

Television History

Introduction

What's on telly today? Is there a favourite show you look forward to? Do you worry about missing it? Or do these questions seem strange because you are used to watching what you want, whenever you like?



If you put these same questions to your gran or grandad, you might get a very different answer. That is because television has changed so much over the years.

Television, or TV, is only about one hundred years old. At that time, people were still getting used to telephones and radios. The idea of sending moving pictures over long distances, right into your home, must have seemed like the world was changing very fast indeed.

The first views

There were many people who were all trying to invent the television at the same time. John Logie Baird is often said to have been the first to show one working. Then came the race to make a version that could be sold to the public.

Early television pictures were all in black and white. They were also quite blurred. However, people were working hard to improve them all the time.



By the 1950s, people had started installing TV sets in their homes. Colour TV arrived in the 1960s. Families thought it was amazing to be able to sit together in their living rooms and watch shows being made many, many miles away.

Changing channels

By the 1970s, the most popular shows in the UK were being viewed by more than twenty million people. However, there was no way to record them. You had to tune in when they were on or miss out. Also, there were only three channels to choose from.

Then came the internet and digital TV. Suddenly, there were tens or even hundreds of channels. You could also record something to watch later.

What's more, on-line services meant you could see almost anything you wanted, any time you wanted.

So, don't be tempted to laugh if an older relative seems confused by all the viewing options we have today. Who knows how and what you will be watching when you are their age!

