

**The push is on for the nationwide transition to digital television - 2/28/08**  
**By Cecelia Mason**

**Studio lead:** By this time next year, most television stations in the U-S will have digital only signals. That means anyone who has an older television and is not on cable or satellite will need to get new equipment to watch TV. Cecelia Mason reports there are several options available:

**Mason:** By February 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, all full power television stations in the country must broadcast a digital signal. Federal Communications Commission spokeswoman Monica Desai says the change will affect anyone who watches free over the air television:

**Desai:** Basically people who get their television signal through a rooftop antenna or through rabbit ears if they've got the older type of television. And so if you get your television through analogue TV you've got to take some action before February 17, 2009.

**Mason:** Desai says cable and satellite subscribers will not be affected by the change. Over the air television viewers have several choices. They can buy a new digital TV, sign up for cable or satellite service, or buy a converter box that will allow their old televisions to show the digital signal. The US Commerce Department is offering a coupon for a discount on converter boxes. Anthony Wilhelm oversees the coupon program:

**Wilhelm:** The converter boxes are costing between \$50 and \$70. But you should first apply for your coupons and \$40 will be deducted from the price of each converter box. So we're talking about an outlay from consumers for around \$20 or so to get one of these converter boxes.

**Mason:** Wilhelm says each household can get up to two coupons, which are basically gift cards. Wilhelm says the coupons come with a list of local retailers that sell converter boxes. Anyone wanting coupons can call the National Telecommunications and Information Administration or apply on line at [dtv two thousand nine dot gov](http://dtv.twokousandninedotgov).

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