



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Telecoms Regulator to Consult on the Delivery of Digital Television Services over Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL)

Etain Doyle, Telecoms Regulator today (28th July 2000) issued a consultation paper on the use of ADSL technology to deliver digital television services, in particular licensed programme services and the implications this will have for the legal and regulatory frameworks covering these sectors over the next 3-4 years.

According to the Regulator “ The traditional distinction between telecommunications and broadcasting is becoming increasingly obsolete. Telecommunications services can now be delivered by radio based or “wireless” technology and data and audio visual based material can be broadcast over traditional “copper” wire and fibre optic telecommunications networks. This converging market offers new services such as online business banking, distance learning, home shopping, home banking, and television on demand, interactive games and teleworking. More and more consumers are looking for these added value services and the focus is on content and not the medium through which the service is delivered.”

One of the current technological developments that may blur the distinction between broadcasting and telecommunications is Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL). ADSL is particularly suited to the delivery of broadband and interactive data including Internet Services. At present, separate regimes exist for the licensing of telecommunications and broadcasting and separate obligations apply to operators in these sectors.

eircom plc has indicated it's interest in the possibility of using ADSL technology to provide a broad range of services including digital television services . The Director considers it would be useful at this stage to explore the position of ADSL with respect to the delivery of digital television generally, including licensed programme services.

She continued “ before engaging on a major analysis as to whether the delivery of digital television over ADSL technology should be accommodated, and if so how, I would wish to be fully informed as to the level of interest in providing such services and if there was sufficient interest, on what terms these services should be provided.”

Comments are invited from interested parties. The consultation period will run from 28th July 2000 to 8th September 2000.

A copy of the consultation paper is available on the ODTR website www.odtr.ie

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Notes to Editor

ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line)

This is a technology that allows the use of a copper line to send a large quantity of data (eg television picture) in one direction and a small quantity (e.g. a control channel) and a telephone call in the other. ADSL is asymmetric in that it uses most of the channel to transmit downstream to the user and only a small part to receive information from the user. It was designed to exploit the one way nature of most multimedia communication in which large amounts of information flow towards the user and only a small amount of interactive control information is returned.