

# NATIONAL DATACAST

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Monday, September 25, 2006

Mr. Milton Brown  
Office of the Chief Counsel  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue, Room 4713  
Washington, DC 20230  
(202) 501-8013 (fax)  
[coupon@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:coupon@ntia.doc.gov)

Re: Docket No. 060512129-6129-01

Dear Mr. Brown,

In response to your Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding a digital-to-analog converter box coupon program, National Datacast Inc. respectfully urges the NTIA to require these converter boxes be capable of receiving software updates from an over-the-air digital television broadcast signal.

The boxes are intended to permit Americans who have analog television receivers the opportunity to continue watching over-the-air television after the 2009 analog television shutoff deadline. Including software updating in these boxes will better ensure that these viewers are able to reliably receive and view these broadcasts.

First, these converter boxes must allow consumers to watch television on their existing analog TV sets when all over the air television broadcast channels become digital in February 2009. Digital TV should be accessible to viewers of analog TV receivers.

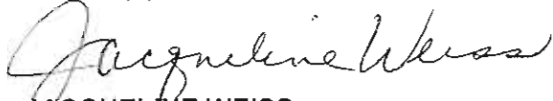
Second, the NTIA should ensure that these converter boxes have the ability to be repaired, patched or updated in the event there is a software problem identified within the converter box. Of particular interest to the public will be the ability to update the parental controls, closed captioning and the emergency alert system related software.

The broadcast and CE industry anticipated the need for firmware updates and created the ATSC "Software Data Download Specification" (A-97) which was ratified in 2004. NTIA should not spend \$1.5 billion on converter boxes unless the devices are enabled with the ability to receive software updates through the use of over-the-air download mechanisms. With over-the-air software updates, software glitches can be fixed on a nationwide basis before viewers are even aware of them and, more importantly, without any action by the consumer.

National Datacast Inc. is a subsidiary of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and, in partnership with PBS member stations nationwide, provides data broadcasting services over the analog and digital broadcast signals of these stations. The stations and PBS benefit from provision of these data broadcasting services. The national reach of our data broadcasting network makes it the ideal delivery mechanism in which to transmit these necessary software updating functions - - providing a public service to all of these viewers. For almost 20 years National Datacast has been designing, implementing and managing the data broadcasting network for applications such as delivering software updates.

By mandating that the converter boxes be equipped with the necessary capability to enable software updates, NTIA will not only protect the needs of consumers, but also the investment of taxpayer money for the subsidy program.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqueline Weiss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**JACQUELINE WEISS**  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Datacast Inc.