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Section 1

Summary

1. In an increasingly converged communications world, people face greater media choice. Changes in technology mean that parents may have to take more responsibility for what they and their children see and hear on screen and online. Media literacy will provide some of the tools they need to exploit the opportunities offered, to manage their expectations and to protect themselves and their families from the risks involved. Through confident use of communications technologies people will gain a better understanding of the world around them and be able to engage with it.

2. We will work with stakeholders to help focus on the present and future media literacy needs of all members of society. There are many stakeholders who have a key role to play in the promotion of media literacy skills in both adults and children. These include content producers, broadcasters, platform and network providers, educators, Government departments, parents, children’s charities and other organisations. Our role will be to provide leadership and leverage to promote media literacy.

3. As with all areas of Ofcom’s work, there is a need to prioritise the issues that Ofcom will tackle in its first year to maximise impact and benefit. It is proposed that the three key stands of work should be as follows:

4. **Research.** Key to the success of our early work and in defining future priorities is to develop an evidence-base of research. This will help us to identify the issues, to direct our work and inform progress towards achieving our goals.

5. **Connecting, partnering & signposting.** We aim to add value to existing media literacy activity, to stimulate new work and to promote and direct people to advice and guidance concerning new communications technologies.

6. **Labelling.** Viewers and listeners need to have clear, accurate and timely information about the nature of content so that they can make informed choices. Our prime concern is to ensure consistency in the presentation of information related to possible harm and offence, in particular to help protect young and vulnerable people from inappropriate material. This advice can be effectively delivered using a content labelling framework. Ofcom will work with industry players to explore the possibility of creating a common content labelling (information) scheme for electronic audiovisual material.
Section 2

Introduction

What is this consultation about?

7. This consultation sets out Ofcom’s proposals for a definition of, and outlines our priorities for promoting media literacy. We invite stakeholders and others to comment on our plans.

8. Ofcom assumed its powers under the Communications Act 2003 (the Act) on 29 December 2003. The promotion of media literacy is a new duty for Ofcom arising from Section 11 of the Act. (See Annex 4)

What is media literacy?

9. There is no single, agreed definition of media literacy.

10. There are parallels with traditional literacy; the ability to read and write text. Media literacy is the ability to ‘read’ and ‘write’ audiovisual information rather than text. At its simplest level media literacy is the ability to use a range of media and be able to understand the information received.

11. At a more advanced level it moves from merely recognising and comprehending information to the higher order critical thinking skills such as questioning, analysing and evaluating that information. This aspect of media literacy is sometimes referred to as ‘critical viewing’ or ‘critical analysis’.

12. Someone who is media literate may also be able to produce communications in electronic form, such as write emails, create web pages or video materials.

13. So media literacy is a range of skills including the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and produce communications in a variety of forms. Or put simply, the ability to operate the technology to find what you are looking for, to understand that material, to have an opinion about it and where necessary to respond to it. With these skills people will be able to exercise greater choice and be able better to protect themselves and their families from harmful or offensive materials.

14. A media literate person should be able to, for instance, use an electronic programme guide to find the programme they want to watch. They may agree or not with the views of the programme maker, or just enjoy the programme. They may also recognise that the programme maker is trying to influence them in some way. They may interact with the programme using interactive features or by telephone. And they may respond to the programme by writing to or emailing the broadcaster with their point of view. People may also be able to use communications technology to create their own video and audio content.

15. Media literate people should be able to use the internet to find information and accept that sometimes what they find may represent a particular view rather than a statement of objective fact. They will be able to control what they and their children see to avoid being offended. They may also be
confident enough to be able to order and pay for goods and services online and to create their own website and contribute to a chatroom discussion.

16. People’s level of media literacy may change through time as they become more competent and confident in the use of communications technologies and as they ‘consume’ more content. People’s ability to analyse critically the content they consume will depend on a number of factors. There are important roles for educators, broadcasters, internet service providers and others to understand and meet the needs of a wide and diverse range of groups.

**The importance of media literacy**

17. With increasing complexity of technology and wider media choice people will have to take more responsibility for what they and their children see and hear on screen and online. Media literacy will provide some of the tools they need to exploit the opportunities offered, to manage their expectations and to mitigate some of the risks involved.

18. The continued strength of the UK economy is dependent on a skilled workforce and the strength of our society is dependent on active and engaged citizens. In an information-rich society, with goods and services increasingly offered online the skill to exploit the benefits of new communication technologies become ever more important.

19. A media literate person will have the potential to be an efficient worker, an informed consumer and an active citizen. People who are not able to use effectively the new communications technologies will not be able to take full advantage of the benefits they bring and may become marginalised in society.

**Electronic media**

20. Ofcom’s responsibilities do not encompass all aspects of media literacy. The Act makes it clear that our remit only relates to electronic communications broadcast and distributed over networks. Although an important means of communication and, therefore, of media literacy, we do not have a role to play in the promotion of media literacy with respect to print media. There will however, be opportunities to consider relevant cross media links in our work.

**This consultation**

21. In this consultation we seek endorsement of our definition and strategy for promoting media literacy. In outlining the work we propose to do, we also seek to stimulate a process which will help us further clarify our priorities. The questions we ask in Annex 3 give you the opportunity to suggest where you believe the level of media literacy skills need to be amongst different groups. Taken together, the responses to this consultation will help us to more clearly define our research into media literacy skills and needs and suggest where our priorities should be.

22. We think it important for everyone interested in media literacy to see the views of others during consultation. We propose to publish all responses we have received on our website. We would prefer respondents to give us views
that they would be happy to see in public. But if those who have responded to a consultation tell us that some or all of their views must stay confidential, we will respect this.

**Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)**

23. The Communications Act says that we must carry out and publish an RIA:
   - where we are proposing to do anything related to the carrying out of our functions; and
   - it appears to us that the proposal would be likely to do one or more of the following:
     - involve a major change in Ofcom's activities;
     - have a significant impact on businesses operating in markets Ofcom regulates; or
     - have a significant impact on the general public in the UK or a part of the UK.

24. In relation to the proposals outlined in this consultation, Ofcom will operate with the consent of stakeholders. We do not consider these proposals fulfil the criteria set out above. We do not, therefore, propose to undertake a RIA in respect of the promotion of media literacy.
Section 3

What does Ofcom plan to do?

Our Vision

25. Our vision for media literacy is to inform and empower the citizen-consumer in the digital communications age.

Our approach

26. Our work provides an opportunity to focus stakeholders on the future needs of all members of society. Our principal role will be to provide leadership and leverage to help achieve this goal. We may also provide seed corn funding for projects and activities which contribute to our objectives but which would otherwise not proceed. Ofcom has to prioritise its work in this area. We will consult with and involve stakeholders throughout the nations and regions and from all sections of society and of all ages to ensure a diversity of view.

27. Whatever we do to promote media literacy through stakeholders will have to result from persuasion and debate, as Ofcom has no formal power to mandate action to promote media literacy.

Stakeholders

28. There are many stakeholders who have a part to play in improving the level of media literacy in both adults and children. Content producers, broadcasters, platform and network providers all have a responsibility in this area and are well placed to offer advice, support and guidance to their customers.

29. Formal education plays a vital role in laying the foundations of media literacy. Schools, colleges and universities offer opportunities for the development of skills at a variety of levels. They are also well placed to undertake research to inform future priorities and challenges. Informal educational opportunities in libraries, UK Online and community art centres give people beyond school age a chance to access technology and experience the potential it offers.

30. The Home Office, the Department for Education and Skills, Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Department of Trade and Industry all have areas of responsibility related to media literacy.

31. Parents, carers, children’s charities, viewer and listener organisations and others are rightly focussed on issues of harm and offence and protecting the young and vulnerable people from illegal, harmful and inappropriate materials.

32. A range of organisations such as ICSTIS (for premium rate telephony), Internet Service Providers Association, British Board of Film Classification, ELSPA (for the games industry), The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) and various EU projects related to the Safer Internet Action Plan all have their part to play in providing users with the information and advice they need to benefit from new communications technologies.
Section 4

Our Priorities

Research

33. Key to the success of our early work in promoting media literacy and defining future priorities is to develop an evidence base of research to identify the issues, to direct our work and inform progress towards achieving our goals.

34. Research carried out by the ITC, BSC and others\(^1\) found that "little research on adults’ awareness and understanding of the new and changing media and information environment has been conducted, so much remains to be discovered and understood, this being crucial as increasing responsibility for accessing content is being devolved to the public."

35. “Clearly, a well-defined vision - of the key dimensions of consumers’ skills and abilities, of the minimum and desired levels of literacy required, of the population sectors which risk being left out, of the most appropriate means of both promoting and evaluating media literacy – must be debated and agreed if media literacy are to reach satisfactory levels across the whole population.”

36. In consultation with other interested parties we will conduct research to begin to answer some of these questions and inform future policy debate.

37. Our research will focus on gaining a greater understanding of the levels of media literacy in all sections of society. Some groups, such as children, young people, parents and older people may have particular needs. Some may be vulnerable or risk being disadvantaged. This research will identify which sections of society are at risk and where Ofcom needs to focus its resources.

38. We will explore barriers to greater media literacy. If access is a prerequisite to gaining competence and confidence in the use of communications technologies, we need to know what physical, cognitive, social, economic or technical barriers exist. And which sectors of society are at greatest risk of being excluded? This research will help identify which stakeholders are best placed to deliver solutions to overcoming barriers to greater media literacy.

39. We will consider people’s attitudes and expectations when viewing and listening to materials. This work will help content providers to supply information about the nature of materials so as to reduce the chance of causing harm or offense.

40. We need a better understanding of people’s attitudes and experiences when using tools to manage content. There are tools available to help viewer’s access and control content including electronic programme guides (EPG) and filtering tools for Internet content. Our research will help producers of both

\(^1\) Assessing the media literacy of UK adults, a review of the academic literature. Sonia Livingstone with Nancy Thumim, March 2003. ITC, BSC and NIACE
hardware and software to focus clearly on the needs of the users and help them to produce tools which are effective and easy to use.

41. This strand of work will also make a valuable contribution to understanding the higher order levels of skills particularly related to critical viewing. Where appropriate, Ofcom will contribute to research initiated by others which will inform our understanding in key areas.

42. By way of example, the recent interest in the promotion of food to children has triggered a research project in the area. This research involves a review of current evidence on the effect of food promotion and advertising in particular on children. In parallel we will undertake qualitative research on the key messages that children take out of different types of food promotion and what parents and children say influences their food preferences and purchase behaviour and the role of food promotion and advertising in these. In this and other future research projects Ofcom can contribute to a greater understanding of people’s critical viewing skills.

43. Some of this research will include long running studies of people’s changing attitudes and expectations of content delivered on different platforms. In particular, we will wish to be informed about emerging media literacy and protection issues such as the impact of personal video recorders, 3G mobile Internet access and location based services.

44. In particular we will try to identify potential barriers to the evolution and use of effective access tools particularly on mobile Internet platforms.

45. Annex 3 of this consultation document includes a number of questions relating to our proposed work to promote media literacy. Responses to questions 5 to 8 will help our research programme. These questions ask for your opinion on the skill needs of different sections of society, including those who may otherwise be excluded from the benefits of new communications technologies. We would also like to know what you think are the barriers people might face in their efforts to become more media literate.

46. We also propose to undertake research to inform and direct the two other main strands Connecting, Partnering & Signposting and Labelling of audiovisual content.

**Connecting, Partnering & Signposting**

47. We aim to add value to existing media literacy activity, stimulate new work and promote and direct people to advice and guidance concerning new communications technologies. In this strand of work Ofcom can have an immediate impact in raising the profile of media literacy and putting the issues firmly on stakeholder’s agenda.

Connecting

48. Ofcom’s key role in this area will be to bring interested parties together to maximise their efforts to promote media literacy.

49. There are many projects and initiatives in education and elsewhere which add to our knowledge and understanding of media literacy particularly in relation
of critical viewing. Ofcom will promote these initiatives and encourage collaborative working in this area.

50. For example, teachers report difficulty gaining access and rights to use appropriate visual materials to support their media literacy teaching. Ofcom is in a position to explore with a range of stakeholders more effective ways of making resources available for use in education.

Partnering

51. Ofcom will be in a position to join in partnership with other stakeholders on a range of projects which address unmet needs identified by research.

52. In particular, we will seek to support initiatives to encourage the elderly and the socially or physically disadvantaged to gain experience of new communications technologies.

53. These partnerships may include work lead by the:

- The UK Film Council, bfi, Channel 4 and BBC’s Media Literacy Task Force – Ofcom is a partner in the steering group and will conduct joint research to support the Task Force's work;

- The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) – Ofcom is an active member of the National Steering Group for Adult Learners Week and will encourage the inclusion of media literacy as a theme in a forthcoming campaign;

- Media Smart, the advertising industry initiative to increase children’s awareness of issues surrounding advertising – Ofcom offers advice and guidance where appropriate and will promote the use of their classroom resources;

- We are exploring ways in which we can contribute to the work of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (formerly re:source), particularly how we can work with them in relation to the knowledge web and their proposals for a common information environment;

- Home Office Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet – Ofcom is a member of the Task Force and contributes to the work of the subgroup on child protection measures;

- Cyberspace Research Unit, University of Central Lancashire, the proposed National Awareness Node of the EU Safer Internet Action Plan – Ofcom supported the UCL bid and will support and promote the future work of the National Awareness Node; and

- The Internet Watch Foundation – Ofcom embraces the work of the IWF and will offer research and promotional support.
Signposting

54. The media literacy landscape is wide and people do not always know the range of activity going on or where to find it. We will help raise the profile of existing initiatives.

55. Ofcom’s will also direct people to advice and guidance on a range of issues related to communications technologies.

56. For instance, research suggests that despite the availability of high quality information related to Internet safety, parents still remain largely unaware of how to manage their children’s experiences online. Ofcom will encourage stakeholders to provide advice and guidance to their customers on matters of safety and best practice, particularly where information is not currently widely available.

57. Ofcom will encourage the creation of a portal, or use part of its website to facilitate this strand of work.

Labelling

58. The strands of work outlined above represent the first stages of a long-term process of increasing our understanding and effective promotion of a wide range of media literacy activity. However, this strand of work represents an opportunity for Ofcom to encourage industry to deliver a specific output and would facilitate important progress in achieving our vision of informing and empowering citizens and consumers in the digital communications age.

59. In a ‘converged media world’ viewers and listeners might get their ‘content’ via satellite, cable, digital terrestrial television or digital audio broadcast. It may be subscription, free to air, encrypted or PIN-protected. Online content may be accessed via premium rate telephone lines, over the Internet or streamed by broadband connection. Programmes can be watched and listened to on television and radio sets, on our PCs or on 3G mobiles. Programmes may be available on-demand at anytime or time-shifted by personal video recorders. Content will also come to us on VHS, CD, MP3 and DVD. Some of this content will be regulated, some not. The potential for confusion, frustration and offence is great.

60. We have to protect the young and vulnerable from inappropriate and harmful content from whatever source. Ofcom and its Codes will do some of it. The industry, in the form of self and co-regulation will also take some responsibility. But it will fall to all of us to take more responsibility for what we and our families watch and listen to. We will all become gatekeepers for content coming into our homes.

61. We have to become more ‘active’ viewers and listeners. Some may need to be more active than others: those with young children may need particular help.

62. We need to know more about the nature of programmes and how they come to be on our screens and radios. We need to know how to get the

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2 *Assessing Internet Content Rating and Filtering Tool Effectiveness*. I2 media research and Opta, December 2003, ITC
programmes we want, and how to keep off our screen and radios programmes that we do not want. In short, we will have to take more control of our viewing and listening.

63. To enable this, viewers and listeners need to have clear, accurate and timely advice about the nature of content so that they can make an informed choice. This advice can be effectively delivered using a content labelling framework.

64. Ofcom will challenge the industry to consider creating a common content labelling (information) scheme for electronic audiovisual material delivered across all platforms. With industry agreement Ofcom will establish a cross-media working group (including the BBC, PSB commercial broadcasters, BSkyB, BBFC, Mobile industry, ISPA, ELSPA and others) on labelling as a first step.

65. The Netherlands was the first country to introduce a uniform classification system for the audiovisual industry. Research3 by the Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation indicates that over 80 per cent of parents of children aged between four and 15 want some sort of classification of audiovisual products. A similar proportion of parents also said they would use such a system if it were available. In particular, parents want to know if productions contain violence, discrimination, drug abuse, frightening scenes, strong language and sex. Research4 by the BBFC confirms these findings and suggests these categories should be expanded to include some indication of frequency or intensity.

66. Recent research by the BBC also suggests that viewers of television programmes prefer information about programmes to be delivered to them as clear text messages describing content which may cause offence.

67. In the digital age, viewers and listeners will become ever more reliant on the content provider to offer information, via labelling, about the nature of content. Whilst some information included in labels may facilitate searching, our prime concern is to ensure consistency in presenting information related to possible harm and offence and protecting young and vulnerable people from inappropriate material.

68. Already, however, there is a divergence in the regulatory frameworks and rules that apply and different sectors use different labels and are promoting different solutions. Without some form of intervention there is the likelihood that this will result in multiple, conflicting label systems which will confuse.

69. Ofcom has a critical role to play to ensure consistency and accuracy of information about content in order to inform and empower viewers and listeners in the digital future.

3 http://www.kijkwijzer.nl/engels/ekijkwijzer.html
4 Sense & Sensibilities: Public Opinion & the BBFC Guidelines, September 2000
Section 5

Responding to this consultation

How to respond

Ofcom invites written views and comments on the issues raised in this document, to be made by 5pm on Tuesday 10 August 2004.

We strongly prefer to receive responses as email attachments, in Microsoft Word format, as this helps us to process the responses quickly and efficiently. We would also be grateful if you could assist us by completing a response cover sheet (see Annex 2) to indicate whether or not there are confidentiality issues. The cover sheet can be downloaded from the ‘Consultations’ section of our website.

Please can you send your response to medialiteracy@ofcom.org.uk.

Responses may alternatively be posted or faxed to the address below, marked with the title of the consultation.

Sara Winter
Content and Standards
Fifth Floor
Ofcom
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

Fax: 020 7981 3806

Note that we do not need a hard copy in addition to an electronic version. Also note that we will not routinely acknowledge receipt of responses.

It would be helpful if your response could include direct answers to the questions asked in this document, which are listed together at Annex 3. It would also help if you can explain why you hold your views, and how Ofcom’s proposals would impact on you.

Further information

If you have any questions about the issues raised in this consultation, or need advice on the appropriate form of response, please contact Robin Blake on 020 7981 3869.

Confidentiality

Ofcom thinks it is important for everyone interested in an issue to see the views expressed by consultation respondents. We will therefore usually publish all responses on our website, www.ofcom.org.uk, as soon as possible after the consultation period has ended.

All comments will be treated as non-confidential unless respondents specify that part or all of the response is confidential and should not be disclosed. Please place any
Ofcom’s strategy and priorities for the promotion of media literacy

confidential parts of a response in a separate annex, so that non-confidential parts may be published along with the respondent’s identity.

Please also note that copyright in responses will be assumed to be relinquished unless specifically retained.

Next steps

Following the end of the consultation period, Ofcom intends to publish a statement around the end of August.

Please note that you can register to get automatic notifications of when Ofcom documents are published, at http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/subscribe/select_list.htm.

Ofcom’s consultation processes

Ofcom is keen to make responding to consultations easy, and has published some consultation principles (see Annex 1) which it seeks to follow, including on the length of consultations.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how Ofcom conducts its consultations, please call our consultation helpdesk on 020 7981 3003 or e-mail us at consult@ofcom.org.uk. We would particularly welcome thoughts on how Ofcom could more effectively seek the views of those groups or individuals, such as small businesses or particular types of residential consumers, whose views are less likely to be obtained in a formal consultation.

If you would like to discuss these issues, or Ofcom’s consultation processes more generally, you can alternatively contact Philip Rutnam, Partner, Competition and Strategic Resources, who is Ofcom’s consultation champion:

Philip Rutnam
Ofcom
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA
Tel: 020 7981 3585
Fax: 020 7981 3333
E-mail: philip.rutnam@ofcom.org.uk
Annex 1

Ofcom’s consultation principles

Ofcom has published the following seven principles that it will follow for each written consultation:

Before the consultation

1. Where possible, we will hold informal talks with people and organisations before announcing a big consultation to find out whether we are thinking in the right direction. If we do not have enough time to do this, we will hold an open meeting to explain our proposals shortly after announcing the consultation.

During the consultation

2. We will be clear about who we are consulting, why, on what questions and for how long.

3. We will make the consultation document as short and simple as possible with a summary of no more than two pages. We will try to make it as easy as possible to give us a written response. If the consultation is complicated, we may provide a shortened version for smaller organisations or individuals who would otherwise not be able to spare the time to share their views.

4. We will normally allow ten weeks for responses, other than on dispute resolution.

5. There will be a person within Ofcom who will be in charge of making sure we follow our own guidelines and reach out to the largest number of people and organisations interested in the outcome of our decisions. This individual (who we call the consultation champion) will also be the main person to contact with views on the way we run our consultations.

6. If we are not able to follow one of these principles, we will explain why. This may be because a particular issue is urgent. If we need to reduce the amount of time we have set aside for a consultation, we will let those concerned know beforehand that this is a ‘red flag consultation’ which needs their urgent attention.

After the consultation

7. We will look at each response carefully and with an open mind. We will give reasons for our decisions and will give an account of how the views of those concerned helped shape those decisions.
Annex 2

Consultation response cover sheet

A2.1 In the interests of transparency, we will publish all consultation responses in full on our website, [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk), as soon as possible after the consultation period has ended, unless a respondent specifies that all or part of their response is confidential. We will also refer to the contents of a response when explaining our decision, unless we are asked not to.

A2.2 We have produced a cover sheet for responses (see below) and would be very grateful if you could send one with your response. This will speed up our processing of responses, and help to maintain confidentiality by allowing you to state very clearly what you don’t want to be published. We will keep your completed cover sheets confidential.

A2.3 We strongly prefer to receive responses in the form of a Microsoft Word attachment to an e-mail. Our website therefore includes an electronic copy of this cover sheet, which you can download from the ‘Consultations’ section of our website.

A2.4 Please put any confidential parts of your response in a separate annex to your response, so that they are clearly identified. This can include information such as your personal background and experience. If you want your name, contact details, or job title to remain confidential, please provide them in your cover sheet only so that we don’t have to edit your response.
Cover sheet for response to an Ofcom consultation

BASIC DETAILS

Consultation title: 

To (Ofcom contact): 

Name of respondent: 

Representing (self or organisation/s): 

Address (if not received by email): 

CONFIDENTIALITY

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?

Nothing   Name/contact details/job title
Whole response Organisation
Part of the response If there is no separate annex, which parts?

If you want part of your response, your name or your organisation to be confidential, can Ofcom still publish a reference to the contents of your response (including, for any confidential parts, a general summary that does not disclose the specific information or enable you to be identified)?

Yes No

DECLARATION

I confirm that the correspondence supplied with this cover sheet is a formal consultation response. It can be published in full on Ofcom’s website, unless otherwise specified on this cover sheet. If I have sent my response by email, Ofcom can disregard any standard email text about not disclosing email contents and attachments.

Name Signed (if hard copy)
Annex 3

Consultation questions

We would welcome your general comments on the proposals outlined here. And in particular, your comments with regard to the three proposed strands of work (Research, Connecting, Partnering & Signposting and Labelling).

Question 1: What is your view of Ofcom’s proposed definition of media literacy?

Question 2: What do you consider to be the key role/s of media literacy in the UK?

Question 3: Do you agree that each of the 3 proposed strands of work (Research, Connecting, Partnering & Signposting and Labelling) address an important element of the media literacy landscape?

Question 4: Are there any specific areas which you consider to be a priority that we have not considered here as part of our early media literacy work?

Question 5: What do you think are the types and levels of media literacy skills necessary to enable citizen-consumers to effectively manage and enjoy the opportunities offered by new communication technologies? How do these differ for particular sectors of society?

Question 6: What do you see as being the key barriers to achieving appropriate levels of media literacy in the UK?

Question 7: Should any of the following groups with potentially particular needs in relation to media literacy feature as a priority for Ofcom’s work in media literacy and why?
  - Vulnerable children
  - Vulnerable adults
  - Disabled people
  - Elderly people
  - People on low income
  - People in different parts of UK
  - People from different ethnic communities
  - People living in Rural areas
  - People living in Urban areas

Question 8: Are there any other areas in which you feel that Ofcom should be conducting research in order to inform its media literacy work?

Question 9: What are the key initiatives, projects or resources that Ofcom should have regard to in promoting media literacy?

Question 10: Do you support the need for a common labelling system for audiovisual content?
Annex 4

Section 11 Communications Act (2003)

Ofcom assumed its powers under the Communications Act 2003 (the “Act”) on 29 December 2003. The promotion of media literacy is a new duty for Ofcom arising from Section 11 of the Act.

Media literacy

11 Duty to promote media literacy

(1) It shall be the duty of OFCOM to take such steps, and to enter into such arrangements, as appear to them calculated-

(a) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public understanding of the nature and characteristics of material published by means of the electronic media;

(b) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public awareness and understanding of the processes by which such material is selected, or made available, for publication by such means;

(c) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which access to material published by means of the electronic media is or can be regulated;

(d) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which persons to whom such material is made available may control what is received and of the uses to which such systems may be put; and

(e) to encourage the development and use of technologies and systems for regulating access to such material, and for facilitating control over what material is received, that are both effective and easy to use.

(2) In this section, references to the publication of anything by means of the electronic media are references to its being-

(a) broadcast so as to be available for reception by members of the public or of a section of the public; or

(b) distributed by means of an electronic communications network to members of the public or of a section of the public.