



# Solving the Mystery of Digital TV

by Tanya Friedman

**W**hat is the mystery of digital television and February 2009? Is it Y2K all over again?

Digital Television (DTV) is a new type of broadcasting technology that is used by broadcast television stations, this does not apply to cable networks. TV stations will be broadcasting and transmitting the TV picture using data bits like a computer, this technology allows more bits to be transmitted and many more uses by the TV stations. It is also mandated by the FCC that broadcasters turn in their current analog frequency so the government can use it for other uses such as emergency notifications and new technology.

## **Will I need a new TV?**

You will not need a new TV as long as you are connected to a private cable system such as Peoples Choice Cable TV, or you're connected to a cable company or DirecTV.

## **What if I have a TV in my home that is not connected to any of the above?**

You have choices. You can connect your TV to your provider or you can purchase a DTV receiver from Best Buy, Circuit City, etc. The receiver will allow you to watch the DTV programming on your existing TV set. In general, the stronger the antenna you use the more DTV broadcast stations you will receive.

In a nutshell, the converter box reconfigures the digital signal to analog.

**Is there a difference between DTV and HDTV? (High Definition television)**

Yes. All HDTV is digital, but not all Digital TV is HDTV.

DTV is the basic level of quality display and resolution for both analog and digital. Transmission of DTV may be in either the traditional (4:3) or widescreen (16:9) format.

HDTV in widescreen format (16:9) provides the highest resolution and picture quality of all digital broadcast formats. Combined with digitally enhanced sound technology, HDTV sets new standards for sound and picture quality in television.

**If I have a High Definition television will I be able to receive all the (HD) high definition programming that's available?**

Yes and no. If you have a HDTV with a built in HD tuner and antenna then you can probably pick up any broadcasters of HD and DTV programming for free, such as NBC, CBS, ABC, and FOX, provided they are broadcasting in HD. Remember not every program will be broadcasted in HD, some will be DTV. For cable networks in HD, such as Discovery HD, ESPN HD, A&E HD, etc., you will require a HD television, you will need a HD box (unless you have a newer TV and purchased a cable card, however that is the minority) and you will need to subscribe to the HD tier in order to get those network in HD. Since DirecTV, offers the most HDTV services, find out if what they offer suits your needs. In addition, just as with cable, satellite services offer some national HDTV programming, but may not always offer HDTV feeds from local station affiliates.

There are great sites available to obtain more information, such as [about.com](http://about.com), [AARP.org/digital](http://AARP.org/digital), or [DTV.gov](http://DTV.gov).

*Tanya Friedman is Operations Manager for Peoples Choice Cable TV. For more information, please visit [www.peopleschoicecable.com](http://www.peopleschoicecable.com). ■*

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