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Manufacturers Not Giving Customers the Full Picture

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TV aerial manufacturers Maxview have highlighted a significant challenge with the aerials and TV reception equipment installed as standard, on all new caravans and motor homes now and for the past 5 years. The standard TV aerial fitted to new caravans and motor homes manufactured in the UK will not be able to receive all of the new digital TV channels in many of the areas where we all head on holiday.

The digital switchover map of the UK, shows all of the areas in pink, where a full selection of the channels will be broadcast. As you can see from the map shown, the full selection will not be broadcast in all areas, or there will be no terrestrial digital signal at all.

It doesn't matter which area you are travelling to this year, the fact is that every area of the UK is switching to digital TV only and switching off the old analogue signals, so you must consider doing something in addition to your aerial rather than nothing.

As the vast majority of caravans and many motor homes do not come fitted with a TV, the TV that lives in the caravan or motor home during holiday season most often comes from the smallest room in the house. In a home in a digital switchover area, this is likely to be the last TV to be converted to digital. This means that if you take this TV away with you to an area that has already switched, it will not work unless you add a digital set top box to it.

Maxview's Steven May explained "There is nothing more frustrating than switching on your TV and not being able to receive the channels that you know and love. Terrestrial reception for caravans and motor homes, with the current standard factory fitted aerial, is simply not going to give all of the channels all of the time, as they are not broadcast in every area. However with a satellite system and a freesat receiver you can watch everything that you need, everywhere you travel in the UK."

The digital switchover project is currently being rolled out across the UK with the Borders TV area already completed and the West Country region completed by August this year. Wales and the South West are next and finally the Granada region before the end of 2009, with a staged roll out across the rest of the country until the end of 2012.

For anyone with a terrestrial TV aerial holidaying in the grey areas on the map, you will not be able to receive all of the same channels that you do at home. In the grey areas there will only 20 channels compared to the 48 channels in the pink areas. In grey holidaying areas, 20+ channels like Film4, Fiver, Dave and CITV are simply not broadcast.

Steven added "There is a huge opportunity for the first time, for all manufacturers to provide their customers with a reliable method of TV reception. The old analogue TV transmission was often patchy or snowy and we all accepted that it was the best we could get. Now however, terrestrial digital signals are inconsistent and all of the manufacturers, with a satellite solution, can provide the very best, most reliable reception using a roof

mounted freesat system giving 180 channels of Digital TV and radio. With all of the technological advances in caravan and motor home manufacturing, we are still yet to see the FIRST High Definition, Digital Radio, satellite enabled, as standard, Caravan or motor home.” (Editorial note; There are lots of retro fitted vehicles but none factory enabled)

With over 9,000,000 Sky TV subscribers, Maxview know that many of them are losing a full month subscription, every year. This can be beyond £50 when they are away in their vehicles and it represents a great value-add for the manufacturers, in addition to the benefits of a full TV service throughout the UK.

Ten years ago in Germany the equivalent of BBC and ITV were put up on the satellite service as free to air (no contact, no subscription) and the caravan and motor home reception market immediately polarised. Within 3 years over 60% of all manufactured vehicles switched from terrestrial TV aerials to roof mounted satellite dishes and within 5 years over 90% had opted for satellite. For the UK digital switchover and the gradual rollout it means that for the next 3 years there will be confusion of not knowing whether where you are holidaying has switched or not. You will also not know what channels you will get or even whether there will be any signal at all when you get there. One switch now to satellite and all of that customer satisfaction can be there immediately with a satellite solution.

The challenge for caravan and motor home manufacturers is the product that they have been fitting and continue to fit on the roof will cause continual disappointment in all of the areas in grey on the map. The most likely solution is that customers complain to whoever will listen or as we see on so many sites, they retro fit a dish system, in frustration of the factory fitted solution never working and consider it a waste of money. The very best solution is to provide a factory fitted, roof mounted, satellite dish system to receive all of the channels.

With over 12,000,000 homes now filled with High Definition TV's, Maxview have selected a 12/230 Volt freesat HD receiver, this ensures a reliable solution for areas and locations that find it difficult to receive terrestrial signals. The freesat satellite based service is a joint partnership between the BBC and ITV. It was launched last March and has sold over 500,000 units. Freesat provides a free-to-air digital and high definition satellite TV and radio service that has no contract, no subscription, just the one-off cost for the receiver box. This means that as long as you are able to see (have line of sight to) the satellite and there are no obstructions blocking you, you will be able to receive the signals.

With a freesat satellite dish system you would be able to get over 180 digital TV & radio stations and all of the interactive services that you would get at home. With the receiver that Maxview have selected you can also have it installed at home providing a digital TV, radio and High Definition satellite service for an installation cost of as little as £80.

Maxview have focused their efforts this year on informing and educating all of the UK caravanners and motor homers about the digital switchover. As a result of Maxview's efforts and a huge £150,000 marketing campaign, we have seen Digital UK invest a considerable amount in informing our industry of the need to consider the possible solutions before you travel.

Steven May concluded “Whilst manufacturers look at the many ways that they can reduce costs, it is vital that they don’t forget how to add considerable customer benefit and satisfaction, with a reliable TV and Radio reception method. If you travel to any site in Europe you will see over 80% of vehicles with a satellite solution, it’s the way forward for the industry”.

For the full range of Maxview reception solutions visit their web site www.maxview.co.uk or call 01553 811000 to get your copy of the latest brochure.

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www.freesat.co.uk
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