The UK’s switch to digital TV

Alex Pumfrey
former Director of the UK’s Digital TV Switchover Programme

presentation prepared for the CMA’s UKCN Consumer Remedies Workshop

June 2017
Summary of presentation

Alex Pumfrey is Partner at Maidthorn, a firm of advisor-entrepreneurs working where the creative industries meet digital innovation. Previously, between 2008 and 2012, Alex was Programme Director of the UK’s Digital TV Switchover at Digital UK.

This presentation was given by Alex at the fourth workshop of the UKCN Consumer Remedies project held at the CMA on 22 June 2017. The first half of this workshop was focussed on marketing, market research and behavioural insights.

Alex led the successful delivery of UK switchover on time, under budget, with minimal consumer disruption. This presentation provided an overview and lessons learnt from UK’s switch to digital TV.
Digital TV switchover was the national change programme which required everyone to get digital TV as the old analogue TV signal was switched off, 2008-2012.

Whilst it was Government policy, enforced via licences by DCMS and Ofcom, delivery was co-ordinated by Digital UK, a single purpose organisation created for the job.

The successful delivery of switchover is presented here as a case study of consumer action and behaviour change.
My role in the digital TV switchover

Alex Pumfrey

2005 - 2008  Director of Strategy & Policy for Digital UK
             Responsible for creating the governance framework

2008 - 2012  Programme Director for Digital UK
             Responsible for project managing the delivery of UK switchover

2013 – 2015  COO for Digital UK
             Responsible for transitioning Digital UK to run Freeview

2016→       Partner, Maidthorn
             Advising businesses on digital strategy / incubating start-ups

• Led the successful delivery of UK switchover: on time, under budget, with minimal consumer disruption
• Worked closely with Government, regulators, broadcasters, equipment manufacturers and others
• Has advised other nations navigating digital switchover: USA, Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, Japan, France, Finland and Nigeria
• Has spoken on delivery of switchover in professional conferences, and on national and international media
Before and after

Before Switchover
2006

- Freeview coverage c.75% of homes
- 80 transmitters converted
- c.65% adoption of digital TV (all platforms)
- 1000s analogue televisions being sold
- Media pessimism about switchover
- Political anxiety
- 10-15% say they will never convert

End of Switchover
November 2012

- Freeview coverage 98.5% of homes
- 1,154 transmitters converted 2008-2012
- 100% adoption of digital TV (all platforms)
- All TV set sales with digital built-in
- Positive media and NAO report
- Political credit
- Everyone converts to digital
"[The project is] more complex, with more potential for chaos and consumer revolt than any other civilian project in our history."

Industry expert, 2006

"I am delighted to take this opportunity to congratulate all those who have played a part in the unqualified success of the digital television switchover."

Ed Vaizey MP, Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries, 2012
Regional roll-out: 2008-2012

- **2009**: 4.8m homes
- **2010**: 2.3m homes
- **2011**: 10.5m homes
- **2012**: 9.1m homes

Millions of homes

Alex Pumfrey – June 2017
Programme benefits

1. Universal availability of digital terrestrial TV
   - Increases affordable choice of TV platforms for consumers
   - Increased channel choice
   - An end to dual analogue/digital transmission for broadcasters

2. Release of valuable spectrum
   - Freed up 14 UHF channels which were sold for mobile use
   - 4G roll-out in this spectrum is now covering most of the UK
   - Digital TV uses spectrum more efficiently than analogue TV

Government estimated net benefits of £1.1 to 2.2 billion NPV for UK plc

Ofcom spectrum auction raised £2.34 billion for Treasury
Shared objectives

“The goal of the digital TV switchover programme is to switch television in the UK to digital by the end of 2012, in a way that makes it a simple and positive experience for viewers, and providing assistance to older and vulnerable people”

Programme Goal

1. Re-engineer all 1,154 transmission sites, switch analogue TV off, and launch the high power digital terrestrial television signal at the main transmitter and its relays successfully and on time
2. Achieve universal awareness of switchover (95% or higher) five months prior to the start of switchover
3. Ensure that all those requesting assistance from the Help Scheme are helped in a timely manner
4. All those choosing to convert their main set to digital...are able to do so by the second switchover date

Critical Success Factors
Programme partners with clearly defined roles

Policy & Regulatory

- Overall responsibility for policy delivery
  - dcms

Policy and spectrum management
  - Ofcom

Implementation

- Overall responsibility for programme delivery: on time, on budget and with minimal disruption
  - digitaluk

- Responsibility for timely delivery of practical assistance to vulnerable people
  - Switchover Help scheme
## Ring-fenced budgets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Final Expenditure</th>
<th>Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital UK Communications</td>
<td>BBC Licence Fee</td>
<td>£200m</td>
<td>£126m</td>
<td>£74m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital UK Operations</td>
<td>Analogue and digital broadcasters</td>
<td>£30m</td>
<td>£30m</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC Switchover Help Scheme</td>
<td>BBC Licence Fee</td>
<td>£600m</td>
<td>£340m</td>
<td>£260m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmitter Network Upgrades</td>
<td>Analogue and digital broadcasters</td>
<td>£630m</td>
<td>£630m</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£1,460m</strong></td>
<td><strong>£1,126m</strong></td>
<td><strong>£334m (23%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The delivery elements

- Transmitter engineering
- Consumer communications
- Trade enablement
- Consumer support

Project Management
A layered communications strategy which extended deep into local communities to relay the message of switchover:
The ‘moment of compulsion’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Communications objective</th>
<th>Main channels used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1 year</td>
<td>Raising awareness, Building understanding, Encouraging readiness, Prompting action if not ready, ‘Be ready’</td>
<td>National advertising, Regional advertising, Direct mail Press/PR Events, Local advertising, Press/PR Local advertising</td>
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<tr>
<td>-6 months</td>
<td>Raising awareness, Building understanding, Encouraging readiness, Prompting action if not ready, ‘Be ready’</td>
<td>National advertising, Regional advertising, Direct mail Press/PR Events, Local advertising, Press/PR Local advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 month</td>
<td>Raising awareness, Building understanding, Encouraging readiness, Prompting action if not ready, ‘Be ready’</td>
<td>National advertising, Regional advertising, Direct mail Press/PR Events, Local advertising, Press/PR Local advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 week</td>
<td>Raising awareness, Building understanding, Encouraging readiness, Prompting action if not ready, ‘Be ready’</td>
<td>National advertising, Regional advertising, Direct mail Press/PR Events, Local advertising, Press/PR Local advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 day</td>
<td>Raising awareness, Building understanding, Encouraging readiness, Prompting action if not ready, ‘Be ready’</td>
<td>National advertising, Regional advertising, Direct mail Press/PR Events, Local advertising, Press/PR Local advertising</td>
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1st stage: loss of 1 analogue channel
2nd stage: loss of all analogue channels
Meet Digit Al!

- Digit Al: 'your friendly guide to switchover'
- Designed by Oscar-winning Aardman Animations
- Appeared consistently through all communications
- Also a costume character for events…
- …and a toy for children
- Became well recognised and even loved!
The advertising campaign

- Communications were delivered by a co-ordinated campaign in the 6 months up to switchover:
  - TV, radio, outdoor and press advertising
  - On-screen messages
  - ‘Your Guide to Switchover’ information booklet delivered to you door
- At peak we delivered more than 200 time sensitive advertisements per week
- In each area there were over 100 opportunities to see our messages
TV advertising

- Advertising on TV was an important part of the mix - and expected for a TV change programme
- We ran a number of different ads, this being our most popular format
Community activity

• More than 2,000 roadshow events to advise 480,000 people
• A Schools’ Programme - educational materials linked to curriculum
• Regional teams acted as the face of switchover in each community and co-ordinated activity on the ground, working with partners
Partnership with charities

We helped establish Digital Outreach - a consortium to cascade switchover messaging into the local community.

12,686 charity staff and volunteers provided advice to 580,000 people

- Identified key charities in a region
- Commissioned lead organisations
- Mailed Community Outreach Pack
- Trained volunteers
- Provided grants for community events
- Ran Advice Points at switchover
Phone and web support

- Advice Line: 08456 50 50 50
- At peak 700 customer service advisers at six call centres
- Received 2 million calls

- Website: [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk)
- 17 million people used the website
- A ‘postcode checker’ allowed viewers to find out digital TV options where they live
- There were 63 million enquiries of the postcode checker
Some need extra help…
The BBC-run Help Scheme provided practical assistance to 1.3 million people.

People were eligible if:
- 75 or over
- Disabled or blind / partially-sighted
- They were identified from Government records and written to directly
- The service was £40 for most or free if on income support

It provided:
- An easy-to-use box
- Installation service
- A new aerial if needed
- Help on how to use digital TV
Supporting retailers

- 7,000 stores signed up to the ‘Digital Tick Logo’ scheme
- They received Digital UK’s point of sales materials and were included on Digital UK’s online retailer search function
- 46 Retail Support Executives visited every logo licensed store
- They provided in-store training on switchover to 74,000 retail staff who received the ‘Ask Digital’ qualification
Insight & monitoring

Strategic insight

Core segmentation:
- Cultured conservatives
- Out and about families
- Traditionalists
- TV centrics
- Rolling stones
- Hi-tech consumers

Additional work to understand disabled, older and isolated consumers

Additional work to understand Minority Ethnic consumers

Quantitative

- Monthly tracking study
- 6 years: ‘06-'12
- GfK NOP / Ipsos MORI
- 1,300 per month
- 65,000 in total
- Face-to-face in-home
- Specific quotas: older, disabled, flats, ME

Qualitative

- Focus group programme
- 3 or 4 waves per each of 15 regions
- 3 months, before and after
- Local agencies

- Regional reporting
- Regional teams provide regular report from their on-the-ground experience

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Point from Switchover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>-8 months</th>
<th>-5 months</th>
<th>-2 months</th>
<th>1 week</th>
<th>+2 weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Switchover Awareness</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date Understanding</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retune Understanding</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Set Conversion</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 insights

1. ‘Joining the dots’ – creating a seamless consumer experience
2. Awareness > understanding > action
3. Show you’re serious
4. Don’t overcomplicate it
5. Get press and PR onside - powerful allies
6. Localise activity - can’t be a ‘top down’ imposition
7. Use grassroots networks
8. Offer extra help to those that need it – a little goes a long way
9. Find a moment of compulsion (everyone waits until the last minute)
10. The British public are resilient and pragmatic when given the right advice and support!
Thank you

Alex Pumfrey