



The 4G challenge

With fears that 4G mobile services will interfere with digital terrestrial TV broadcasts, the DTG outlines how it is committed to ensuring the two coexist while maximising the benefits to the consumer

WITH the completion of the UK digital switchover comes a new challenge: the introduction of 4G mobile broadband services.

In early 2013, Ofcom auctioned off 250MHz of spectrum as two separate bands, which is equivalent to two-thirds of the radio frequencies currently used by wireless devices such as tablets, smartphones and laptops in the UK.

4G mobile broadband is due to be rolled out in the UK this summer. While the launch of 4G services will enable broadcasters and mobile service providers alike to deal with the increasing demand for accessibility of broadcast content on the go, the question as to how 4G and digital TV can coexist is one that the Digital TV Group (DTG) is currently looking into.

The DTG, the industry association for digital TV in the UK, is committed to leveraging its expertise to assist with making 4G and digital terrestrial television (DTT) coexist as efficiently and effectively as possible and thus maximising the benefits of the service to consumers.

The DTG is also working closely with at800 [at800 is a trademark of Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited (DMSL) and is funded by and represents the UK mobile operators who will be launching 4G mobile services at 800MHz], as well as the industry, supporting all sides, while trying to minimise impact on consumers as much as possible.

The RF working group, which includes broadcasters, manufacturers and silicon vendors, is currently in the process of looking at the coexistence of 4G and DTT. This includes investigating the current sensitivity and selectivity requirements in the DTG's *D-Book* [the technical specification for UK DTT – Freeview and Freeview HD] RF chapter to determine whether improvements in receiver performance can be made, as well as the creation of new tests for manufacturers to ensure coexistence.

DTG Testing, the DTG's test centre, has been awarded the contract to test filters that will be used to protect

digital terrestrial television from interference by 4G mobile broadband signals at 800MHz.

Second screens

The DTG is also looking at improving the experience of second-screen applications, in particular those directly related to main screen content.

Ofcom has commissioned Technologia, in association with i2 media research and the DTG, to undertake a study on the growing use of second-screen devices and apps. Second-screen innovations allow users to control TVs and recorders, navigate and choose programmes as well as interact with content in new ways and extend the social dimension of TV consumption.

The Ofcom study will focus on consumer benefits, technology enablers, innovation and the opportunities and potential risks associated with developments in this area.

The DTG is working on enhancing the interoperability between consumer devices in the home and across devices from different manufacturers. A working group has documented home networking use cases related to consuming TV content on various devices and has begun exploring ways in which these solutions can be delivered using existing standards. The group's task is to determine whether a standard requires profiling or extending to improve the interoperability.

Another important development the DTG is currently involved in is the 'Future of Innovation in Television Technology' Taskforce (FITT) led by a group consisting of senior content executives, consumer specialists, technology leaders in television, networks and mobile and leading academics in the field.

The Taskforce is divided into four main areas of work with each work stream being driven by an advisory group of industry. The four work streams are: Computing for the Creative Industries; Future Networks and Infrastructure; Evolution of Television, and Consumer Trends over the

Freeview launches BBC2 HD



BBC2 HD launched on Freeview on March 26, replacing the existing BBC HD channel.

The new channel will broadcast a simultaneous version of the BBC2 schedule and is available subscription-free on Freeview 102. Subject to regulatory approval, a further 10 HD channels could launch on the Freeview platform by the end of next year.

Freeview has also revamped its website – www.freeview.co.uk – to include new and improved features, including a 'shop window' on the home page, a new 'what we offer' page, an enhanced guide with links to catch-up TV and a short list of key Freeview+ HD and Freeview HDTV products, with customer reviews from Reevoo.

For the first time, the site will include a backwards-scrolling programme guide that will allow catch-up options for programmes viewers have missed.

This will link users to the programmes in BBC iPlayer, ITV Player, 4OD and Demand Five, so they can watch there and then. It is also possible to customise the TV guide, so users can set their own favourite channels.

To support retailers, Freeview has been carrying out in-store product demonstrations in partnership with Toshiba, supported by extensive point-of-sale literature.

Freeview's field team has been attending local Repra events to train independents. To order point-of-sale material, please visit www.freeview.co.uk/independentPOS

Next 10 Years. The Taskforce will publish a first report on May 2 at the DTG Summit, followed by two interim reports due in August and November 2013, before publishing the final report in March 2014.

● To attend the DTG Summit, visit the website at www.dtg.org.uk/summit