

EBU Technical Recommendation R71-2001

Labelling and identification of 16:9 aspect ratio television tape-recordings

<i>EBU Committee</i>	<i>First Issued</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>Re-issued</i>
PMC	1997		2001

Keywords: 16:9, Video recording - General

The EBU considers that there is a significant risk of incorrect transmission when the same video-tape format is used for both 4:3 and 16:9 aspect ratio programmes.

In this Recommendation, the term "16:9 aspect ratio" is taken to mean 16:9 pictures occupying the full active picture height (575 lines) of the television frame (sometimes called anamorphic images). It does not include pictures of 16:9 or any other non-4:3 other aspect ratio which are recorded on video-tape in a "letter box" form.

The EBU has investigated proposals by which the VTR operator may readily identify tapes that contain 625-line programmes in the 16:9 aspect ratio.

Recommendations

The EBU recommends that the following steps are taken to avoid such errors:

1. Labelling

The tape box label should clearly identify 16:9 aspect ratio recordings by the use of tick boxes or some other means.

For initial experiments, and during the introduction of a 16:9 service, it is further recommended that tape boxes containing 16:9 aspect ratio recordings are prominently identified by the use of a separate, small brightly coloured label (such as is often used to identify master recordings) to be printed "16:9 aspect ratio pictures" or "16:9"¹.

The reel or cassette label should also identify recordings in the 16:9 aspect ratio. As space may be limited on small size cassettes, the option of an ink stamp, to overprint the label with the phrase "16:9 aspect ratio pictures" or "16:9", should also be considered.

2. Programme information sheet

The programme information sheet (record report) should also identify 16:9 aspect ratio recordings. A clear distinction should be made between anamorphic 16:9 aspect ratio recordings and letterbox recordings. Details of both may be required.

3. Tape leader

It is strongly desirable that the pre-programme or countdown picture sequence on the tape leader should contain a circular element appropriate to the aspect ratio in use for the aspect ratio programme material. This will appear elliptical if incorrectly displayed.

This circular element may be most easily incorporated in the countdown clock signal, if one is used; this might be either a real clock, placed in front of a camera, or an electronic clock modified for the aspect ratio.

¹ It is advisable to use the full description until both production and operational staff have become fully familiar with the concept of different aspect ratios.