

ABI: 4K Can Become Industry Norm

Written by Marco Attard
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According to ABI Research 4K/UHD TV has the potential to become the next big thing in TV, as declining prices should facilitate adoption through normal upgrade cycles during the 2013-2018 period.



The analyst predicts Asia-Pacific, with China in particular, will lead in 4K TV shipments, even if N. America will be the first market with adoption rates reaching 5% (in 2017) and 10% (by end 2018).

“Despite a very limited installed base there have already been a number of 4K trials from broadcasters, pay TV operators, and satellite operators,” ABI says. “While many point to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil and Sochi Winter Olympics as highlights for 4K, these events will have a minimal impact on 4K adoption— it’s simply too early.”

Unsurprisingly price is the most crucial factor in 4K TV adoption, but OTT services (such as Sony Video Unlimited 4K) and upscaling technology should help early adopters bridge the content gap. Consumers already perceived value in higher resolution displays, and awareness should spread further from new products supporting 4K resolutions such as next generation game consoles and Qualcomm Snapdragon 800-based mobile devices.

“Unlike 3D, which required awkward glasses, 4K has the legs to become an industry norm,” the analyst concludes. “This isn’t a sprint, however, and it will take time for the necessary infrastructure, installed base of devices, and content to come together before 4K becomes an integral part of how the typical TV household consumes video content. We expect this could start to happen as early as 2018 in some regions. In the meantime, many consumers will have 4K panels without 4K content, or 4K game consoles without a 4K display, and will claim a superior 4K experience even though the technical merits are not quantifiable.”

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