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NCC issues alerts on purchase and use of OTT TV boxes

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During the 2020 Olympics, the National Communications Commission (NCC) issued a notice comprising alerts to the public regarding the purchase and use of over-the-top (OTT) TV boxes. "OTT TV boxes", also known as "internet protocol TV boxes", are small home electronic devices that can be used to download and stream media content. As they function with radio frequency, they are subject to the NCC's prior inspection and type approval before their introduction to the market. The NCC specifically prohibits device suppliers from offering any firmware or software inside OTT TV boxes that would involve illicit downloads or streaming of copyrighted media content.

As of 4 August 2021 the NCC had voided 65 type approvals of OTT TV boxes since 2017. At least nine of these were found to have altered their approved configuration in order to introduce copyright-infringing apps without the NCC's permission in 2021. The full list of disqualified OTT TV boxes has been published on the official NCC website to alert consumers to the fact that they should not be purchased. Consumers are urged not to use any of these devices to download or acquire streaming services in relation to the broadcast of the Olympics.

The NCC admits that there is no penalty against the individual use of illicit OTT TV boxes subject to existing regulations. However, local cable operators have been actively pursuing legal actions in accordance with the Copyright Act against providers of illicit OTT TV boxes through national police raids.

After a second consultation in November 2020, a proposed OTT TV service bill (for further details please see "[NCC plans for enactment of OTT regulation](#)") has not made any further progress, despite strong lobbying from local cable operators, emphasising the need for an immediate licence regulation to force OTT TV service providers to comply with copyright regulations.

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