

Timeline: Fifteen years of Sky

Analogue launch

SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 1989

Sky launches UK 'Direct to Home' service by the Astra satellite with four free-to-air channels. The first show is Davis Cup tennis. In the absence of a studio, commentary takes place in a cupboard next to the gallery. The Sky News team numbers six people. The first customer management centre opens at Livingston, Scotland with a staff of twelve, but no tables or chairs.



1 MILLION SUBSCRIBERS

JUNE 1990

One million households in the UK receive Sky. Sky Movies uses encryption technology for the first time to scramble the signal to allow only subscribers to view.



NOVEMBER 1990

Sky and rival broadcaster BSB agree to merge and form BSkyB.



APRIL 1991

The launch of Sky Sports completes the five-channel line-up of the new satellite television company.

SEPTEMBER 1991

The Simpsons launches in the UK.



MARCH 1992

BSkyB makes an operating profit for the first time.



MAY 1992

Sky signs an exclusive £304 million deal with the FA Premier League, allowing it to offer groundbreaking sports coverage and help change the perception of Sky, whilst at the same time enabling football to invest in improved facilities.

SEPTEMBER 1993

Sky scrambles a multi-channel package, offering 14 channels at a basic subscription level.

MAY 1994

MTV launches on Sky.



2 MILLION SUBSCRIBERS



AUGUST 1994

Sky launches Sky Sports 2. A further four channels are launched, including Sky Travel.

4 MILLION SUBSCRIBERS

DECEMBER 1995

Sky's second customer management centre opens at Dunfermline, Scotland. BSkyB enters FTSE 100 Index, and Sky launches a further six channels including The Disney Channel and The History Channel.



DECEMBER 1994

17% of BSkyB is floated on the UK and US stock exchanges, valuing the company at £4.6 billion.

JUNE 1996

Sky bids £670 million to win the new FA Premier League deal and reaches a deal with Twickenham for England's home rugby internationals.



JULY 1996

Satellite and cable achieve a 10.8% share of the total UK viewing audience, surpassing BBC2 and Channel 4 for the first time.

10.8%

share of UK viewing audience

AUGUST 1996

A joint venture with Granada is formed and Granada Sky Broadcasting is launched.



JANUARY 1997

Sky announces coverage of the British and Irish Lions South Africa tour, the first time a broadcaster televises every match of an overseas international rugby union tour. Sky also launches the National Geographic Channel, forms MUTV with Granada and Manchester United and launches Pay-Per-View movies on Sky Box Office. BSkyB announces the formation of BiB, its digital services joint venture.

Digital launch

225,000 DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS

1 OCTOBER 1998

Sky launches the UK's first digital TV service, offering 140 channels. Sky launches its minidish dubbed "much less obtrusive than older satellite dishes" by Good Housekeeping magazine.



AUGUST 1999

Sky shows the world's first interactive TV football match, Arsenal vs Manchester United.



2.1M DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS

DECEMBER 1999

Free digiboxes and minidishes help Sky digital become the fastest growing digital platform in the world.

4.7M DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS



MARCH 2000

Sky shows its first interactive advertisement.

JUNE 2000

Sky launches the world's first interactive TV news service.



MAY - NOVEMBER 2001

The BBC, E4 and MTV use the Sky platform's interactive capacity to extend coverage of Wimbledon, Big Brother and MTV Europe Music Awards.



NOVEMBER 2001

Sky unveils upgraded customer contact centres.

5.7M DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS



AUGUST 2001

Sky introduces Sky+, a fully integrated personal video recorder and digital satellite receiver.

SEPTEMBER 2001

Sky switches off its analogue signal.

MAY 2002

Sky News wins a BAFTA award for its news coverage.

6.5M DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS

OCTOBER 2002

Sky offers three channels as part of the new Freeview package.

DECEMBER 2002

Sky returns to positive cash flow.

7M DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS

SEPTEMBER 2003

Sky reaches 7 million subscribers (3 months ahead of schedule). Sky sets a target of 8 million subscribers by 2005. Average revenue per user (ARPU) is now £386, on track to meet

the target of £400 by the end of 2005. Churn is down to 9.4%. Sky makes its first year of profit since its investment in digital. A major promotion launches to boost sales of Sky+ and extra digibox.



JANUARY 2004

Sky screens its 500th live interactive football match, Manchester United vs Southampton. Sky One attracts 1 million viewers for the debut of Nip/Tuck.

FEBRUARY 2004

The third series of 24 premieres on Sky One.

