

CCTV Launches High-Definition Digital Channel

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Hangzhou viewers can enjoy high-definition television (HDTV) programs via a new movie channel launched by China Central Television (CCTV) beginning Thursday.

The channel, the first of its kind in China, features movies, TV series, documentaries and 3-dimensional animated pictures, according to the two incumbent service providers, CTV Media and China DTV Media, both under the CCTV.

After a four-month trial operation in Hangzhou, capital city of east China's Zhejiang Province, the HDTV service will be formally launched nationwide in January 2006, and the time of play will extend from current 15 hours per day to 18 hours.

"To have an access to the new channel, you must have a high-definition television set and a set-top box which costs 2,500 yuan (about 301 dollars)," said Shen Xiangjun, general manager with the China DTV Media.

In comparison with analogue TV, digital TV has clearer pictures and more channels. China has opened nearly 100 digital TV channels. Digital TV users will number 1.2 million by the end of this year, statistics from the Ministry of Information Industry show.

At present, cable TV in China, however, is still very popular. People can receive over 30 channels with cable TV by paying only two US dollars

per month.

China is to air the 2008 Summer Olympic Games via high definition TV programs, Shen said.

China's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television has made a timetable for popularizing digital TV, saying that China will start direct digital satellite TV services from 2006, promote digital terrestrial TV by 2008, and switch off analogue TV broadcasting in 2015 when digital TV will cover the whole country.

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