

5 Broadcasting Services

1. Broadcasting Category in Japan

Broadcasting in Japan can be broadly categorized as terrestrial broadcasting, satellite broadcasting, and cable TV. Two new forms of terrestrial broadcasting have been introduced over the past decade: community FM broadcasting, in 1992, and foreign-language FM broadcasting, in 1995. In the satellite broadcasting category, analog broadcasting via communications satellite (CS) was inaugurated in 1992 and CS digital broadcasting in 1996, while BS digital broadcasting is scheduled for start-up in December 2000. In the cable TV category, the numbers of relatively large-scale facilities and facilities that provide original programming are growing.

2. Multiplex Broadcasting

Multiplex broadcasting refers to the use of “spaces” between the wavelengths of TV or FM broadcasting to transmit such information as sound, text, or graphics. The first use of multiplex broadcasting in Japan was TV sound multiplex (stereo), inaugurated in 1982. Next came TV text multiplex broadcasting, FM text multiplex broadcasting, and TV data multiplex broadcasting.

Additionally, the MPT has been working to popularize closed-captioned programming and explanatory programming for the hearing impaired and the visually impaired (Exhibit 39).

3. Satellite Broadcasting

The only BS broadcasting currently available is analog broadcasting via the BSAT-1a (the First Launched BS-4 satellite). There are four BS TV channels: two from NHK; one from Japan Satellite Broadcasting, known as WOWOW, and one experimental Hi-Vision channel. Digital CS broadcasting is offered by SkyPerfecTV, which uses the JCSAT-3 and JCSAT-4 satellites, and DirecTV, via the Superbird-C satellite. Only one carrier offers analog CS broadcasting, PCM radio programming, via the JCSAT-2 satellite.

4. Cable TV

The number of large-scale cable TV facilities offering either original programming or programming retransmitted from satellite broadcasting has been growing in recent years, and cable services are diversifying. As of the end of fiscal 1998 there were 15,817,000 subscribers to cable TV, up 9.2% year over year. Of these, 7,936,000 were subscribers to cable companies offering original programming, up as much as 18.1%.

5. NHK

As of the end of fiscal 1999 NHK had 36,878,000 subscribers, of whom 26,809,000 subscribed only to ordinary terrestrial broadcasting (down 1.2% year over year), while

10,069,000 subscribers had contracts allowing them to receive satellite broadcasting as well, up 6.4%. This was the first time that the number of subscribers in the latter category exceeded 10 million.

6. University of the Air

Programming over the University of the Air is provided variously by terrestrial broadcasting, VHF broadcasting, and digital CS broadcasting for 18 hours, from 6 A.M. to midnight. During the first semester of fiscal 1999 there were 73,446 students enrolled in the University of the Air, up 8.0% year over year.

7. International Broadcasting from Japan

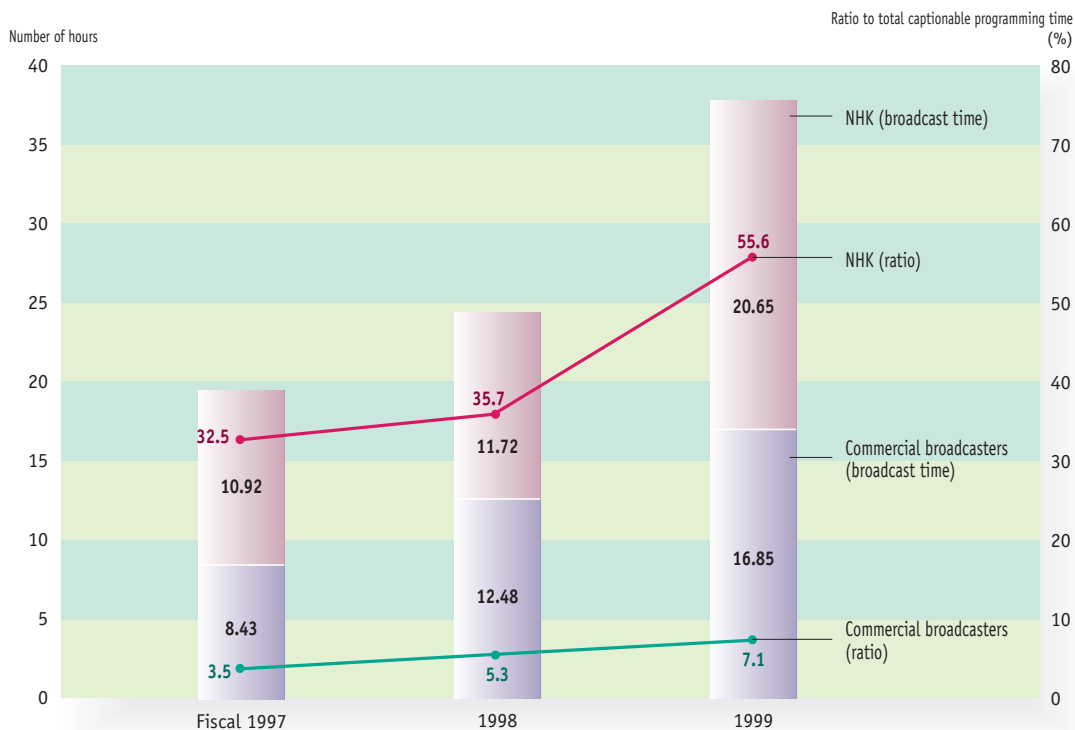
In October 1999 NHK extended its daily international TV programming schedule to a full 24 hours (except for midnight to 6 A.M. on Mondays), and in February 2000 NHK's Radio Japan inaugurated an experimental audio news service via the Internet. In July 1999, TBS, a commercial broadcaster, began distributing about 10 minutes of news each day to Taiwan.

8. TV Watching and Radio Listening

Survey of TV and Radio Viewer and Listener

Rates notes that, with changes in living timetable and diversification in the way of life developing, such as changes in lifestyles

Exhibit 39. Actual Closed-captioned Programming Time and its Ratio to Total Captionable Programming Time



Note: NHK figures are for its general broadcasting channel; figures for commercial broadcasters are totals of the five Kanto-region key broadcasters. Broadcasting time are the totals during the week of the study (in fiscal 1999, June 28–July 4, 1999), excluding programs broadcast more than once.

toward a more night time orientation, the daily scene of people's watching TV has drastically changed from over the past two decades (i.e., from 1979 to 1989 to 1999).

9. Broadcast Programming

In response to a proposal made by the Experts' Group on Youth and Broadcasting, the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan produced a media literacy program entitled "TV Kids Detective Squad: Smart TV Watching," which 127 commercial TV stations around the country broadcast at different times in November and December 1999. In preparation for the inauguration of BS digital broadcasting in December 2000, NHK and commercial broadcasters are in the process of producing HDTV programming.