
future technology tv Complaints about the BBC's HD service rumble on

Posted by bartc - 2010/01/06 07:27

I expect they'll announce Super HD shortly - after all the set makers have to be kept busy - and the whole sorry thing will repeat... They already have Ultra HD. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/5335870.stm> I would hope in the future we would get away from the strange to me at least 16x9 ratio. Think this might have been done probably due to limitations of the CRT. I would like to see the cinema screen ratio used in the future. Yes I know the movie screens vary but is the normal w/s 2:1? Going up to 2.5:1 for the epic style films? I hate 2.25/2.35 ratio, at least for films to be shown on TV. My heart sinks everytime I put a DVD on or watch a movie on TV, and it's in letterbox format. Apart from the fact that none of my TV's zoom functions scale equally in X and Y (so distorting the picture), it means at least 100 lines of vertical SDTV resolution is wasted. Worse are the letterbox formats designed to fit into a 4:3 frame, which I calculate are only using 320 lines of vertical resolution (I remember trying to watch Grand Prix, originally in 70mm, in this format, on TCM, which does not believe in high bitrates either). Why can't the transmitted picture use the full SDTV height, then be stretched horizontally in the TV? Better still, transmit only the 16:9 central portion, to preserve horizontal resolution too.

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Posted by Kennedy McEwen - 2010/01/06 07:27

Why can't the transmitted picture use the full SDTV height, then be stretched horizontally in the TV? Better still, transmit only the 16:9 central portion, to preserve horizontal resolution too. Isn't that what normally happens? SDTV is transmitted at 720x576pixels and single byte in the MPEG stream tells the TV what aspect ratio to display it at.

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Posted by Kennedy McEwen - 2010/01/06 07:27

Indicating the resolution as the total number of pixels in the image is a perfectly valid way of doing so, but I doubt that most people would think it the most obvious one to use, as the relationship between the numbers and perceived sharpness is no longer a simple one, but a square law. It ceased to be a square law for most cameras a long time ago, Rod, and for some cameras it is much less than linear. It certainly isn't a simple relationship between resolution and pixel count. ;-)

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Posted by Roderick Stewart - 2010/01/06 07:27

The concept of resolution as lines per linear distance has been in use a lot longer than that. What an interesting discussion, and there was I thinking that the term resolution was first used with telescopes, way back in the 18th century, where of course it is measured in arc seconds. Exactly. A linear measurement related to the size of detail you can see. If the number of detail elements per unit *area*, rather than *distance*, had ever been thought to be important, we'd have been using something like milliradians. The concept of indicating the number of detail elements within an area seems to have arisen recently amongst those who are selling them, and who can thereby use bigger and more impressive (if misleading) numbers. Rod.

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Posted by bartc - 2010/01/06 07:27

In article <QA4Ym.17918\$Ym4.1...@text.news.virginmedia.com, bartc <ba...@freeuk.com writes Why can't the transmitted picture use the full SDTV height, then be stretched horizontally in the TV? Better still, transmit only the 16:9 central portion, to preserve horizontal resolution too. Isn't that what normally happens? SDTV is transmitted at 720x576pixels and single byte in the MPEG stream tells the TV what aspect ratio to display it at. Everything I've seen suggests the black bars, top and bottom, are transmitted as part of the picture (and some channels I've seen have station logos over these bars). When an entire 2.25:1 movie image is shown, all 720 horizontal pixels are used, many of which will be thrown away if the picture is digitally zoomed by the TV to eliminate the black bars. In this case, on a

16:9 TV, you will be looking at some 560Hx450V pixels' worth of detail, about 60% of what SDTV can deliver. And in the case of my TCM movie example, over HDMI the 4:3 image could not be zoomed by my TV, and the 2.25:1 movie contained in the frame occupied about 55% of the screen area of my 26" TV. The only thing that looks good is material shot in 16:9, 'compressed' to fit into 720x576, and 'expanded' at the TV to perfectly fill the screen with no aspect distortion (the pixels have been stretched horizontally compared with the 4:3 SD was designed for, but the compression and expansion cancel each other). 100% utilisation of both resolution and screen area, and no distortion; why can't all programs be like that?

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Posted by John Legon - 2010/01/06 07:27

The concept of resolution as lines per linear distance has been in use a lot longer than that. What an interesting discussion, and there was I thinking that the term resolution was first used with telescopes, way back in the 18th century, where of course it is measured in arc seconds. Exactly. A linear measurement related to the size of detail you can see. If the number of detail elements per unit *area*, rather than *distance*, had ever been thought to be important, we'd have been using something like milliradians. The concept of indicating the number of detail elements within an area seems to have arisen recently amongst those who are selling them, and who can thereby use bigger and more impressive (if misleading) numbers. Except, of course, that an arc second is not a linear measurement at all but an angular measurement, which gives a linear component only at a specified distance. It seems to me that a number expressing the *content* of a picture in terms of the total number of picture elements it contains is a perfectly valid means of indicating the amount of detail contained in a picture. Picture content expressed as the product of the number of lines or pixels in the height and width, as say 1920 x 1080 or 2.07 megapixels, has the advantage of being independent of aspect ratio. Resolution doesn't come into it. How much of the detail can actually be seen of course depends on the size of the display, the viewing distance, and the resolution of the viewer's eyesight (which can be measured in arc seconds).

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Posted by Roderick Stewart - 2010/01/06 07:27

How much of the detail can actually be seen of course depends on the size of the display, the viewing distance, and the resolution of the viewer's eyesight (which can be measured in arc seconds). Agreed (though you seem to be contradicting your earlier self). Human visual acuity is measured and indicated in exactly this way, and not by calculating the total number of cells in our retinas. It makes sense therefore that the performance of imaging technology should be measured in the same way, because images are, after all, for eyes to look at. Rod.

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Posted by Roderick Stewart - 2010/01/06 07:27

100% utilisation of both resolution and screen area, and no distortion; why can't all programs be like that? Because a vast amount of programme material has already been made, and continues to be made, by many different people/companies/organisations for many different purposes, and they don't all use the same standards as television. If you wanted to make them all conform to the same standards, to fit your requirements rather than theirs, you would have a lot of people to persuade. In reality, it isn't going to happen. If it is more important to you that your television screen be filled than that it should present the available image accurately and completely, then you are going to have to make a compromise of some sort - blank lines, missing parts of the image, or geometric distortion, or any combination of these. 'Twas ever thus. Rod.

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Posted by bartc - 2010/01/06 07:27

100% utilisation of both resolution and screen area, and no distortion; why can't all programs be like that? Because anamorphic mode is specified at 16:9 only. It would be nice to have 2.35:1 anamorphic too, but it's not in the spec. It

might seem wasteful to encode the thin black bars in a 2.35:1 film within a 16:9 frame, but because it's a solid black rectangle virtually all of the bitrate can be used for the main part of the picture. That's the only mitigating factor. But I don't think a better effective bitrate can make up for a reduction in vertical resolution. (When widescreen first came out, I noticed a reduction in height of the screen (on a typical replacement TV), because people were going by the diagonal screen size, which works differently between 4:3 and 16:9. Couple that with letterbox movies with top/bottom black bars, and you're looking at a travesty of a movie, in my opinion. Especially if that letterbox is contained within a 4:3 frame which is then stretched sideways to remove left/right black bars!)

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Posted by The dog from that film you saw - 2010/01/06 07:27

anyone know what bitrate channel 4 uses? - i'm assuming the are 1900x1080i ?

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Posted by The dog from that film you saw - 2010/01/06 07:27

anyone know what bitrate channel 4 uses? - i'm assuming the are 1900x1080i ? You mean resolution, surely? it was 2 questions :)

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Posted by Brian Mc - 2010/01/06 07:27

: anyone know what bitrate channel 4 uses? - i'm assuming the are 1900x1080i ? : It's most likely to be 1440x1080i, just like the BBC and Luxe use. It is never good to guess!! C4HD is uplinked by Sky and uses the same technical parameters as as all Sky HD channels - including 1920x1080 resolution!

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future technology tv Complaints about the BBC's HD service rumble on

Posted by Mark Carver - 2010/01/06 07:27

: anyone know what bitrate channel 4 uses? - i'm assuming the are 1900x1080i ? : It's most likely to be 1440x1080i, just like the BBC and Luxe use. It is never good to guess!! C4HD is uplinked by Sky and uses the same technical parameters as as all Sky HD channels - including 1920x1080 resolution! Well, there we are, that's the difference between a hard nosed commercially orientated broadcaster, who is only thinking about the bottom line, and trying to get away with bare minimum effort, and being cynical towards its viewers; and a company such as BskyB.

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future technology tv Complaints about the BBC's HD service rumble on

Posted by paul_geaton - 2010/01/06 07:27

She told the BBC that there is not a major issue with picture quality and added the corporation had only received one formal complaint. What a load of BULLSHIT! TBH I've never thought to complain. I just thought it was what it was and I suppose most ordinary punters would feel the same. I feel a campaign coming on Thanks Geoff, All, you can join my campaign here (apologies if someone's already mentioned it): <http://www.zen97962.zen.co.uk/> and you'll find links there to our new Facebook and Twitter sites. I'm just about to take the issue to the BBC Trust and contributions to the Appeal, in the way of personal documents to be included in my submission, are welcome, especially before 30 Dec 09.

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Posted by DVDfever - 2010/01/06 07:27

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future technology tv Complaints about the BBC's HD service rumble on

Posted by Roderick Stewart - 2010/01/06 07:27

The trouble with the BBC Trust is that they claim to be independent but, there's a clue with the word BBC in the title. The BBC is, in a sense, independent - of any need to please their viewers and listeners. They have a fixed income that is protected by law regardless of what they do. We are criminals if we don't pay for it if we watch any television broadcasts at all. Unlike a true public organisation with a clearly defined democratic route through which they would be answerable to the people they serve, or a commercial organisation which would be answerable through the wallets of those who can choose what to pay for, the BBC are in effect answerable to no-one, certainly not to us. We needn't expect the BBC to improve the quality of anything - programmes or transmission quality - because they have none of the usual incentives to do so. Rod.

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future technology tv Complaints about the BBC's HD service rumble on

Posted by Duncan Booth - 2010/01/06 07:27

I'm just about to take the issue to the BBC Trust and contributions to the Appeal, in the way of personal documents to be included in my submission, are welcome, especially before 30 Dec 09. If you haven't already seen this, then you might want to take it into account: <http://www.which.co.uk/news/2009/12/bbc-hd-in-the-clear-says-which-la...> It may be harder for you to make a convincing case when the BBC can point to an independent study that says there's been no significant loss in quality.

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Posted by Chas Gill - 2010/01/06 07:27

I'm just about to take the issue to the BBC Trust and contributions to the Appeal, in the way of personal documents to be included in my submission, are welcome, especially before 30 Dec 09. If you haven't already seen this, then you might want to take it into account: <http://www.which.co.uk/news/2009/12/bbc-hd-in-the-clear-says-which-la...> It may be harder for you to make a convincing case when the BBC can point to an independent study that says there's been no significant loss in quality. How convenient. There may be those that expected a change in quality because they KNEW that the bit rate had been so dramatically reduced. I didn't know it had until long after the event but I noticed the deterioration immediately. That is the best subjective test I know. For me it is (was) unacceptably poor. I have to say, though, over the last week or so - particularly over the Christmas period, it has improved dramatically (for me). Now the which experts have compared old stuff with recent live stuff and given the BBC a favourable review I expect the BBC will back off the quality knob again and it will be business as usual. - and, yes, I AM a grumpy old bastard!

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Posted by charles - 2010/01/06 07:27

She told the BBC that there is not a major issue with picture quality and added the corporation had only received

one formal complaint. What a load of BULLSHIT! TBH I've never thought to complain. I just thought it was what it was and I suppose most ordinary punters would feel the same. I feel a campaign coming on Thanks Geoff, All, you can join my campaign here (apologies if someone's already mentioned it):<http://www.zen97962.zen.co.uk/>and you'll find links there to our new Facebook and Twitter sites. I'm just about to take the issue to the BBC Trust and contributions to the Appeal, in the way of personal documents to be included in my submission, are welcome, especially before 30 Dec 09. Just joined the FB group. Danielle talks a right load of shit. The trouble with the BBC Trust is that they claim to be independent but, there's a clue with the word BBC in the title. The word BBC is in the title because they overlook the BBC.

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Posted by Dave Plowman (News) - 2010/01/06 07:27

Michael Briggs, Which? TV expert said: - who is he and what are his credentials? I'm afraid that I stopped taking Which seriously a long, long time ago - ever since they had a different independent review. That one was of ISPs, and put their own ISP top and declared that it was the best. Did you try their ISP and decide for yourself it was rubbish? Just that it would be weird if they decided to enter this competitive market and not provide a service which was a market leader by *their* parameters. For things I just want to work - like vacuum cleaners and washing machines etc I've often bought on their recommendations. And am yet to be disappointed. Things I *think* I know about - like say cars - I'll read what they say but probably just go my own way. If you actually read the Which reports carefully, they're designed to guide those who just want a decent value product - not one for the enthusiast. Who of course doesn't actually pay for Which but just reads the headlines in the press.

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Posted by charles - 2010/01/06 07:27

Michael Briggs, Which? TV expert said: - who is he and what are his credentials? I'm afraid that I stopped taking Which seriously a long, long time ago - ever since they had a different independent review. That one was of ISPs, and put their own ISP top and declared that it was the best. Did you try their ISP and decide for yourself it was rubbish? Just that it would be weird if they decided to enter this competitive market and not provide a service which was a market leader by *their* parameters. For things I just want to work - like vacuum cleaners and washing machines etc I've often bought on their recommendations. And am yet to be disappointed. Things I *think* I know about - like say cars - I'll read what they say but probably just go my own way. I gave up on Which? many years ago after two totally contradictory reports. The first was car fog lights- the one that gave the best beam ptttern was completely rejected because it would need periodic polishing to keep the chrome outer in good condition; the second was a bathroom infra-red heater where the Best Buy's reflector would need polishing once a week - to do this you'd first need to remove the safety guard the unit and the element, while working on a ladder. And then there was the Rover 2000 which was slated for poor performance - the report recieved national coverage and must have done unaccountable damage to the sales; Which? admitted later they'd put the wrong spark plugs in when they'd done the 500 mile service themselves. And the damming report which killed the UK's tv industry by saying Japanese sets were so much better than british ones (even when it was badge engineering on the same production line).

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Posted by Dave Plowman (News) - 2010/01/06 07:27

Did you try their ISP and decide for yourself it was rubbish? You've missed the point - they stopped being independent when they launched an ISP, and threw away credibility by declaring theirs the best. Or perhaps that they'd looked at all of them and decided they could do better?

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Posted by Dave Plowman (News) - 2010/01/06 07:27

And the damming report which killed the UK's tv industry by saying Japanese sets were so much better than british

ones (even when it was badge engineering on the same production line). Thankyou, I'd forgotten about that. It was disgraceful and unforgivable. And made no difference to an industry which was dying anyway.

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Posted by Zero Tolerance - 2010/01/06 07:27

It may be harder for you to make a convincing case when the BBC can point to an independent study that says there's been no significant loss in quality. The view of one person at a non-broadcast organisation does not qualify as an independent study .

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Posted by Duncan Booth - 2010/01/06 07:27

It may be harder for you to make a convincing case when the BBC can point to an independent study that says there's been no significant loss in quality. The view of one person at a non-broadcast organisation does not qualify as an independent study . The Which report is based on more than one person's view. It is an independant study, but I hope you noticed that I didn't say 'authoritative'. Perhaps I didn't express myself clearly enough. It doesn't matter whether the study itself is good or bad: its mere existence gives the BBC a pretext to reject out of hand any complaints about HD quality. An appeal to the Trust would IMHO stand a better chance of success if it attempts to deal with any such distractions in advance.