



DigitalPlus

Set Top Box Analytical Services



Nielsen DigitalPlus, a new service launched in 2007, provides advanced tuning metrics based on data retrieved from digital set top boxes (STBs). These data, combined with Nielsen's traditional measurement, allow clients to create new insights by evaluating digital media activity and gauging its potential impact on consumer behavior.

What Are Set Top Box (STB) Data?

Essentially, STBs are data processing devices, which connect to external signal sources and decode that signal into content that is displayed on a TV. STBs collect information on the use of functions available on the device, and express the data as tuning events with specific time intervals. These events include channel switching, on/off status, interactive program guides, volume adjustments, picture-in-picture (PIP), high definition (HD) capability, Video On Demand (VOD) transactions, Digital Video Recorder (DVR) usage, interactive content navigation, dynamic advertising capabilities, etc. Important data elements such as start time, end time, and duration add critical context to these events.

Many STBs are equipped with memory or hard drive space for storing information; platform providers (cable MSO, satellite, or telephone) utilize massive data servers in combination with their STBs to store and forward various content to their subscribers. Since these data can be collected and stored in different ways, Nielsen DigitalPlus has categorized STB data into four major data streams: *Linear, Interactive, VOD and DVR*.

STB Data Collection & Metrics

Any function activated upon a STB can theoretically be captured by the platform provider. However, the availability of STB data depends on multiple factors which can vary widely by platform and/or technology. In order for data to be collected, STBs must have a method of returning the user information back to the provider—a backchannel or return path. STBs installed with the appropriate software and backchannel are technically able to relay the data back to the provider or authorized third party.

However, like any data processing device, STBs can and do have different capabilities and functionality. Moreover, each platform can set different collection criteria, with different methods of collection; this can lead to different levels of precision and accuracy.

Working with cooperating platforms, Nielsen DigitalPlus is able to refine these data into consistent STB tuning metrics, applying the necessary standards for marketplace acceptability. Our refinement process systematically adjusts for a variety of data issues, including:

- When the STB is on and the TV set is off
- TV sets in the home not connected to a STB
- Age/gender demographics
- Market break information; i.e., income level and education

DigitalPlus Four Streams of STB Data

- **Linear**
 - Traditional stations, channels & networks
- **Interactive**
 - Program guide
 - Mosaic content
 - Consumer purchasing
 - Advanced advertising
- **Video On Demand (VOD)**
 - Free
 - Premium
 - Subscription
- **Digital Video Recorder (DVR)**
 - Time-shifted content

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