

China test-launches 3D TV channel

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File illustration photo shows television sets at an electronics store. China's state broadcaster has test-launched a 3D television channel in a bid to draw viewers and drive consumption by encouraging people to upgrade to 3D-capable sets.

China's state broadcaster has test-launched a 3D television channel, state media said, in a bid to draw viewers and drive consumption by encouraging people to upgrade to 3D-capable sets.

Viewers in the world's largest TV audience now can watch the China [3D TV Trial Channel](#) with a 3D TV, special glasses and a set-top box, [Xinhua news agency](#) said.

The 3D channel broadcasts three daily rotations of four-and-a-half hours of 3D content such as performing arts, cartoons, movies and sports, and promises programming from the upcoming London Summer Olympics.

State-run China Central Television launched the service Sunday, initially free of charge, with partners Beijing TV, Shanghai Media Group, Jiangsu TV, Tianjin TV and Shenzhen TV -- reaching China's biggest viewing and advertising markets.

To make up for current slim pickings in 3D programming available in China, or elsewhere, each partner broadcaster has established specialist 3D production units, Xinhua said.

The channel is due to have its full official launch on January 23 to mark the start of the week-long Lunar New Year holiday, when Chinese traditionally travel home and watch special variety TV programmes together.

In a year when the central government in Beijing has warned about a slowdown in China's economic growth, its head broadcast regulator told Xinhua the 3D channel can create demand for 3D TV sets "worth hundreds of billions of yuan."

"The launch of the 3D trial channel is a significant step in the development of China's television," Cai Fuchao, head of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, told Xinhua.

CCTV has in recent years fought fiercely not to lose viewers to more progressive programming at BTV, SMG and satellite channels such as that from central China's Hunan province.

China has roughly 500 million TV sets, according to Xinhua, and now also is home to more than 500 million Internet users and the fastest growing movie box office in the world, up more than 60 percent last year to \$1.5 billion.

With their eyes fixed on the 3D channel test, some retailers of Chinese-

made 3D TVs slashed the prices of a typical 42-inch model, often in half, to around 5,000 yuan (\$790), the Made-in-China tech gadget blog reported in November.

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