

Summary

Because of the serious competition, during early developing time, Taiwan's CATV system operators provided lots of channels and greatly lowered the CATV price to promote channel services. This promotion strategy has run for years and formed a very unique CATV environment in Taiwan. CATV consumers only have to pay NTD. 600 per month, then they can watch about 100 basic channels nowadays. Although CATV consumers can watch so many channels, they don't really have so much time watching them all but still have to pay for them. Besides, the CATV bundling price doesn't allow consumers to choose the channels they really need and want. On the social resource perspective, the CATV bundling pricing strategy keeps CATV channels from being used effectively and brings a waste.

In recent years, consumers' awareness of their rights is getting stronger. Consumers begin to find out the possibilities of paying fewer CATV price and watch fewer channels. In order to respond to the need of consumers, the government advocated CATV channel tiering policy. Channel tiering brings several advantages: consumers can be more active and own more choices; the CATV industry can work more effectively and system operators can prevent those who access CATV services illegally. Also, the advanced technology and hardware of channel tiering can prevent juveniles from watching inappropriate CATV programs.

In the past, some CATV system operators tried to implement channel tiering, but it was not successful. The government also advocated several kinds of channel tiering models, but until now, there is still no consensus. CATV channel tiering is basically a good policy for consumers, and it's a pity that this policy can't be successfully execute. Therefore, by in-depth interview, the researcher of this study collects opinions from managers of CATV industry, government members and professors to discuss the failure reasons of channel tiering, the problems of execute channel tiering nowadays and different attitude toward this issue. Furthermore, the researcher tries to integrate different opinions to find out possible executive ways of channel tiering in the future.

According to the research findings, CATV channel tiering faces many complicated problems now. First, because of the "bowling CATV culture", Taiwan's CATV consumers lack for the spirit of "user-payer" principle. Besides, they are pretty satisfied with the CATV services now and have no intention to push a new policy.

Furthermore, consumers' intentions to order digital CATV services and the distribution of DSTB are pretty low, and this situation barriers to the implementation of channel tiering, too. As to the CATV industry, the implementation will affect both CATV systems and channels, so the CATV industry objects to this policy. In order to preserve the rights of consumers, the government members hold that CATV channel tiering policy should execute in the future although it faces many difficulties now. They suggest the government should find an appropriate way and keep pushing this policy. The opinions from professors are very divergent. Some consider that the government should open the CATV market and give the industry more freedom, but some consider that the government should regulate more strictly.

Although there is still no consensus on CATV channel tiering, the researcher has some findings during the research process. CATV channel tiering is a very complicated policy which relates to lots of other policies, laws and issues. Therefore, the researcher advices that the channel tiering issue should be considered together with other issues like digital policies, the problems of CATV industry structure and so on. Furthermore, in order to make the CATV service price more reasonable, the government should encourage more medium to provide services equivalent to CATV channel services, give consumers more choices, and build an equally competitive market. To summarize, the research advices that channel tiering issue is not a single policy and we should rethink it in a more flexible way.