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**IRS / Communal TV
Systems for Mixed Use
Developments**

An Incamedia white paper for
property developers

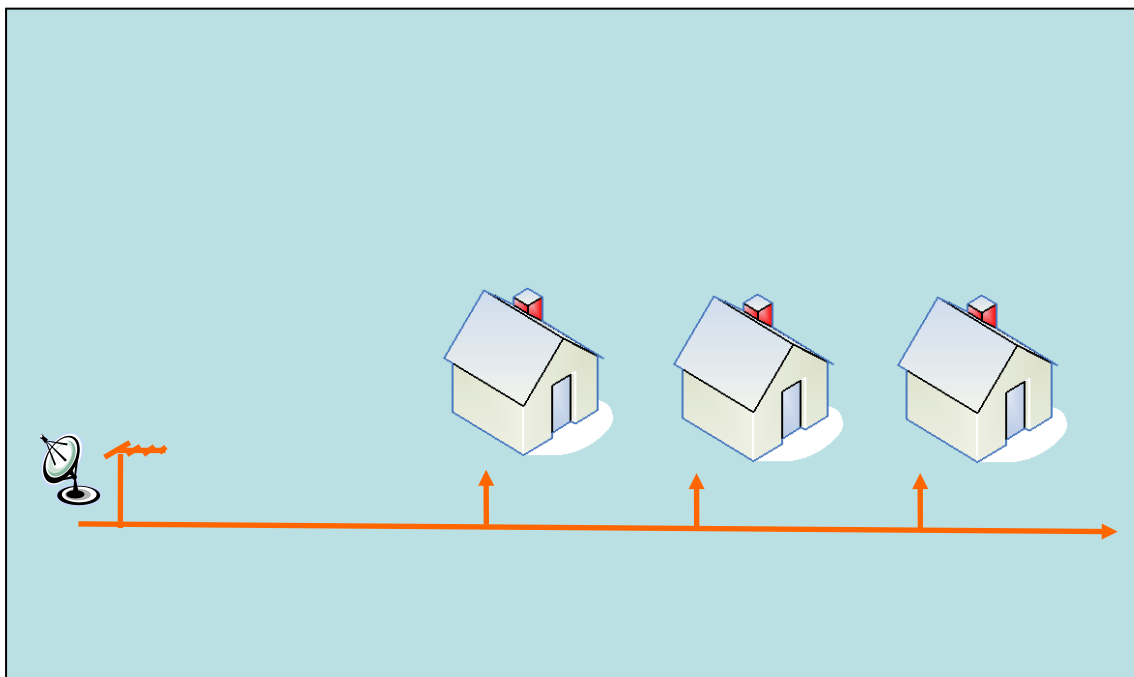
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Introduction to communal TV systems

Communal TV services are common in MDUs (multiple dwelling units), to avoid the need for dishes and aerials for each flat or balcony.

Increasingly, communal systems are also being specified for new communities of SDUs (single dwelling units), especially where dishes and aerials are proscribed by planning agreements / design codes or where the off-air reception is inadequate for all or part of the site.

A set of antennae is located onsite at a point of good reception, either on a building or a mast. Modern fibre-optic systems mean that there is effectively no limitation on the distance from the mast/antennae to individual buildings. This means that a single antennae set can supply thousands of homes plus office and commercial buildings.



Supplying multiple buildings from a single antenna set via fibre optic cables

IRS (Integrated Reception System)

The most popular UK standard for communal TV systems is the Sky Homes IRS. This supplies a range of terrestrial and satellite TV signals.

A typical IRS provides:

- Terrestrial Analogue TV (BBC1, BBC2, ITV, C4, C5)
- Terrestrial Digital TV (Freeview)

- Satellite (Sky, Sky+, Sky HD, Freesat)
- Radio (FM, DAB)

Additional satellite channels, such as foreign language programmes, can be supplied by adding the appropriate dish and receiving equipment.

What are the benefits of an IRS for house buyers?

A communal TV system eliminates any reception difficulties and removes the need for all TV and radio aerials and Sky satellite dishes.

Residents receive the full range of free-to-air and pay TV channels direct to their TV outlet – the only difference is they don't need dishes and aerials. They must however have a UK V license and they will need an appropriate subscription to view pay-for services, such as Sky.

- Residents avoid the expense of erecting their own antennae
- TV is available from day one – just move in and 'plug and play'
- Excellent reception is guaranteed regardless of location and terrain
- All free-to-air TV is available without subscription
- Reduces aerial and dish clutter and enhances urban design aesthetic
- Is a good differentiator and adds to marketing proposition for properties
- Provides an element of future-proofing for the development

Once in the home, signals can be fed to convenient outlets in all main rooms, together with telephone and data (if required). Buyers today are media-savvy and increasingly look for well-connected homes.

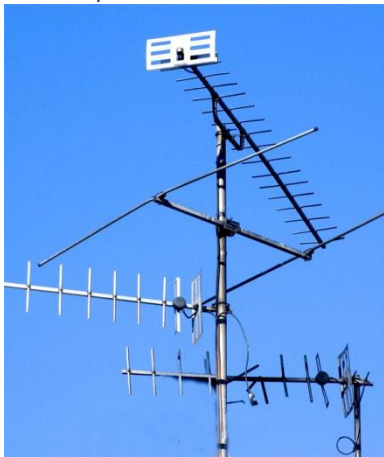
What are the benefits of an IRS for developers?

Many leading developers and house builders are now specifying communal TV systems as standard for their developments. In addition, government agencies such as Homes and Communities Agency are increasingly specifying IRS as requirement for their sites and planning authorities often impose conditions on satellite dishes.



The communal antennae are of a similar size to ordinary domestic aerials and dishes and are receiving only, so there are no issues with health and safety. They are unobtrusively located, either out of sight on the top of a suitable building, or in a suitable landscaped position on the development perimeter.

Replace 100s of these..



And 100s of these..



With 1 of these..



An IRS provides many benefits for your development:

- Improves the marketing proposition by making homes 'plug and play' - purchasers can move in and watch TV without the hassle and expense of an aerial installation.
- It supplies the full range of off-air and Sky satellite TV services, maximising customer choice.
- Residents take out their own subscriptions for pay TV – the developer is not involved.
- Enhances urban design by eliminating the visual clutter of TV and radio aerials and satellite TV dishes. Can help win bids and planning applications.
- Guarantees good off-air reception even on sites with poor signal levels and high densities.
- IRS systems are generally reliable and maintenance costs are low (in the region of £15 per premises per year).
- An IRS can be combined with other networked services such as CCTV; Broadband etc. (see next section).

An IRS can help differentiate your development and add to the sales proposition



Latest developments in IRS technology

The most common type of IRS is a Hybrid Co-axial / Fibre installation, where fibre optic cables are used to distribute signals to a street cabinet situated in each group of around 50 properties. From the cabinet, 2 co-axial copper cables (similar to domestic aerial leads) are taken into each property, either to the master socket or to a distribution point, such as under the stairs.

The main disadvantage of a hybrid system is that using copper cables limits the distance between cabinets and homes, so that a larger site can require many cabinets. The architecture of a hybrid system also means that it is not cost-effective to use the network for other purposes, such as Broadband. This means that the developer is responsible for the capital cost of a network which can only be used for one purpose and has little potential for repaying capital costs through revenue generation.

An obvious solution to the disadvantage of hybrid systems is to use fibre cables direct into the home, known as FTTP (fibre to the premises). Whilst this avoids the use of street cabinets, the cost of fibre termination units (the 'box' that takes the incoming signals from the fibre and converts them to a suitable format for TV sets) has hitherto been prohibitive. However, the availability of new componentry is now making an all fibre installation more feasible.

An even more advantageous solution for developers is to combine IRS with an open fibre network carrying all the communications and entertainment services to the home e.g. Broadband, Voice, IPTV and IRS. The advantage of this approach is that it uses a single network and for which the capital cost can be repaid by future customer revenues. In other words IRS (which is a non-revenue service) can piggy-back on a network which is paid for with resident's broadband and voice subscriptions).

With the right business model developers can thus obtain a fibre-based IRS and a high-speed fibre broadband network at little or no capital cost.

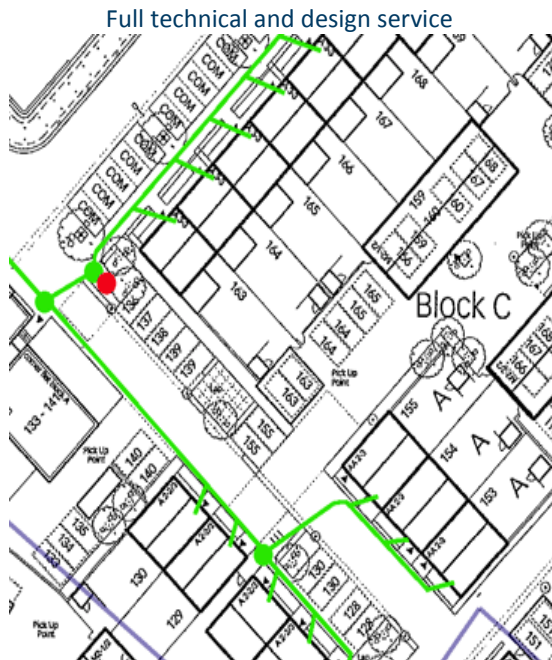
Incamedia IRS consultancy services

As technology consultants working property developers and house builders, communal TV systems TV are a speciality. We offer a full range of consultancy and technical services to ensure developers get best value and quality when installing an IRS for your development.

We take care of all aspects of procuring and project managing a communal TV system on your behalf e.g. provide specifications, tendering to suppliers, negotiating contracts, supervising installation and QA.



Because we understand the technologies, we can provide real cost benefits – we've been known to save clients as much as 33% on tender costs by challenging the technology models proposed by the preferred supplier.



And if your project schedule means that work needs to start before an IRS supplier can be contracted, we will provide the necessary network and duct designs to ensure that ground works are not delayed.

For further information on our technical consultancy services please contact:

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