Australian households have adopted digital free-to-air television since its introduction in January 2001 and 86 per cent of adopters are satisfied with the technology, mostly because of the improved picture and reception.

There are significant knowledge shortfalls about digital television, with 45 per cent of non-adopters not knowing if digital free-to-air services were available in their area, and 17 per cent of non-adopters not having heard of digital free-to-air television at all.

The findings are contained in the ACMA research monograph *Digital Media in Australian Homes*.

This research identifies early benchmarks in the inevitable transition from analog to digital free-to-air television transmission in Australia.

The research examines, more broadly, community perceptions of digital media, the type of digital media platforms being used in homes, and the drivers and inhibitors to the adoption of digital free-to-air television.

The main reasons for the adoption of digital free-to-air television were improvements to picture quality, better reception, and extra channels. The rate of uptake was roughly similar for capital cities and regional areas.

Four per cent of all households reported having high-definition television (HDTV), with 92 per cent of adopters expressing satisfaction with the technology.

Digital subscription television was also reported in 13 per cent of homes, contributing to the 22 per cent of homes with either digital free-to-air television or digital subscription television, according to survey respondents.

'This timely study will inform ACMA, the Australian Government and television broadcasters about how the Australian community is starting to move from analog to digital free-to-air television,' Ms Maddock said.

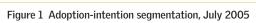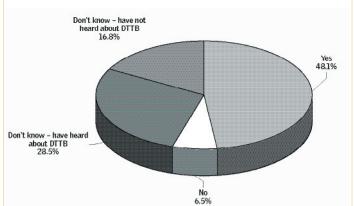The main reasons given by non-adopters for not being interested in digital free-to-air television were lack of interest in more television, cost of equipment, and not knowing about digital television.

At this stage, digital free-to-air television seems to be a peripheral issue for most non-adopter households. Sixty-one per cent of non-adopters were either not interested or not sure if they were interested in taking up the technology. Seventeen per cent of non-adopters said they were interested but had no plans to purchase, six per cent planned to purchase after two years, and 14 per cent said they were planning to purchase within two years.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND CONSULTANT

The research consisted of a nationally representative

Figure 1 Adoption-intention segmentation, July 2005

Table: Household penetration of digital media

MEDIA	% HOUSEHOLD PENETRATION NATIONAL
Digital TV (i.e. digital free-to-air TV and digital subscription TV)	22
Digital free-to-air TV	13
High-definition TV (HDTV)	4
Subscription TV	24
Digital subscription TV*	13
DVD players	78
Internet (total)	67
Broadband internet	26

N=1148 television-using households

*The penetration of digital subscription television is likely to be higher than 13 per cent. At the time of this study there was an estimated 65:35 split between digital and analog, suggesting a household penetration of about 16 per cent for digital subscription television services. This would also have a positive effect on the total penetration of digital television.

Source: *Digital media in Australian homes* study, ACMA, July 2005