

As an individual and as an independent electrical retailer I am frankly gob smacked at the attitude of OFCOM with regard to this matter.

Every day we talk to the public about DTT/DAB/DVB and HDTV. Without a shadow of doubt the biggest point of interest for our customers at the moment is HDTV. Their biggest concern of course should be the switchover to Freeview but this has been dwarfed by HD. Most of our customers assume that HD will be/already is on Freeview once the switchover happens and are shocked to discover that as it stands, they may be forced onto a subscription based service.

Over the last couple of years there has been a shift in policy by various organisations to prevent certain broadcasters (BSkyB) from being allowed to achieve a monopoly situation within certain areas such as sport. The decision to deny space being reserved for HD on the Freeview service almost guarantees that broadcasters like BSkyB will be able to monopolise the HD arena for years to come.

The additional broadcast costs associated with HD and the associated revenues provided by the services at the moment will prevent major broadcasters being able compete on a fair level with for example telecoms companies. This however does not mean that the service that they would provide would not be of huge value to the public unwilling or unable to pay high subscriptions charges.

The U.K has always been at the forefront of television technology and although this is still possible without HD on Freeview it will create a social divide throughout the country.