

Transcript for Currys PC World HDMI cables

Presenter: Ricky Boletto

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**In March, Paul Bridges contacted Watchdog to complain about the way his local Currys PC World store was selling HDMI cables.**

**He'd overheard salesmen telling customers that you needed to buy the most expensive ones if you want to ensure the best possible pictures on an HDTV.**

**But Paul is a self-confessed techie. And he knows that simply isn't true.**

**RICKY (TO CAMERA)**

Why? Because what an HDMI cable is doing when it transfers pictures onto a screen is actually very simple, and it either works or it doesn't.

*PROFESSOR WILLIAM WEBB – INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY*

*The HDMI cable carries the video and the audio signals that make up the picture that you see on your television and it carries those in a digital format so that means it converts the signals to ones and zeros and sends those down the wire and then reconstructs the picture at the other end.*

*Because the data is digital it's either correct or incorrect. If it's correct we get a perfect picture, if it's incorrect we get no picture at all.*

*So in a normal domestic environment a cheap cable is just good as an expensive cable. Both will provide perfect picture quality, you'll see no difference at all between them.*

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**But was what our viewer Paul witnessed typical of the way these cables are being sold?**

**Time to find out.**

**We visited 15 Currys PC World branches across the UK looking for an HDMI cable to connect a Blu-Ray Player to an HD Television.**

**And in each, we asked staff about the difference we'd see in picture quality by paying more.**

**Here's what the first sales person had to say...**

*UNDERCOVER*

*REPORTER: I've got a HD TV and a Blu Ray player.*

*CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: That's all you've got?*

*REPORTER: Yeah.*

*CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: You only need a standard one you don't need anything more complicated than*

*that, definitely not. And they're the cheapest ones that we do.*

*REPORTER: I just want good picture quality. Does it make any diff...?*

*CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: It doesn't make any difference. There are some ridiculously expensive ones but the picture quality is no different. There's no point in buying them really.*

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**Correct. This is what all sales staff should be saying.**

**And in two more stores, that is indeed what we were told.**

**In another three, although the advice we were given was confusing, in the end they did advise we buy the cheapest cable.**

**But in the remaining 9 stores, the information we were given was very clear. And very wrong.**

*UNDERCOVER*

*CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: We've got the more expensive ones for like Blu-Rays, they give you a lot sharper quality picture, or we've got the cheaper ones down here.*

*What it is, is if you connect this up to the TV, you won't- most of the picture will be missing.*

*So it means that you're going to get a lot more quality picture and a more detailed picture, as these here are very, very basic.*

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**Convincing ...but incorrect.**

*UNDERCOVER*

*REPORTER: So what's the difference between the cheap and the expensive?*

*CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: Speed of cable and the quality of your image. So every time your Blu-ray is playing and sending information through the cable to television, if it's a slow cable then sometimes the sound and the image do not synchronise.*

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**Again, incorrect...**

*UNDERCOVER*

*CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: That would be the one for you then.*

REPORTER: *That's the best one to go for.*

CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: *You can go for cheaper, there is a cheaper lead, but the quality goes down a bit on the cable.*

REPORTER: *The picture quality goes down.*

CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: *Yeah.*

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**And once again incorrect. In each of the nine stores we were clearly advised to go for more expensive cables if we wanted the best picture quality.**

UNDERCOVER

REPORTER: *OK, so one of these ones might be better?*

CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: *The one here is £39.99, for a one metre, and that will be a lot more better, cos on the back, it's just all about the copper and the shielding, most people say ooh there's no difference, but we always say if you buy this, you will notice a lot more better difference than one of those cables.*

REPORTER: *So you're saying the more I spend, the better picture quality?*

CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: *Yeah*

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**So what is going on? Why did the sales staff in some stores get their information so right, whilst the majority got it so very wrong?**

**Surely customer services would set the record straight.**

RECORDED PHONE CONVERSATION

CURRYS PC WORLD STAFF: *Right, the difference between a £3 HDMI cable and a £150 or £30 or £50 or £70 HDMI cable is quality, okay.*

*If you put a really good HDMI cable in, the quality of the picture is so much better.*

**RICKY (VOICE OVER)**

**Even Currys PC world customer services don't know what they are talking about.**

RICKY (TO CAMERA)

So, let's put you in the picture.

The message couldn't be clearer – you don't have to spend a fortune on an HDMI cable, no matter what anyone might tell you.

