

Traditional pay-TV STBs remain a fixture in consumer homes worldwide, Futuresource Consulting reports, as operators add new features to counter the enhanced functionality of media streamers.



The analyst says global media box shipments (combining STBs and media streamers) total 339 million units in 2016, with STBs making 86% of the total. The total value of the 2016 media box market is up to \$21 billion.

However, while the share of STBs making the media box market is "unlikely" to dip in 2017, the traditional STB is under threat by many competing connected devices-- such as media streamers, games consoles and smart TVs-- all able to access content from a variety of sources. Thus more desirable features are being added to STBs, including SVoD services, voice search and smart home functionality, as well as 4K/UHD upgrades.

Futuresource predicts STBs will account for over 80% of media boxes by 2021, the result of operator rollouts of upgraded boxes to current subscribers (for 4K, OTT and home gateway feature supply) and new subscribers in less mature markets.

Interestingly, pay-TV operators in Europe do not need to worry about cord cutting as yet, since the trend is yet to impact the region to a "significant degree." That said, media streamers are set to grow by 14% in 2017, since such devices provide access to a wide variety of both mainstream and niche content, with a better UI than smart TVs.

"There is a battle to be a permanent feature in an HDMI connection between different brands of media streamer in the US and Western Europe," Futuresource concludes. "Multiple ownership

Futuresource: STBs Remain Household Fixture

Written by Marco Attard
27. 09. 2017

is high in these markets as consumers want access to many services, but no single media streamer has them all. As a result, some consumers have more HDMI devices than their TV set can handle."

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