

UK Broadcasters

**Managing the Transition to
Widescreen Commercials**

**Technical Guidelines
for Delivery**

Summary:

- 1. Since the launch of Digital Terrestrial and Digital Satellite Services, the UK Broadcasters are increasing the amount of widescreen programming. Following consultation with advertisers, the majority of whom are keen to adopt a widescreen format, the UK Broadcasters have agreed to begin transmission of commercials in widescreen format.**
- 2. The start of Widescreen 16:9 Full Height commercials transmission will be on 1st July 2000. This date is known as C-Day.**
- 3. All commercial 16:9 Full Height copy for transmission after C-Day must be delivered in widescreen format and will be transmitted on widescreen channels without modification.**
- 4. The widescreen 16:9 Full Height commercial copy supplied will be presented on non-widescreen services in a 14:9 slight letterbox format, matching the format of many existing programmes.**
- 5. All existing 4:3 commercials intended for use after C-Day will have to be re-worked for delivery and will require a new unique commercial ID and clock.**
- 6. Delivery of new or re-formatted widescreen commercials should start as soon as possible after 1st April 2000**
- 7. Commercial copy for campaigns that complete transmission before C-Day will not be affected in any way.**

Reasons for moving to Widescreen

Widescreen broadcast capability increased dramatically in the autumn of 1998 with the launch of Digital Terrestrial and Satellite services. Since this time the UK broadcasters have been commissioning an increasing amount of widescreen programming. With the advent of cheaper set top box offers in 1999, the sales of widescreen TV's are now increasing rapidly.

The set manufacturers are actively encouraging widescreen TV sales. The advertisers can see creative benefits in the wider format and the move to widescreen commercials will provide a more consistent viewing experience on widescreen services.

Reasons for C-Day

It is not possible at present to change aspect ratio cleanly between commercials for reasons associated with digital broadcasts and TV display technology. Therefore it is necessary for the broadcaster to present all commercials in a break in the same aspect ratio.

A co-ordinated change for all UK broadcasters will avoid commercial producers having to make separate 4:3 and widescreen copy versions for otherwise identical campaigns.

Commercials will be presented in a consistent way as 16:9 widescreen on widescreen channels or 14:9 letterbox (LB) on 4:3 channels.

For these reasons the UK Broadcasters have all agreed to begin transmissions from a common date. The date of **1st July 2000** was chosen after canvassing the views of advertisers and others at a seminar last autumn and received a very positive response. This time of year was considered optimum so that the new delivery arrangements would be well established for the busy autumn period.

Copy Delivery

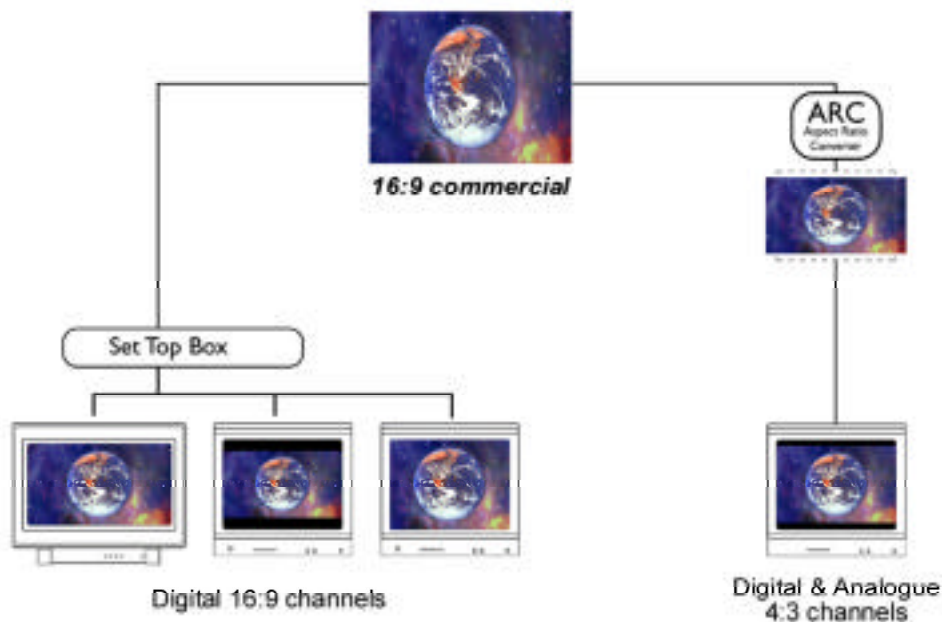
A. Widescreen Commercial Copy

Widescreen transmissions require 16:9 aspect ratio, full height pictures. This is abbreviated to 16:9FH. To achieve better presentation on 4:3 channels, the broadcasters will show a 14:9 (14:9LB) letterbox picture.

For this reason, it is essential that delivered widescreen copy is produced to the **UK Broadcasters specification for 16:9 shoot & protect 14:9** as outlined in the seminar. A copy of this is attached as Appendix A.

This protects action for 14:9, but graphics are protected for 4:3 centre cut-out mode for modern TV sets. (The specification uses a protection figure for domestic TV receiver overscan of 3.5% per side, which has been agreed as appropriate for modern TV sets).

Clocks on widescreen commercials should be formatted as described in the Delivery section later in this document.



B. Existing Commercial Copy

Commercial copy for campaigns that complete transmission before C-Day are not affected in any way.

Current campaigns that continue after C-Day will require re-mastering to a 16:9FH frame.

In every case the re-mastered copy will be treated as separate and a unique commercial. (See Delivery section).

Many current commercials can be re-mastered to a 14:9 full height picture in a 16:9 frame (14:9PB – Pillar Box or 14:9FH) In this format the viewer will see an identical image on both widescreen channels (in most viewing modes) and 4:3 services. In the former they will see slight pillar-box (thin black bands either side) on a 16:9 widescreen display and the latter, a slight letterbox displayed.



For some existing commercials, remastering to 14:9FH may not be possible. In these cases, copy will have to be remastered to 4:3 full height pictures in a 16:9 frame.

This is **not** recommended as it will present the viewers of a widescreen channel with large bands left and right (dependant on display type and viewing mode) and the 4:3 channel viewer with thin black bars on all sides ('Postage Stamp').

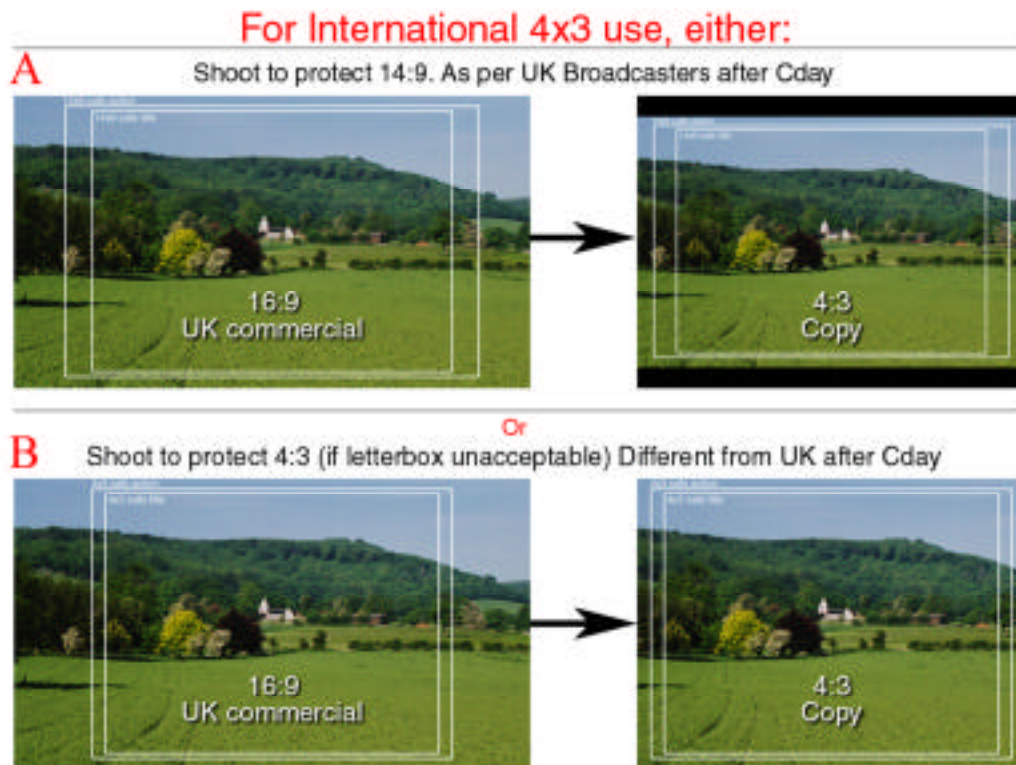


C. International use of Commercial Copy

The ideal would be to deliver an aspect ratio converted version of the 16:9FH copy to 14:9 slight letterbox in a 4:3 frame.

However some overseas markets may not accept 14:9 letterbox copy, so there are two possible options.

Either the production can be protected for 4:3 safe in a 16:9 frame with the inevitable artistic compromises this brings, or a separate master can be made using pan-scan techniques from the 16:9 pictures to protect critical action. The text would then have to be re-positioned correctly on each master.



Delivery to UK Broadcasters

UK Broadcasters will accept 16:9FH copy from the 1st April 2000.

It should be noted that the Commercial Payout to UK Broadcasters will not affect the original format of the copy in any way. i.e. Widescreen commercials will be played out as widescreen, similarly 4:3 copy (for transmission before C-Day) will be played out in 4:3.

Any play-out session may include a mixture of widescreen and 4:3 commercials. For those broadcasters who take door copy only, commercials for transmission after C-Day will be delivered in a 16:9FH frame.

It is the responsibility of the broadcasters to convert the supplied copy for transmission on 4:3 channels as described earlier.

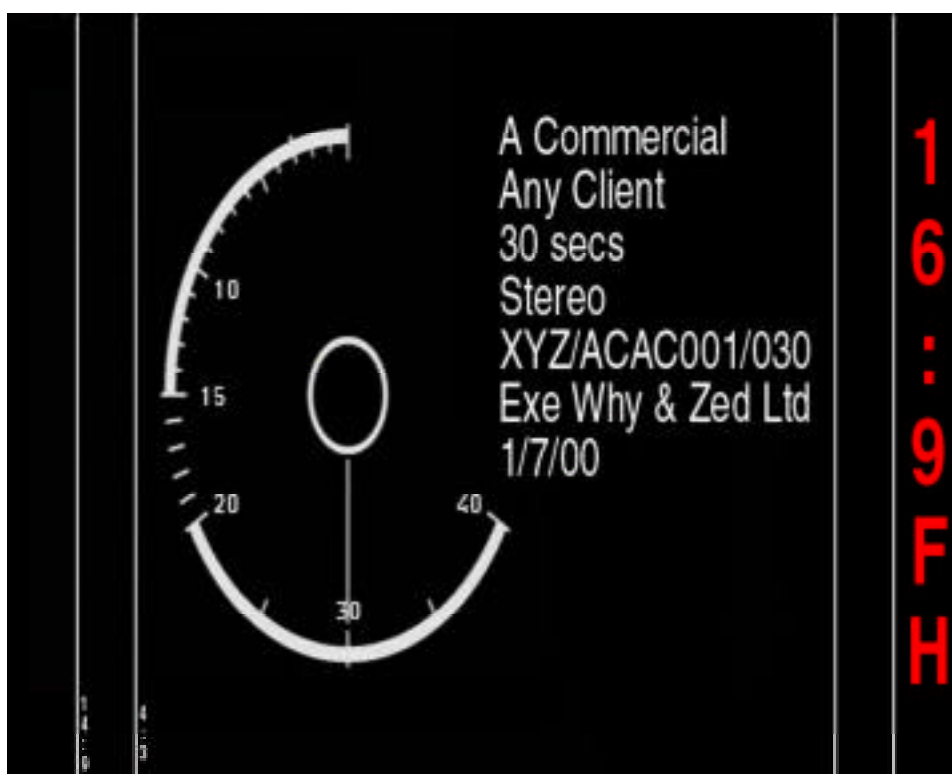
A commercial campaign that commences before C-Day, and completes after C Day will require two different versions to be supplied. The current 4:3 version will be used before C-Day and a new 16:9FH version must be supplied for transmission after C Day.

Each version will be treated as a completely separate commercial, and must have a unique commercial identification code and clock reference, and will be scheduled separately.

All widescreen commercials must indicate the format by the inclusion of the text **16:9FH** on the VT leader clock.

It is recommended that the text should be positioned within the right hand side of the 16:9 frame, such that it is contained outside the 14:9 picture area (see Fig 1.). The purpose is such that any subsequent changes to the aspect ratio to less than 16:9 would therefore exclude the “16:9FH” text.

FIG. 1

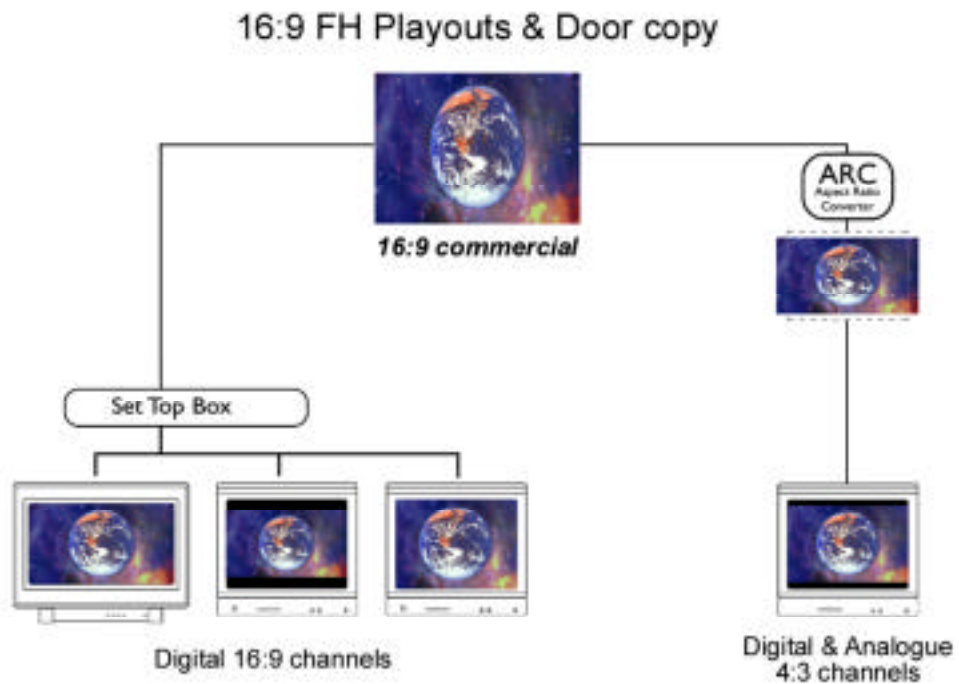


Note: The overall height of both picture and captions will be reduced on transmission of a 16:9FH commercial on a 4:3 channel.

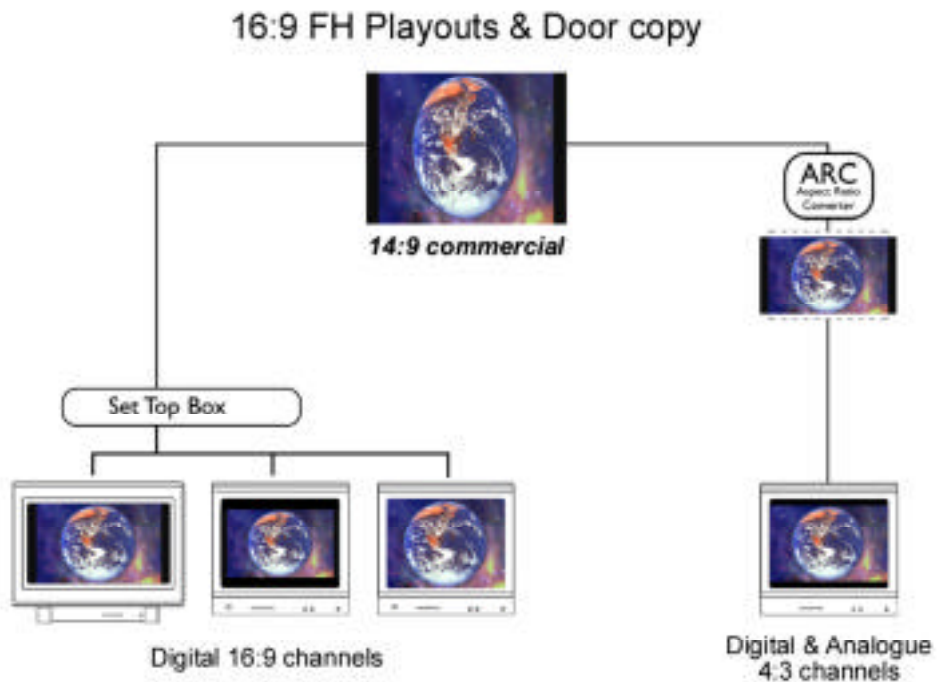
Transmission

The following diagrams explain how the viewer will see the commercials when delivered in 16:9FH. On transmission, it will look as follows:

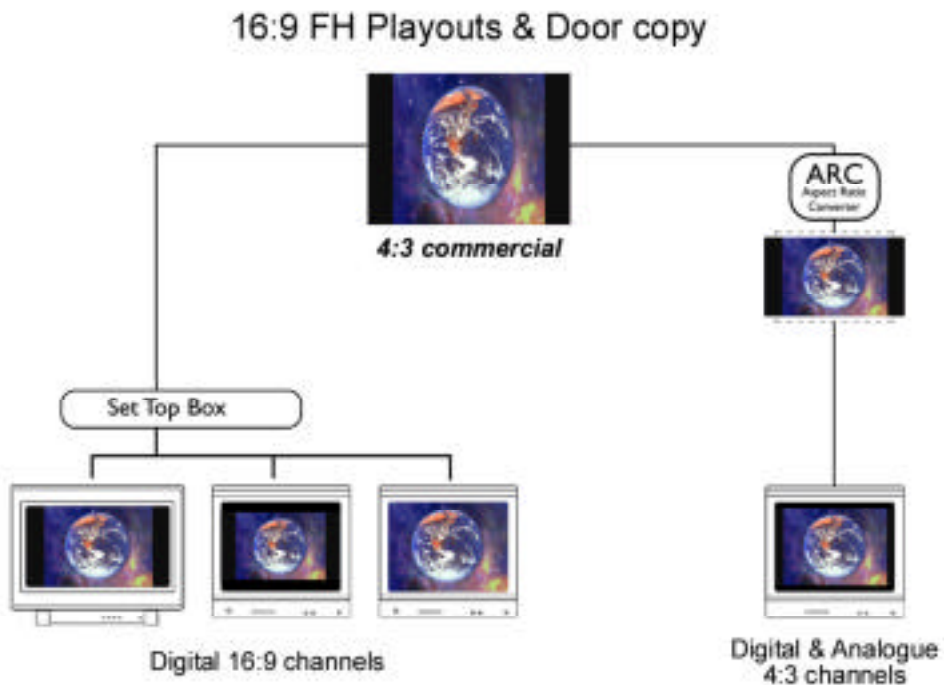
A. 16:9FH



B. 14:9 Full Height in a 16:9 Frame



C. 4:3 Full Height in a 16:9 Frame



Key Dates

1st April 2000

Widescreen copy accepted by all UK broadcasters for transmission after C-Day.

1st July 2000

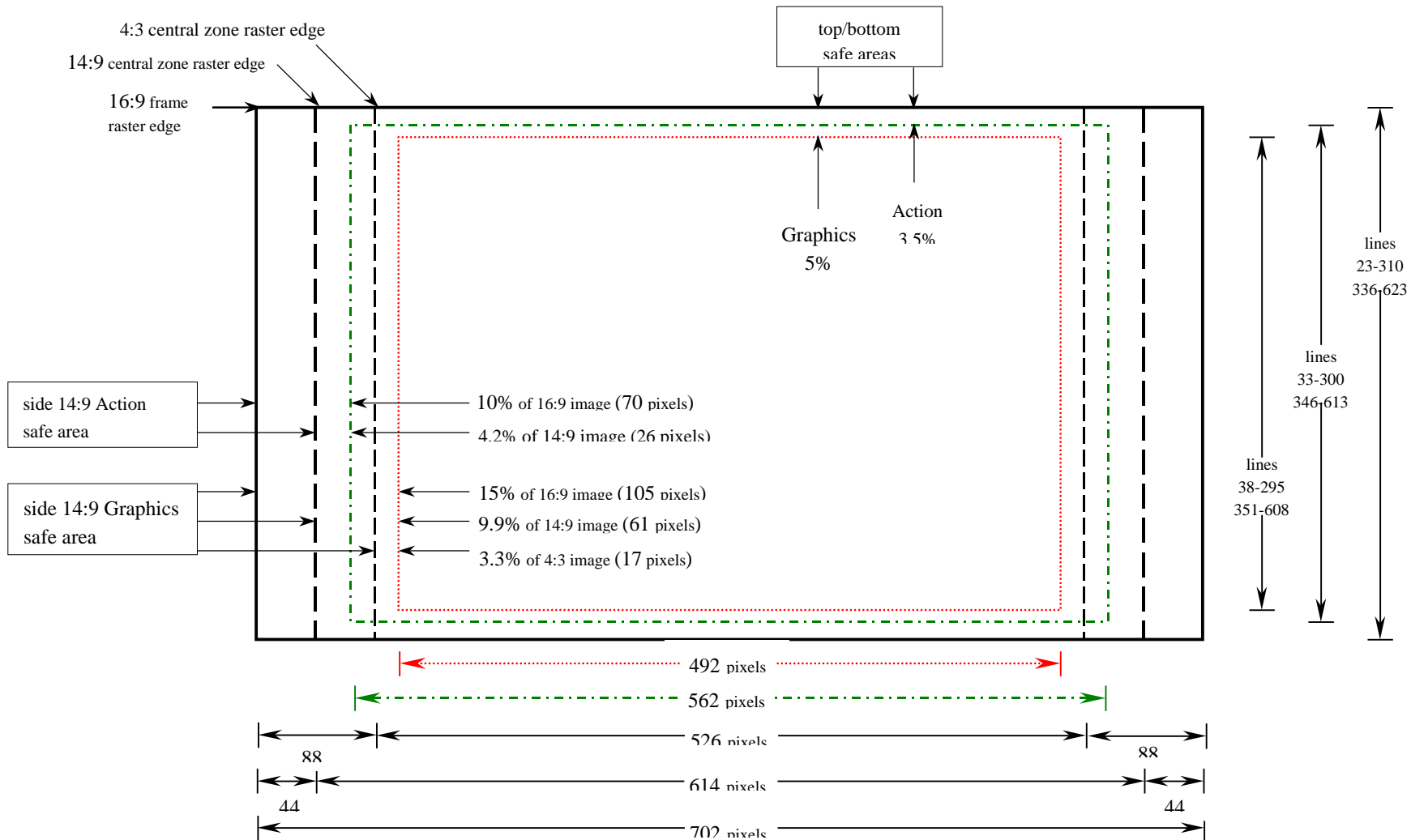
C-Day. Transmission of 16:9FH widescreen commercials (or their derivatives) begins.

Produced for UK broadcasters by:

Chris Hearn	-	Granada Media Group
Andy Lucas	-	Carlton Television
Dick Eagle	-	Channel 4 Television

Visuals provided by Tom McKerrow of the Widescreen Conversion Company.

UK BROADCASTERS SAFE AREA SPECIFICATION FOR 16:9 SHOOT AND PROTECT 14:9



APPENDIX A