

We are embarking on an unprecedented revolution in the way we receive television signals.

It will impact an entire industry in the way that the assembly line forever changed the way we manufacture.

The way that forsaking trains for airplanes changed the way we get from point A to B.

The way that switching to color television and color movies changed the way we are entertained.

I am talking about the switch to digital television, and it is going to happen on February 17, 2009.

I want to thank you very much for inviting me to speak to you today.

***Spend a few minutes introducing yourself and provide background on your station and its role in the community.***

Think about how many times you watched TV today. Or even caught a glimpse of what was on the tube.

What if I told you that the signal that delivered your last television program will be obsolete in 2009?

And what if I told you that *everyone* in this audience who receives free over-the-air television on an analog TV set through an antenna could get dramatically clearer pictures on their TV?

What if I told you that all of your television sets can have drastically better sound quality?

What if I told you that you that each and every one of you who gets television over-the-air on an analog set will have more TV channels than you get now?

I'm guessing you'd like that.

On February 17, 2009, that's exactly what's going to happen.

We will experience a dramatic change in the way our favorite television shows are broadcast.

But before I tell you why, let's take a look back at some of the major milestones in television history.

Then I'll take you to the future of television, and show you how the DTV transition will affect you.

In 1927, Bell Telephone and the U.S. Department of Commerce conducted the first long distance use of television between Washington D.C. and New York City.

In 1948, cable television was born in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

In 1953, the first successful color television began commercial broadcasts.

1960 marked the first televised presidential debates, between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon.

Kennedy's comfort on TV compared to Nixon drastically impacted the election. Those listening to the debate on the radio were far less impressed by Kennedy.

In 1969, Astronaut Neil Armstrong took the first lunar stroll. About 720 million people around the world tuned in to view it live.

In 1989, Pay-per-view became a familiar part of cable TV service, reaching about one-fifth of all wired households.

In 1993, Closed Captioning became a requirement on all TV sets.

2005 saw flat screen TVs & HDTV become the "in" thing of the year. Almost all televisions sold are now flat LCD and Plasma screens.

And that brings us to our latest milestone in television history: February 17, 2009.

On that date, we—as a nation—will make the transition to Digital Television, or DTV.

The transition to DTV will be the single most significant advancement in television since the color TV was invented in the 1950's.

For the past 80 years, we've been getting our broadcasts through the same antiquated technology.

Since the inception of the first television, stations have been broadcasting through analog signals.

Televisions have picked up these analog signals through analog tuners and antennas—the old-fashioned looking ones that resemble "rabbit ears."

On February 17, 2009, all of these analog signals will be upgraded to digital signals.

Stations across the country will begin broadcasting exclusively in the digital format.

Why digital broadcasting? How will this revolutionize television as we know it?

Because it offers dramatically clearer pictures and better sound.

It is far more efficient and more flexible than traditional analog broadcast technology.

It gives viewers the option of High Definition TV, or HD TV, which offers crystal-clear pictures.

It will also allow stations to broadcast multiple programs simultaneously, instead of broadcasting only one channel at a time as they do today.

That means a local station could broadcast an all-weather channel, an all-traffic channel, or an all-sports channel, in addition to their normal news broadcasts.

This is called "multicasting," and it has the potential to change TV viewing as we know it.

Digital television was first introduced in the 1990's when everything was becoming digitized. In the 1990's our music, our cell phones, our movies, they all went digital.

Many TV stations followed suit and began airing their broadcasts in both digital and analog formats.

You may be wondering, why can't we leave things the way they are?

Why does TV have to go exclusively digital?

Because Congress recognized the benefits of going exclusively digital, and they passed a law in 2005 requiring stations to switch their broadcasts to the digital format by February 17, 2009.

They felt that this was the best date, because it would allow TV viewers plenty of time to get prepared for the switch.

Analog is a technology we've been using for over 80 years.

80 years ago we had no internet, no computers, no faxes, no color TV. Many households didn't even have electricity!

Yet millions of households across the country are still receiving analog signals through the antennas or "rabbit ears" on their analog television sets.

In fact, it's estimated that about 19.6 million households are receiving only over-the-air analog broadcasts.

An additional 15 million more households get some of their programming over-the-air on at least one analog TV set.

There are about 64 million analog television sets still being used across the country.

Here in *insert your state*, there are approximately *insert number* households that rely solely on over-the-air television broadcasts.

We want to make sure that no viewer or no television set is left behind come February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

You remember Y2K. It sounded overwhelming at first. No one knew what was going to happen at midnight when the new millennium rolled around.

People across the globe were buzzing with anxiety, excitement and fear of the unknown.

If you look at consumer awareness patterns, the closer we got to the end of 1999, the more and more people began to think about what they should do to prepare themselves.

There are also things we can do to prepare ourselves for February 17, 2009.

In fact, many of you might already be prepared for the DTV transition.

So how do you know if you're digital ready?

How can you be 100% prepared for the transition?

If you have purchased a new TV recently, there's a good chance your TV has a digital tuner, capable of receiving digital broadcasts.

You need to ask your retailer, check your owner's manual, or visit the manufacturer's website to be certain.

All TVs manufactured after March 1, 2007 are required have digital tuners built in, but analog TVs are still on shelves. That's why it's important you do a little homework to make sure your TV is digital.

If you have purchased a new HD or LCD screen television lately, you are already receiving digital TV.

If you subscribe to a paid cable, satellite, or telephone television service such as FIOS, you should not be affected.

If you need more information or have any questions about these services, be sure you contact your service provider.

If you don't meet any of these criteria, then you can follow one of three simple steps that will ensure you won't wake up on February 18 to static instead of your favorite morning show.

One of these steps is to purchase a converter box from your local electronic retailer, similar to the one I have here on display.

The converter box converts the new digital signal back into analog format.

That way you can view digital broadcasts on your analog TV set.

They are user-friendly. They will be manufactured by a number of companies, including LG, RCA, and Samsung, and will be available beginning in January of 2008.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has created a coupon program to provide financial assistance to consumers who need converter boxes.

Every household will be able to apply for up to two coupons, worth \$40 a piece.

These coupons must be redeemed within three months. They will be available in early 2008, and you must register with the NTIA to receive the coupons.

Each coupon can be used toward one converter box.

For example, if you are married, you and your spouse cannot combine your respective \$40 dollar coupons, put them towards a \$60 converter box, and then keep the change.

Just one coupon per box will be permitted.

You may be wondering whether or not you need a converter box, so, keep in mind that you may have some televisions sets in your homes that are DTV ready, and some that are not.

Do you have TV's in your basement? Bedroom? Kitchen? Do you have a second home? A beach house? A cabin?

Make a mental note of where your televisions are, and think about whether or not they are DTV ready.

Do they use an antenna? Is it an older model TV? If so, chances are you will need a converter box.

If the TV is new and equipped with a digital tuner, or if it is hooked up to cable, satellite, or phone service broadcasts, then you do not need the converter box.

Which brings me to the second option, which is to simply subscribe to one of these services.

Paid cable, satellite, or telephone television services will all ensure you will get your broadcasts on February 18, 2009.

As I said before, if you already subscribe to one of these services, you are prepared.

Your third option is to go out and purchase a new television with a digital tuner.

And remember, it's important that you specify to your electronics retailer that you want a TV that has a digital tuner capable of receiving digital broadcasts.

By law, digital tuners have been required in sets 35 inches or larger since July of 2005.

Since March of 2006, digital tuners have been required on sets 25 inches or larger.

And as of March 1, 2007, *all* television sets must be manufactured with a digital tuner.

While the goal of getting every household in America ready for the digital transition may seem a little ambitious, the switch to digital that the U.S. is making in 2009 is not unique.

The transition to digital television is a global phenomenon.

Many nations have already completed their own switchover, and several European countries have set a date that is earlier than ours.

The need to switch to DTV is a universally accepted necessity, and you have the ability to be completely prepared for it.

Remember, if you want to watch your favorite morning show, soap opera, sitcom, drama, or news show on February 18, you need to take one of 3 steps:

ONE—Purchase a converter box. Purchasing a converter box is simple and there are government funds available to help you buy one.

TWO—Purchase a new television set with a built-in digital tuner

OR THREE—Subscribe to a cable, satellite, or telephone company television service

We want to ensure that every last TV is equipped for the transition, and that every person across the country is prepared.

In order to do this, we need your help. We need you to help spread the message.

We want you to take this message to your friends and family members so every household in America is prepared for the switch.

Let them know what I have shared with you today. Each and every one of you can be ambassadors for the NAB by telling at least five people about the switch.

Television stations have already been doing their part in the transition. Over 92% of television stations now provide digital programming in addition to their analog service.

I urge you to start preparing yourself, your family, your neighbors, and your friends today for DTV.

If you have any questions about the DTV transition, I encourage you visit [www.DTVAnswers.com](http://www.DTVAnswers.com). There you can find all the information you need on how you can be prepared for the switch.

And now you have *insert number here* days to make sure you and your family are ready.

Thanks again for inviting me to speak to you today.

I have a few minutes to answer some questions you may have about the transition.

***Brief Q&A with audience.***

For those of you with more questions I have a few reading materials you are welcome to take home with you. If you still have some questions, please refer to the materials or go to [www.DTVAnswers.com](http://www.DTVAnswers.com)