

Digital TV set-top box draft spec unpacked



By Duncan McLeod: @mcleodd

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After years of rigorous debate, the SA Bureau of Standards (SABS) has finally issued the final draft minimum standard for the set-top box decoders that will be used to receive digital terrestrial television signals in SA. The draft spec outlines a basic receiver that does not include a return path for interactivity.

The draft spec, which was published earlier this week for public comment, is a key step in SA's move from analogue to digital terrestrial television and comes ahead of the planned switch-on of digital broadcasts in September 2012. The public has 30 days in which to respond to the draft spec, shorter than the normal 60 days granted by the SABS.

The shorter period is as a result of the urgency of getting the final standard in place.

South Africans wishing to continue receiving terrestrial television broadcasts after analogue broadcasts are switched off - which should happen by mid-2015 to meet a deadline imposed by the International Telecommunication Union - will have to purchase a set-top box.

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