

News Release

C-SPAN

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C-SPAN CONVERTING ENTIRE NETWORK TO PANASONIC'S MII TAPE FORMAT

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- C-SPAN, the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network, is converting its entire operation to Panasonic's MII videotape format by May 1, making it the first U.S. network to use the new format exclusively, C-SPAN Vice President of Operations Brian Lockman announced.

The changeover includes 48 studio and portable field decks for 24-hour operation of C-SPAN and C-SPAN II, Mr. Lockman said.

The non-profit network had been using a standard three-quarter-inch tape format, but its commitment to providing "gavel-to-gavel" coverage of congressional hearings and public events required more storage capacity from portable tape cassettes.

Mr. Lockman said the half-inch MII format was especially suitable for C-SPAN because its design enables a cassette to hold up to 90 minutes of recording time. Other available portable systems limit cassettes to only 20 minutes of tape.

"For our specific needs for portability and ability to record for long periods of time without changing tape, MII is the perfect format," Mr. Lockman said.

Among major U.S. networks, only NBC is currently using MII extensively. That network used MII for its 1988 Olympic coverage and is expected to complete its conversion to that format later this year.

Around the world, MII users include Thames Television of Britain, NHK of Japan and Korean Broadcast Systems.

C-SPAN, which airs U.S. House proceedings and public affairs programming, is available in 43.3 million U.S. households. C-SPAN II, which airs U.S. Senate proceedings and public affairs programming, is available in 17.6 million U.S. households. Both channels are seen around the world via satellite.