



The representation and
portrayal of people with disabilities
on analogue terrestrial television
Content analysis research report

Publication date: 13 December 2005

Contents

Section		Page
1	Executive summary	2
2	Introduction	3
	Objective	3
	Definitions of terms	3
	Context of representation - the prevalence of disability in the UK population	3
	Rationale for evaluating the representation of people with disabilities on television	4
	Considerations relating to audience perceptions of the representation of people with disabilities on television	5
3	Content Analysis Results	6
	Summary of method	6
	Results structure	6
	The proportion of television programmes that include representations of people with disabilities	7
	The proportion of all people on television who are represented with disabilities	7
	The number of people/characters with disabilities represented on television	8
	The level of appearance of people/characters with disabilities	9
	Types of disability portrayed on television	10
	Occupational roles fulfilled by people/characters with disabilities	12
	Relevance of disability to roles fulfilled by people/characters with disabilities	13
	Type of role portrayed by people/characters with disabilities	14
	Proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities considered to highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice	15
	Comparing UK, US and other productions: the proportion of all people/characters represented on television with disabilities	16

Annex		Page
1	Description of methodology	17
2	Graphed data represented in text for accessibility	20

Section 1

Executive summary

- 1.1 Estimates of the proportion of people with disabilities in the UK population range between 14 and 19%^{1, 2}. In 2004, 12% of sampled programmes (on BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Five) included representations of people with disabilities. However less than 1 person/character in 100 in the sampled programmes overall had a disability.
- 1.2 Both these measures provide evidence of under-representation on analogue terrestrial television of people with disabilities in 2004.
- 1.3 Repeat appearances by the same person/character constitute around a quarter of all representations on television of people with disabilities.
- 1.4 The proportion of people/characters with disabilities fulfilling incidental roles in the sampled programmes has increased since 2002. However the proportion of people/characters with disabilities fulfilling major roles in the sampled programmes has decreased. The proportion of people/characters with disabilities fulfilling minor roles has remained relatively stable over the years. .
- 1.5 The most commonly represented disabilities in the sampled programmes have generally been those that are most easily recognised (mobility, sensory impairment and disfigurement/physical impairment).
- 1.6 Roles filled by people/actors with disabilities were more commonly those of children and retired people, both of which can be associated with vulnerability. This may reflect stereotyping in on-screen portrayals of people with disabilities. The high representation of people with disabilities in political roles is largely attributable to appearances by the former Home Secretary, David Blunkett.
- 1.7 Analyses of 2004 data showed a slight reduction in the proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities considered to highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice.
- 1.8 Disability was 'central' or 'relevant' to the majority of representations of people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes for 2004, a finding consistent with previous years' analyses.
- 1.9 Finally we have noted some important caveats in relation to the methodology used in the research reported here. Perhaps the most important is the constraints of analysing only a sample of programmes, in this case it is sample of programmes broadcast in peak time viewing slots over two weeks a year. Also only broadcast programmes are included in the analysis (not trailer, idents and advertisements.) Therefore as a result of these constraints, the methodology may not pick up positive examples of representation of people with disabilities that do appear on screen but not in programmes.

¹ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS)

² Labour Market trends (2001)

Section 2

Introduction

Objective

- 2.1 The research reported here was conducted to evaluate the representation of people with disabilities on analogue terrestrial television in terms of the *extent* of representation and *how* people with disabilities have been portrayed. The report is of a content analysis of recorded samples of television programmes broadcast in 2004. Results are presented in the context of similar data collected each year from 1993 to 2003.

Definitions of terms

- 2.2 'Disability' is defined in the Disability Discrimination Act³ as an impairment either physical or mental that has a long term and significant adverse effect on an individual's ability to function in everyday life.
- 2.3 For the purpose of this research, the disabilities of people/characters in sampled programmes were coded to 54 different types of disability (e.g., blind, partially sighted, temporary blindness). These types were grouped into six broad categories of disability: 'mobility impairment', 'sensory impairment', 'mental health issues', 'disfigurement/physical impairment', 'learning disabilities', and 'other'.
- 2.4 'Representation' refers to the extent to which people with disabilities are presented on television.
- 2.5 'Portrayal' refers to the nature of the representation (i.e., *how* individuals/groups with disabilities are represented).

Context of representation - the prevalence of disability in the UK population

- 2.6 An estimate of the prevalence of disability in the UK population can provide a context against which to evaluate levels of representation of people with disabilities on television.
- 2.7 Estimates of the prevalence of disability in the UK population are wide ranging depending on the definition of disability used, and the source(s) of available estimates. For instance, using estimates of people who are registered as having a disability provides a conservative indication of the prevalence of disability, because some people may wish to register but not be entitled to do so, and others may be entitled to register but be unable or unwilling to do so.
- 2.8 National statistics for the UK suggest that people with disabilities make up between 14% (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1988) and 18% (2001 census) of the population. Using a somewhat different definition, Labour Market trends (2001) suggest that one in five people (19.3%) of working age have a disability covered by the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act.

³ See <http://www.direct.gov.uk/>

Rationale for evaluating the representation of people with disabilities on television

- 2.9 It is necessary to evaluate the representation of people with disabilities on television because of the requirements of legislation, initiatives to promote equality, and in the light of society's attitudes to disability and television.
- 2.10 In 1989, the Broadcasters' Disability Network (now known as the Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network: BCIDN) was established to explore and address disability in relation to the media industry. It works to facilitate the recruitment and retention of disabled employees in the industry, and to promote and disseminate good practice across the industry.
- 2.11 A 1992 review to explore the representation on television of people with disabilities, audience attitudes and producers' perspectives found a paucity of research and few initiatives to review⁴.
- 2.12 In 1995 the Disability Discrimination Act came into effect with the aim of protecting people with disabilities from unfair discrimination in a range of contexts, including the workplace.
- 2.13 In 2002 the BCIDN's manifesto presented commitments from broadcasters to increase the presence of people with disabilities on-screen and in the media workforce, and to increase access to services and buildings.
- 2.14 Section 337 of the Communications Act (2003) requires broadcasters to report on their arrangements for ensuring equal opportunities in employment and training and Ofcom has required broadcasters to report levels of disability declared by their workforce as a means of making that assessment. In 2004, 2% of the workforces of BBC and Five declared a disability. Broadcasters have subsequently announced (annually reviewable) initiatives to improve on-screen representation of disability. For instance, the BBC set a target of two characters with disabilities per 100 characters represented in BBC1 drama by the end of 2004⁵.
- 2.15 Skillset (2005)⁶ reported that since 2000 there had been little change in the employment rates of people with disabilities in the Broadcast Television sector (~1%) until 2004 when this increased to 2.3%. This figure may be an underestimate; Skillset's 2003 workforce survey⁷ found that self-reported disability was three times higher (3%) than that found in the organisation census.
- 2.16 Labour Market Trends⁸ reported in 2003 that 19% of the working population have a disability recognised by the Disability Discrimination Act. 85% of the working population without disabilities are 'economically active', compared with 53% of the working population with disabilities. Based on the estimate that 2.3% of people employed in the media industry have a disability (see section 2.15), people with disabilities are under-represented as employees within the media industry.

⁴ Images of Disability on Television, Guy Cumberbatch & Ralph Negrine. Routledge, 1992

⁵ New drive to improve disability portrayal on BBC television. BBC Press release, 9th Feb 2004

⁶ Employment Census 2004, Skillset, 2005

⁷ Workforce Survey 2003, Skillset, 2004

⁸ Labour Market Trends, September, 2003

- 2.17 The Central Office of Information has suggested that increasing on-screen representation of people with disabilities could decrease prejudice towards people with disabilities and increase employment levels⁹.
- 2.18 Barriers to increasing on-screen representation cited by broadcasting industry professionals included audience ratings, financial imperatives, other peoples' prejudices, practical problems such as the physical environment and additional support, and a perceived shortage of talented actors with disabilities. There was also concern more generally about how to discuss disability in a politically correct manner.¹⁰

Considerations relating to audience perceptions of the representation of people with disabilities on television

- 2.19 Research conducted with people with sensory and mobility impairments, carers without a disability, and a broadcast industry panel (4,000 respondents interviewed) explored acceptance of inclusion and perceived hurdles and barriers to inclusion¹¹.
- 2.20 Perceived hurdles to inclusion included society's attitudinal bias towards physical attractiveness, leading to the rejection of minority groups with disabilities.
- 2.21 Key issues that were suggested to increase acceptance of inclusion centred on realistic portrayals and the avoidance of stereotyping. The study also identified facilitators for the greater acceptance of disability which included:
- Matching – portraying people with disabilities as similar to people without disabilities;
 - Likeability – creating emotional connections between a character with a disability and the audience by portraying shared qualities such as achievement and humour;
 - Incidental inclusion – representing people with disabilities on-screen in incidental roles where their disability is not a focus; and
 - Celebrity – using famous actors to represent people with disabilities on television¹².
- 2.22 The research reported mixed opinion about the benefits of special seasons of programming about disability. Some respondents felt that such seasons might offer a focus for exploring disability issues, whilst others felt that they might serve to further marginalise people with disabilities.
- 2.23 In a national sample survey of prejudice in England¹³, 5% of respondents reported feeling less positive about people with disabilities. The most commonly cited influence on shaping their attitudes towards disability was television (46%) followed by parents (39%), school (31%), friends (22%) and newspapers (20%). Interestingly, other research¹⁰ found that some viewers reported that whilst they viewed television as having an educational role, they would switch it off if the views expressed challenged their own beliefs.

⁹ Images of Disability, www.disability.gov.uk

¹⁰ Disabling Prejudice, Jane Sancho. BBC, BSC and ITC, 2003 (27 industry interviews conducted)

¹¹ Images of Disability, www.disability.gov.uk

¹² However, results reported in Perspectives of Disability in Broadcasting, (Andrea Millwood Hargrave. BSC, 1995) found that respondents took exception to the idea of non-disabled actors playing disabled roles.

¹³ Profiles of Prejudice. Stonewall, 2003

Section 3

Content Analysis Results

Summary of method

- 3.1 One week samples of television programmes ('sample programmes') broadcast at peak time¹⁴ on analogue terrestrial channels have been recorded twice a year from 1993 to 2004.
- 3.2 Programmes broadcast on BBC1, BBC2, ITV, and Channel 4 have been recorded throughout the 12 year period, and programmes broadcast on Channel 5 ('Five') have been recorded since it began broadcasting in 1997.
- 3.3 The content of the sample programmes has been analysed, by coding each sampled programme for various characteristics (e.g., presence of a participant with a disability, their disability, and their occupational role)¹⁵.

Results structure

- 3.4 The content analysis reported here evaluated the representation and portrayal of people with disabilities on analogue terrestrial television with regard to:
 - the proportion of programming that includes representations of people with disabilities;
 - the number and proportion of people with disabilities represented on television;
 - variation in the representation of people with disabilities across different television genres;
 - whether people with disabilities are represented in major, minor or incidental roles;
 - the types of disability (sensory, mobility, physical, mental) portrayed in the programmes in which people (or characters) with disabilities are represented;
 - the occupational roles in which people with disabilities are represented on television;
 - the relevance of disability to the roles in which people with disabilities are represented on television;
 - the type of role in which people with disabilities represented on television are portrayed; and
 - whether sampled programmes representing people with disabilities were produced in the UK or the USA or elsewhere.
- 3.5 Results of the content analysis are presented in relation to:
 - 2004 data; and
 - (where available) trend data across the 12 year period, for BBC1, BBC2, ITV and Channel 4 ('Channels 1-4'), and separately for BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Five ('Channels 1-5').

¹⁴ For the purposes of this study, defined as 17:30 to midnight.

¹⁵ Please see Annex 1 for a detailed description of the research methodology.

The proportion of television programmes that include representations of people with disabilities

- 3.6 In 2004, 12% of sampled programmes included representations of people with disabilities.
- 3.7 As shown in Figure 1, a marginal trend is evident over the period 1993 to 2004 towards an increase in the proportion of television programmes that include representations of people with disabilities. However this variation is not substantial.
- 3.7.1 Whilst representation has been more stable since 1999 (ranging between 11% and 13%), the proportion of programmes including representations of people with disabilities has ranged between 7% and 15% over the full period for which data is available.

Figure 1 The proportion of sampled television programmes representing people with disabilities

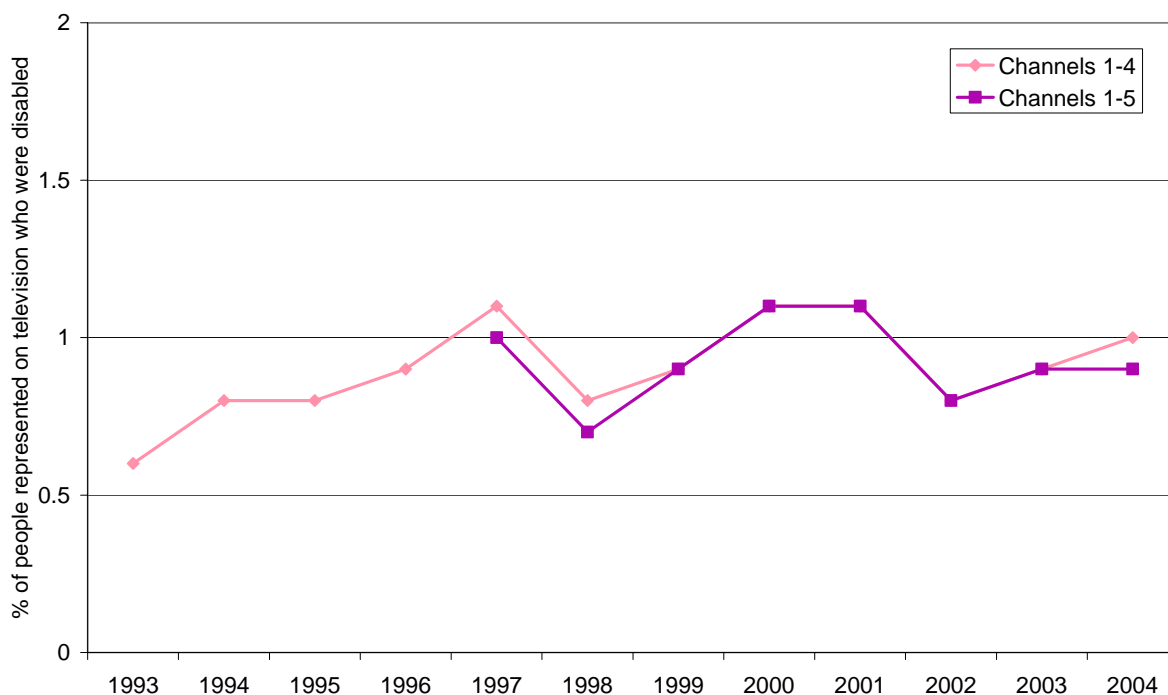


The proportion of all representations of people with disabilities on television

- 3.8 In 2004, people with disabilities made up just under 1% of the 13,815 people represented within the sampled programmes.
- 3.8.1 For Channels 1-5, the proportion was 0.9% (124 people)
- 3.8.2 For Channels 1-4, the proportion was 1% (112 people)
- 3.9 As shown in Figure 2, a marginal trend is evident over the period 1993 to 2004 towards an increase in the proportion of representations of people with disabilities in the sampled programmes who had disabilities. Again the observed variation is not substantial.

- 3.10 The absolute number of people within the sampled programmes who were represented as having a disability has varied over the period 1993-2004. A peak was observed in relation to *Paralympics* programming in 2000.

Figure 2 The proportion of all people with a disability represented in sampled television programmes



The number of people/characters with disabilities represented on television

- 3.11 In 2004, people/characters with disabilities were represented 124 times in the sampled programmes across Channels 1 to 5. For Channels 1 to 4, people/characters with disabilities were represented 112 times. The total number of people identified in the sampled programmes across Channels 1 to 5 for 2004 was 13,815 (including people with and without disabilities).
- 3.12 In 2003, people/characters with disabilities were represented 131 times in the sampled programmes across Channels 1 to 5. For Channels 1 to 4, people/characters with disabilities were represented 102 times. The overall number of people identified in the sampled programmes for 2003 was 14,135 (including people with and without disabilities).
- 3.13 Since 1993, there has been a general (though fluctuating) increase in the number of people/characters with disabilities identified in the sampled programmes. As an example of the fluctuations observed, the lowest number of times that people/characters with disabilities were represented in sampled programmes across the period for which data are available was 73, observed in 1993.
- 3.14 Repeat appearances by people/characters meant that in 2004, 15 people/characters with disabilities accounted for 32% of all instances in which people with disabilities were represented in sampled programmes¹⁶ across Channels 1 to 5. In 2003 11

¹⁶ For example, this 32% included multiple television news appearances by David Blunkett.

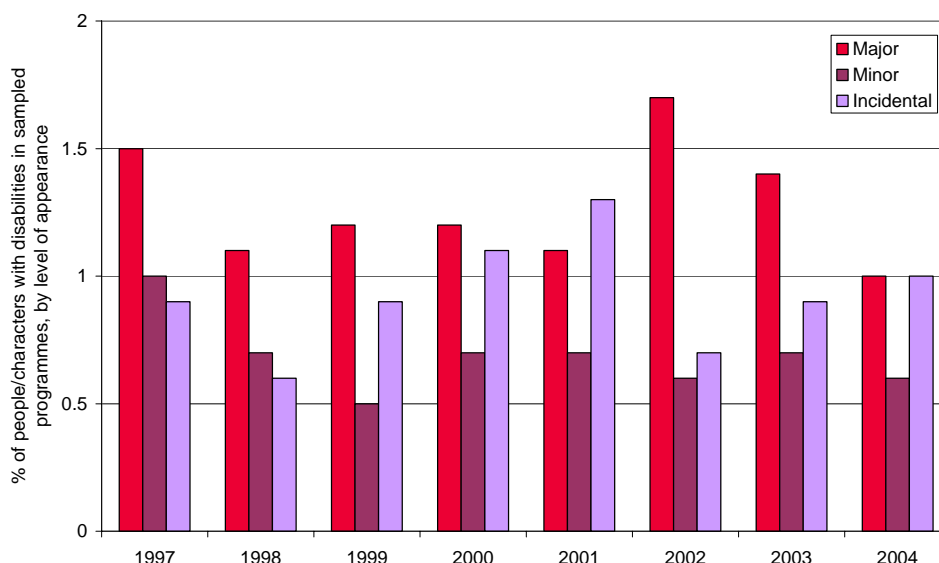
people with disabilities contributed to just over one quarter (27%) of programmes that represented people/characters with disabilities (across Channels 1 to 5).

The level of appearance of people/characters with disabilities

- 3.15 The level of appearance of identified people/characters with disabilities was coded as:
- Major: people who are central to the storyline in fictional content or main presenters
 - Minor: people relevant but not central to a storyline, journalists contributing one item only and people such as game show assistants
 - Incidental: people who receive sparse character development in fictional content or who are subsidiary to the storyline; all interviewees, panellists and contestants
- 3.16 In 2004 across Channels 1 to 5 equivalent proportions of people/characters with disabilities appeared in major and incidental roles, and lower proportions in minor roles (see Figure 3).
- 3.17 Compared to previous years, a lower proportion of people/characters with disabilities were coded as fulfilling major roles in 2004 (see Figure 3). Since 2002, when the proportion of major roles fulfilled by people with disabilities was at its highest, there has been a decline in the proportion of people/characters with disabilities fulfilling major roles.
- 3.18 For the majority of the annual samples, people with disabilities have more commonly fulfilled major roles than either minor or incidental roles¹⁷. The proportion of people/characters with disabilities fulfilling minor roles has remained relatively stable between 2000 and 2004.
- 3.19 The proportion of people/characters with disabilities fulfilling incidental roles has varied considerably over the 12 sampled years. Since 2001 there has been a steady increase in this measure, although the most recent figure (2004) is comparable to those reported in relation to 1999 and 1997 data.

¹⁷ It is possible that this result reflects a coding bias. It may be easier to detect disability in people fulfilling major roles as they tend to be on-screen for longer which may increase the likelihood of the them evidencing their disability.

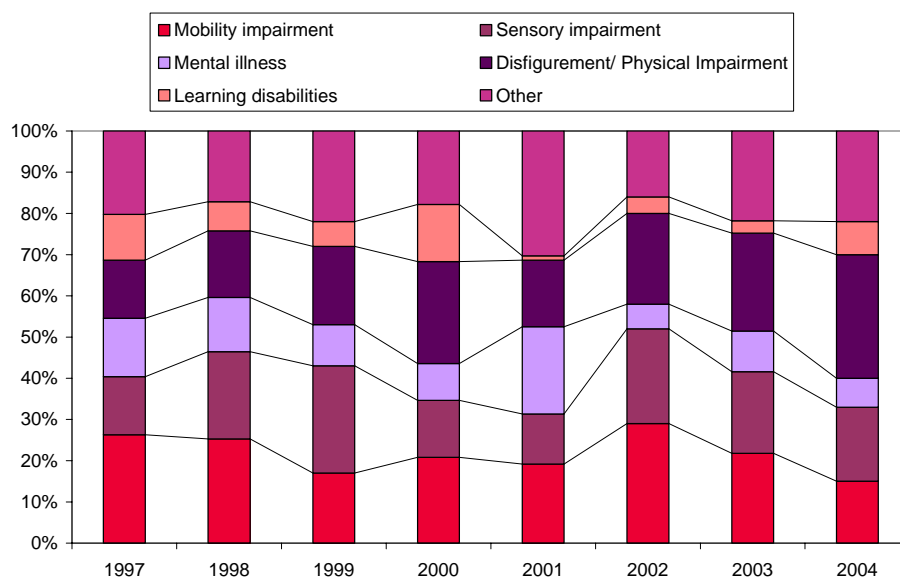
Figure 3 Proportion of people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes, by level of appearance (1997-2004)



Types of disability portrayed on television

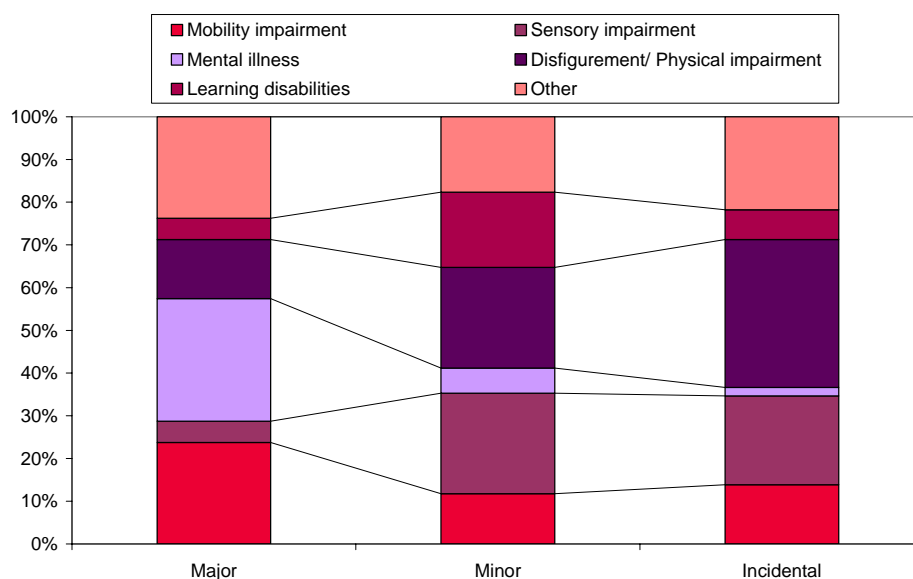
- 3.20 In 2004 across Channels 1 to 5, the most frequently observed disabilities among people/characters on television were the more easily recognised forms: disfigurement/physical impairment (30%), sensory impairment (18%) and mobility impairment (15%). These cumulatively accounted for nearly two thirds of all disabilities identified in the sampled programmes.
- 3.21 Wheelchairs represented 51% of all identified disability aids in the 2004 sample. Callipers and walking sticks made up a further 9%. Cumulatively, the largest category of disability aids was mobility-related. In contrast, only 26% of all disability aids identified were visual impairment-related (guide dogs, 9%; eye patches, 9%; white canes, 4%; dark glasses, 2%; and futuristic sight aids, 2%).
- 3.22 The more easily recognised forms of disability (disfigurement/physical impairment, sensory impairment and mobility impairment) have consistently accounted for over 50% of all types of disability identified in sampled programmes over the period 1993-2004, with the exception of 2001. In 2001 the representation of mental health issues in sampled programmes was higher (at 21%) than for other years (an average of 11.25%), as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Type of disability affecting people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes (1997-2004)



3.23 Figure 5 shows the distribution of the different types of disability represented in sampled programmes, by the level of appearance of people with disabilities (for 2004 data). Mobility impairments and mental health issues were the most frequently represented disabilities by people/characters in major roles. Sensory impairment and physical impairment/disfigurement were most common in people/characters playing minor roles. The most common disability depicted in incidental roles was disfigurement/physical impairment. Again, this result may reflect the coding methodology. It is easier to detect more visible disabilities in people fulfilling minor or incidental roles.

Figure 5 Type of disability affecting people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes by level of appearance (2004)



Occupational roles fulfilled by people/characters with disabilities

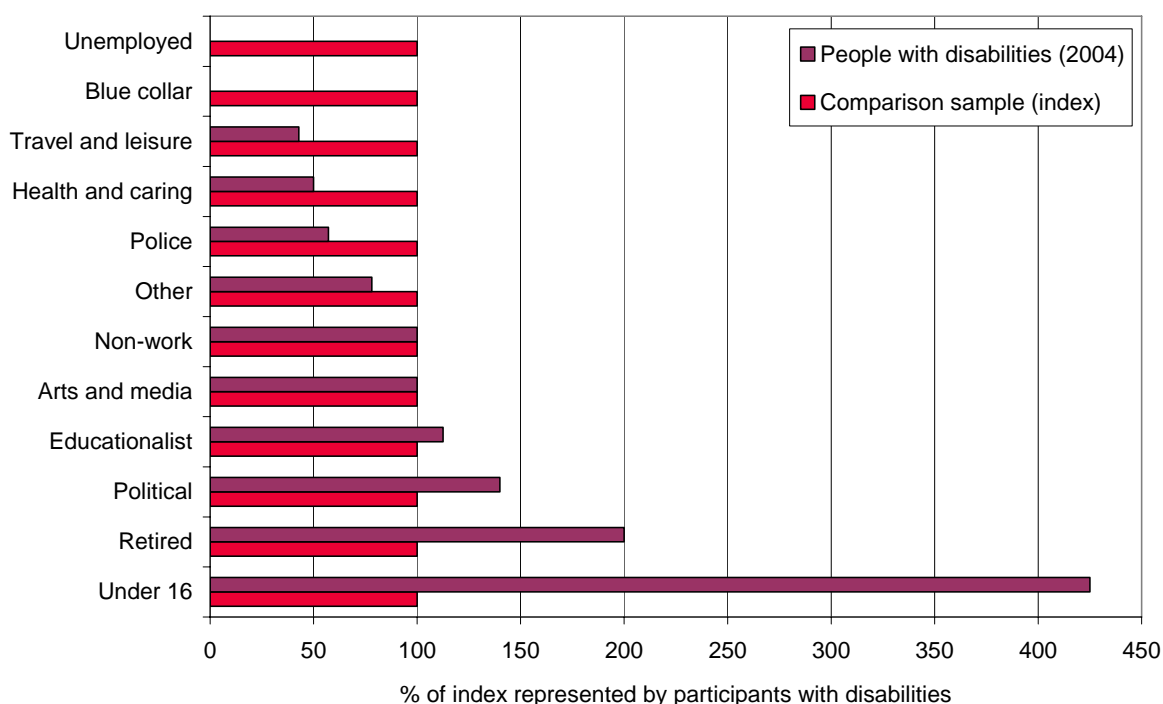
3.24 In general, the occupations of people/characters with disabilities represented in sampled programmes were less likely to be revealed in the programme than those of a comparison sample¹⁸. In 2004 for instance, occupational role could not be coded for 44% of people/characters with disabilities compared with 29% of the comparison sample.

3.25 Using the occupations of the comparison sample as an index, 2004 analyses showed that people/characters with disabilities represented in sampled programmes were more likely to be classified as ‘under 16’ years old (325% over-index), ‘an older person’ (100% over-index) or in a ‘political’ role (40% over-index). Representation of people/characters with disabilities in ‘arts and media’ occupational roles was comparable to index.

3.25.1 That people with disabilities were over represented in the ‘under 16’ year old group and as ‘retired’ may indicate a tendency to portray people with disabilities as vulnerable.

3.25.2 The over-representation of disability in ‘political’ occupational roles was attributable to David Blunkett’s television appearances, which accounted for 80% of the people/characters with disabilities represented within this occupational role. If his appearances were omitted from the analysis, the proportion of people/characters with disabilities represented in this occupational role would fall below that of the comparison sample.

Figure 6 Occupational roles filled by people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes, relative to comparison sample (2004)

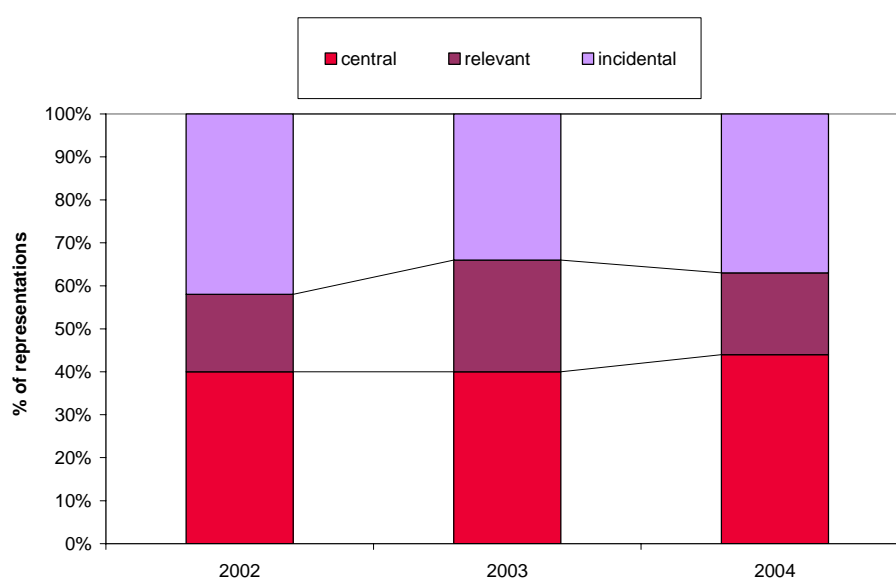


¹⁸ The groups of people/characters with disabilities were compared to a sample of people/characters who did not have disabilities. The comparative sample was established by selecting the first male and first female to appear five minutes from the start of each programme.

Relevance of disability to roles fulfilled by people/characters with disabilities

- 3.26 In instances where people/characters with disabilities were represented in sampled programmes, the relevance of disability to their role was evaluated. The extent to which disability was important to the role fulfilled by people/characters with disabilities was coded as 'central', 'relevant', or 'incidental'.
- 3.27 In the 2004 sample (Channels 1 to 5), disability was 'central' to the portrayal of the person with a disability in 44% of the identified representations, 'relevant' in an additional 19% of the representations, and 'incidental' in the remaining 37%.
- 3.28 These figures are broadly comparable to those obtained in relation to the 2003 sample (Channels 1 to 5), where disability was 'central' to 40%, 'relevant' to 26% and 'incidental' to 34% of the identified representations of people/characters with disabilities.
- 3.29 Disability was of 'incidental' relevance to a slightly higher proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities in relation to the 2002 sample (42%), 'central' to 40% and 'relevant' to 18%.
- 3.30 The variation in the relevance of disability to roles fulfilled by people/characters with disabilities across the years for which this data is available (2002 to 2004) is illustrated in Figure 7.
- 3.31 There are potential benefits of disability being both 'central'/'relevant' and 'incidental' themes in the portrayal of people/characters with disabilities on television. Portrayal of disability as 'central' or 'relevant' can serve a useful function of informing the general population of specific issues that people with disabilities face in life. Equally, portrayal of disability as 'incidental' reflects the reality that people with disabilities can lead busy lives with the same rich tapestry of experience that all people, with a disability or not, live.

Figure 7 Relevance of disability to roles filled by people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes (2002-2004)



Type of role portrayed by people/characters with disabilities

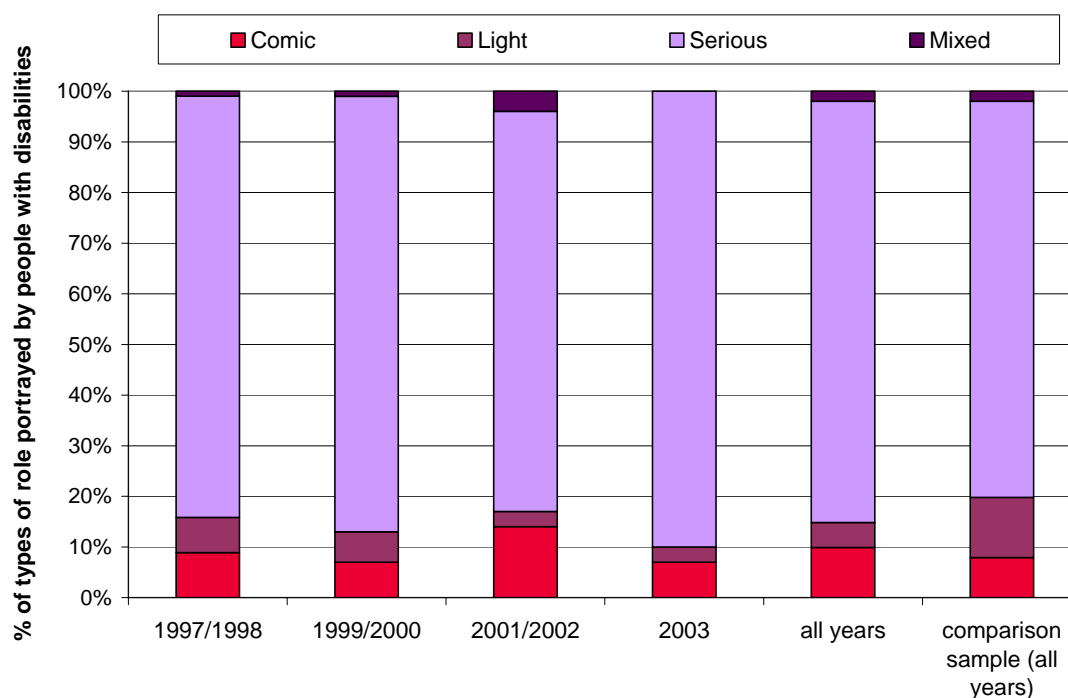
3.32 Figure 8 shows the proportion of people/characters with disabilities portrayed in 'comic', 'light', and 'serious' roles, in years for which data is available.

3.33 Key themes to note are that:

3.33.1 The distribution of roles in which people/characters with disabilities are portrayed is broadly similar to that of a comparison sample (of portrayed people/characters who do not have a disability);

3.33.2 Relative to the comparison sample, there is a slightly higher tendency for people/characters with disabilities to be portrayed in both 'comic' and 'serious', and a lower tendency for them to be portrayed in 'light' roles. This result is consistent with the low rates of representation of people with disabilities in 'light entertainment' programming.

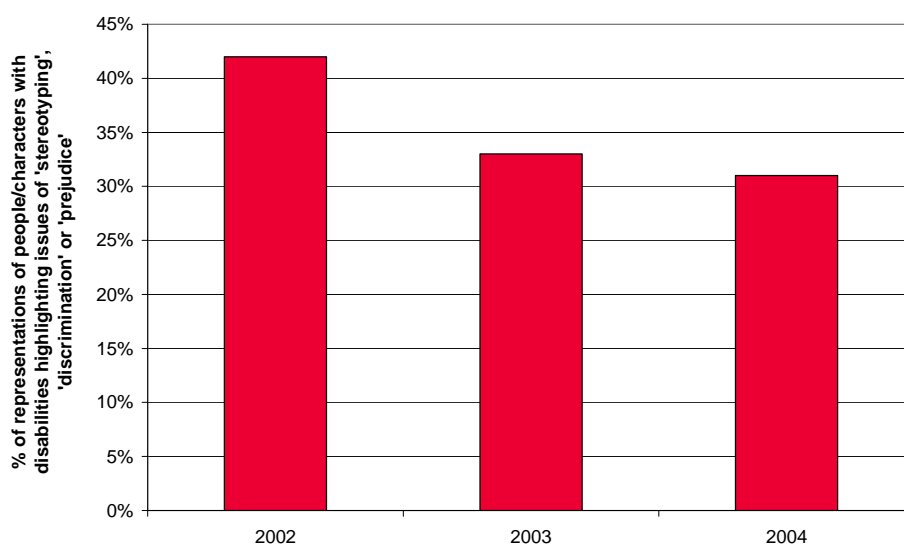
Figure 8 Types of role filled by people/characters with disabilities and a comparison group in sampled programmes



Proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities considered to highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice

- 3.34 Figure 9 shows the proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes (2002-2004) that were considered to highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice.
- 3.35 There is a slight trend towards a reduction in the proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities that highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice.

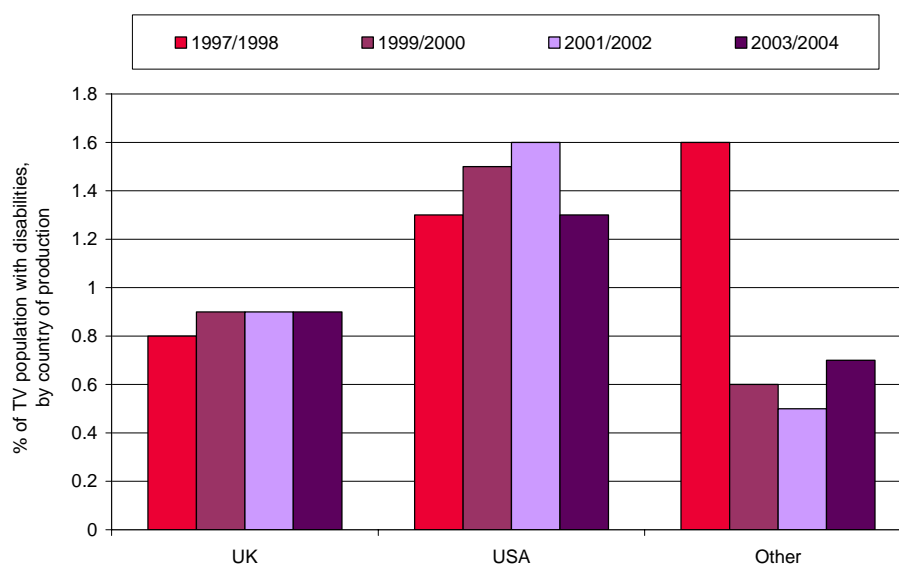
Figure 9 Proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes considered to highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice



Comparing UK, US and other productions: the proportion of all people/characters represented on television with disabilities

- 3.36 Figure 10 provides a breakdown by country of production (UK, US, other) of the representation of people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes as a proportion of all people/characters represented in the sampled programmes.
- 3.37 As shown in Figure 10, US productions have tended to represent a higher proportion of people/characters with disabilities than have UK productions.

Figure 10 The proportion of all people represented in sampled television programmes who with disabilities, split by country of production (UK, USA, Other)



Annex 1

Description of methodology

What is content analysis?

- A1.1 Content analysis is a data reduction technique suitable for qualitative data (such as interviews, video tapes) that involves methodically identifying particular characteristics of a given data source. From the analysis, inferences can be made about the data source.
- A1.2 A sample of content broadcast on analogue terrestrial television services was analysed to establish trends relating to the representation and portrayal of people with disabilities on television.
- A1.3 The content analysis research¹⁹ reported in this document has been conducted over the last 12 years by a team at the Communications Research Group²⁰.

How were the broadcast data sampled?

- A1.4 Broadcast output was recorded from the four main terrestrial analogue channels (BBC1, BBC2, ITV, and Channel 4) each year from 1993 to 2004. Broadcast output was recorded from Channel 5 (now 'Five') when it began transmitting in 1997 through to 2004.
- A1.5 For each channel, annual 'samples' were made using a representative method akin to a survey sample²¹. Each year, two week's worth of broadcast output were recorded: one week's worth during Spring/Summer, and the other during Autumn/Winter.
- A1.6 Over the last 12 years at each of these seasonal time points, prime-time (i.e., 17:30 to midnight) broadcast television was recorded for each analogue terrestrial channel available.
- A1.7 A week's worth of broadcast television for any channel was collected by staggering the recordings over seven weeks. So, in the first week, Monday's broadcast prime time television was recorded, in the second week, Tuesday's broadcast prime time television was recorded, and so on through to Sunday.
- A1.8 All broadcast television programmes collected in the specified time frames were analysed, excluding programme trails and advertisements. Atypical programming (such as the Paralympics) that had been captured within the time frame was noted as such. Whilst it is important that specialist/seasonal programming of minority group representations are monitored, the prime focus of this research was to track changes over time in mainstream broadcast television.
- A1.9 Around 400 hours per annum of recorded broadcast television programming comprised the data sampled. This equates to around 800 programmes per year.

¹⁹ The work was carried out for the Broadcasting Standards Commission until 2002 when the BBC and the ITC became co-funders with the BSC.

²⁰ Based in Birmingham (UK), see BSC Annual Monitoring Reports.

²¹ *Optimising monitoring samples of broadcast television*. Guy Cumberbatch. CRG/BSC (2001)

How were the broadcast data coded?

A1.10 The 'coding frames' are specified characteristics of programmes identified for the purpose of this research, and have been informed by relevant audience research and discourses in this field²². The coding frames have evolved over the last 12 years (or 'samples') and consistency across different samples has been maintained by re-analysing earlier samples where necessary. The patterns across the samples detailed in this report thus reflect objective and reliable measures of trends over time.

A1.11 Six raters coded the broadcast television data. Each programme was coded on a number of characteristics including the following:

- Programme genre (e.g., news, light entertainment, sport, religion, children's, soap opera, comedy, drama, film)
- Country of production (e.g., UK, USA, other)
- Presence of disabled 'participant'(s)
- For programmes containing participant(s) with a disability each participant was coded on the following characteristics:
 - Type of disability:
 - mobility, sensory, mental, disfigurement/physical impairment, learning, other
 - Level of appearance in the programme:
 - major, minor, incidental
 - Role type
 - comic, light, serious, mixed
 - Relevance of disability to role (the extent to which the participant's disability was important to the storyline)
 - central, relevant, incidental
 - Occupation portrayed
 - e.g., blue collar, retired, health and caring, political, travel/leisure, educationalist, arts and media, police, unemployed, non-work, under 16, unable to code
 - Relevance of portrayal to minority disability issues ('highlighting disability issues')
 - Stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice
 - *For factual [non-fictional] programmes only:
 - Participant's role in the programme (expert, elected representative, afflicted/victim, subject of item)

²² *Media*, Guy Cumberbatch in Ellis Cashmore (Ed). *Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnic Studies*. Routledge (2004)

- Subject of contribution (nb. for 'real' people who appeared in factual programmes only) (personal experiences, discuss minority issues, discuss political issues, everyday topics [cooking, gardening, motoring, DIY, country pursuits], contestant, too brief to classify)

A1.12 Note: For some analyses profiles of disabled minority group participants with a disability were compared to a sample of participants who did not have a disability. The comparative sample was established by selecting the first male and first female to appear five minutes from the start of each programme.

How were the data explored?

A1.13 The content analysis data were collected and coded as above. The overall objective was to explore the representation of people with disabilities on broadcast analogue terrestrial television. The data were analysed from various perspectives that address particular research questions. Over the last 12 years on analogue terrestrial television broadcasts:

- 1.13.1 ... what proportion of television programmes has included portrayals of people/characters with disabilities?
- 1.13.2 ... what proportion of all people/characters represented on television had a disability?
- 1.13.3 ... how many different people/characters contribute to the representation of people with disabilities on television?
- 1.13.4 ... in which genres of programmes are people with disabilities most often represented?
- 1.13.5 ... in programmes that represent people with disabilities, what is the level of appearance of the people with disabilities /characters? (e.g., are their roles in programmes major, minor or incidental?)
- 1.13.6 ... what types of disability have been portrayed on television?
- 1.13.7 ... what types of occupational roles are fulfilled by people with disabilities /characters?
- 1.13.8 ... to what extent is the disability of people/characters with disabilities relevant to their roles?
- 1.13.9 ...in which types of role are people with disabilities portrayed on television (comic, light, serious, other)?
- 1.13.10 ... were sampled programmes representing people with disabilities produced in the UK the USA or elsewhere?

Annex 2

Graphed data represented in text for accessibility

Figure 1 The proportion of sampled television programmes including representations of people with disabilities (%)

	Channels 1-4	Channels 1-5
1993	8	-
1994	11	-
1995	7	-
1996	11	-
1997	15	13
1998	8	7
1999	11	11
2000	12	11
2001	12	12
2002	13	11
2003	13	13
2004	13	12

Figure 2 The proportion of all people represented in sampled television programmes who had a disability (%)

	Channels 1-4	Channels 1-5
1993	0.6	-
1994	0.8	-
1995	0.8	-
1996	0.9	-
1997	1.1	1
1998	0.8	0.7
1999	0.9	0.9
2000	1.1	1.1
2001	1.1	1.1
2002	0.8	0.8
2003	0.9	0.9
2004	1	0.9

Figure 3 Proportion of people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes, by level of appearance (1997-2004)

	Major	Minor	Incidental
1997	1.5	1	0.9
1998	1.1	0.7	0.6
1999	1.2	0.5	0.9
2000	1.2	0.7	1.1
2001	1.1	0.7	1.3
2002	1.7	0.6	0.7
2003	1.4	0.7	0.9
2004	1	0.6	1

Figure 4 Type of disability affecting people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes (1997-2004) (%)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Mobility impairment	26	25	17	21	19	29	22	15
Sensory impairment	14	21	26	14	12	23	20	18
Mental health issues	14	13	10	9	21	6	10	7
Disfigurement/ Physical impairment	4	6	9	5	6	2	4	0
Learning disability	11	7	6	14	1	4	3	8
Other	20	17	22	18	30	16	22	22

Figure 5 Type of disability affecting people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes by level of appearance (2004) (%)

	Major	Minor	Incidental
Mobility impairment	24	12	14
Sensory impairment	5	24	21
Mental health issues	29	6	2
Disfigurement/	14	24	35
Learning disability	5	18	7
Other	24	18	22

Figure 6 Occupational roles filled by people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes, relative to comparison sample (2004)

	Proportion of characters with a disability represented across different occupational roles relative to index (ie. 100, as shown in Figure 7) (%)	Proportion of characters with a disability represented across different occupational roles	Proportion of comparison sample represented across different occupational roles
Under 16	425	17	4
Retired	200	6	3
Political	140	14	10
Educationalist	112.5	9	8
Arts and media	100	17	17
Non-work	100	-	-
Other	78.1	25	32
Police	57.1	4	7
Health and caring	50	4	8
Travel and leisure	42.9	3	7
Blue collar	0	-	3
Unemployed	0	-	1

Figure 7 Relevance of disability to roles filled by people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes (2002-2004) (%)

	2002	2003	2004
Central	40	40	44
Relevant	18	26	19
Incidental	42	34	37

Figure 8 Types of role filled by people/characters with disabilities and a comparison group in sampled programmes (%)

	Comic	Light	Serious	Mixed
1997/1998	9	7	83	1
1999/2000	7	6	86	1
2001/2002	14	3	79	4
2003	7	3	90	0
all years	10	5	83	2
Comparison sample (all years)	8	12	78	2

Figure 9 Proportion of representations of people/characters with disabilities in sampled programmes considered to highlight issues of stereotyping, discrimination or prejudice

	% highlighting issues
2002	42
2003	33
2004	31

Figure 10 The proportion of all people represented in sampled television programmes with disabilities, split by country of production (UK, USA, Other)

	UK	USA	Other
1997/1998	0.8	1.3	1.6
1999/2000	0.9	1.5	0.6
2001/2002	0.9	1.6	0.5
2003/2004	0.9	1.3	0.7