OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Programme Information Research

An investigation of current attitudes and behaviours towards programme information

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Section 1

Foreword

Ofcom is the independent regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services.

Under Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom is required to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public understanding of the nature and characteristics of material published by the electronic media and its various delivery systems. This forms part of our work in the field of media literacy as outlined in the Ofcom Annual Plan for 2005/2006. Ofcom defines media literacy as the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts.

In addition to these media literacy obligations, under Section 3 (2 e) of the Communications Act 2003 Ofcom has a duty to apply adequate protection to members of the public from the inclusion of offensive and harmful material in such services.

In 2004 Ofcom published the consultation document 'Ofcom's Strategy and Priorities for the Promotion of Media Literacy'. The consultation made a call to the UK audio-visual industries to consider establishing a common content labelling (information) scheme for material delivered across all platforms so as to give consumers an idea of the nature of content provided.

Following the consultation, Ofcom established an Audio Visual Content Information Working Group (AVCIWG). This group of stakeholders and other interested parties was brought together to inform our work in this area. The AVCIWG includes representatives from the broadcasting sector (including the British Board of Film Classification); the internet and mobile phone industries; the games industry and consumer organisations.

The aim of this research is to provide evidence of consumer needs and preferences and to inform Ofcom's thinking in this area so as to give guidance to stakeholders.

Section 2

Executive summary

Ofcom commissioned this research in order to understand the extent to which viewers utilise the current provision of content information at the point of consumption, and whether these methods of informing viewers will remain viable in the future in their ability to protect people from potentially harmful or offensive material. The research was quantitative in nature with a multi-phased methodology that was designed to mirror the consideration process that takes place when viewers think about these issues.

This executive summary is based on the key research objectives.

Viewers use a wide range of information sources to provide information on programme content.

- Printed material dominates as an information source – whether this is weekly television listing magazines, weekly or daily newspapers.
- Use of the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) and flicking through channels in multichannel households is as frequently cited as printed material.

The first phase of the research asked for viewer's initial thoughts on a number of questions related to programme information

The majority of viewers feel that current programme information sources are adequate.

- Over half of people feel there is currently sufficient programme information and a majority of these are largely satisfied.
- However, just over a third of adults claim they would like more information on programme content prior to viewing, with more people wanting "a little more" rather than "a lot more".
- There were no major differences by platform user type (terrestrial versus multichannel versus Personal Video Recorder (PVR) versus Video On Demand (VOD)), suggesting that perceived needs do not change with time-shifted viewing.
- However, there is a stronger desire for more information about content on the smaller cable and satellite channels.

However, half of UK adults express some level of concern regarding programme content.

- When asked directly, half of adult television viewers expressed some level of concern regarding what is shown on television these days.
    - The older the viewer, the more concerned they were.
    - Female viewers were more likely to be offended than their male counterparts.
- Those in terrestrial households were more likely to be concerned than those in multichannel homes, however as the former tended to comprise older viewers, this could be an age-related finding – not a platform finding.
- Violence, bad language and sexual content were the issues most likely to offend.

- A third of people claimed to be offended at least once a month, 1 in 5 claimed to be offended less than every 6 months, and a further 1 in 5 claimed to be never offended by what they see on television.

Programme information is considered helpful by many viewers in its ability to mitigate offence.

- Over half of all adult television viewers claimed that pre-transmission information helped to reduce potential offence.
- Programme information's ability to mitigate offence was felt more strongly by parents and those in multichannel households.

There are stronger needs and concerns among parents on behalf of their children.

- Parents claimed they would like more programme information when considering viewing decision made for their children. However, they still showed high levels of satisfaction with current information.
- Parents were more aware of content control measures such as the 9.00pm watershed and age classification for films, than non-parents.
- Around half of parents spontaneously claimed they had some concerns regarding television content when considering their child's viewing habits. This rose to three quarters when prompted.
- The same issues that offend them as adults, offend them as parents.
- Parents were likely to send their children out of the room if something they considered harmful or offensive was on television.

Once respondents had considered the issues in more depth they were again asked for their views.

Deliberation led to a greater desire for programme information across all channels - particularly for terrestrial viewers.

- There was an increase in dissatisfaction with existing programme information post deliberation.
- Perceptions of programme information's ability to mitigate offence increased significantly after the consideration period.

When given a choice, viewers express a preference for on-screen text based programme information.

- Viewers were presented with the options of text based information, symbols, age ratings or the existing EPG information.
- On balance respondents preferred the on-screen text based information option shown to them, both before the deliberation period and after it.
- Text was thought to give more detail as to the nature of the programme content.
- The vast majority of viewers would also prefer all channels to use the same information system.

Next steps

This research does not provide overwhelming evidence of a need at the present time for more programme information, particularly for the main broadcasters. However, the continued diversification of sources of content (e.g. television provided over the internet or mobile television) and the expected rise in PVR ownership and the availability of on demand content, may lead to consumers needing more support in managing their own and their family's viewing in the future. Consistent with Ofcom's regulatory principle to always seek the least intrusive regulatory mechanisms to achieve its policy objectives we consider voluntary action by industry, with the support of Ofcom, to be the most effective course at this time..

Ofcom proposes to invite stakeholders – through the Audio Visual Content Information Working Group or similar representative body - to consider the creation of a common framework to be used across the audiovisual content industries on a self regulatory, voluntary basis. This framework will then be made available to all interested parties - and Ofcom would encourage it to be used, although its use would be voluntary.

Ofcom will encourage stakeholder to address the information needs related to

- content featuring violence, bad language and sexual content

By providing

- information at the point of choice (through selection screens, EPGs and print listings etc)
- information in the form of consistent text labels (related to the nature, frequency and intensity of materials likely to offend).

Consistent use of language to describe content will assist viewers in making judgements about the suitability of materials.

Ofcom recognise the editorial and technical differences in the provision of audiovisual content on different platforms. We also recognise that the viewing experience and expectations across different platforms could suggest different ways of achieving the overall goal of providing adequate information about content to allow viewers to make informed choices.

Section 3

Background to the research

Traditionally, viewers have been protected from potentially problematic material through a variety of means. These include a consistency of scheduling by channel (which establishes viewers' expectations regarding the type of programming content on certain channels) and provisions within the Broadcast Code – such as the 9pm watershed and pre-transmission announcements.

However, changes in audiovisual content distribution and creation are driving changes in consumption, potentially rendering traditional models of content control increasingly less effective. Key changes include:

- growth in multichannel television
- growth in on-demand and time-shifted viewing
- traditional television content being created for multiple platforms
- new audiovisual content being developed for new platforms
- consumers beginning to make their own content

Combined, these changes may decrease the ability of consumers to rely on existing content control measures to protect themselves and their families from harmful or offensive materials. Consumers have the potential to 'time-shift' their viewing choices 'off-schedule' thus rendering the traditional methods of content control less effective. There is therefore potential for confusion, frustration and offence if, for example, programming originally intended to be broadcast post 9pm is watched at a later date during the day with children present. Therefore, as a result of these changes, Ofcom needs to understand the extent to which viewers and listeners utilise the current provision on content information at the point of consumption, and whether these methods will remain viable in the future in their ability to protect people from potentially harmful or offensive material.

A number of pieces of audience research in recent years have explored issues, attitudes (and to some extent preferences) towards audiovisual content labelling across various media.

The ITC's/BSC's *Striking a Balance* (2002) indicated there is a general desire for content labelling, and that as more channels and services become available, needs and concerns were likely to increase. Respondents felt that content labelling empowers viewers, parents in particular, with the ability to make informed choices.

This report details the findings of the quantitative survey commissioned by Ofcom, conducted by BMRB (the British Market Research Bureau), designed to measure consumer attitudes and behaviours towards programme information.

As a starting point and for reasons of simplicity, the research focused primarily on content in the television environment. Ofcom recognise that there may be platform differences and these may need to be explored in future research.

3.1 Research objectives

The overall aim of the research is to provide guidance on whether audiovisual content information is considered desirable among television viewers on different platforms (i.e. terrestrial versus multichannel versus PVR (Personal Video Recorder)[1] versus Video-on-Demand)[2]. And to better understand the potential impact of on demand and time-shifted viewing on peoples' concerns for themselves and their families regarding potentially harmful or offensive content.

The key questions the research was designed to answer included:

- From where do people currently get their programme information?
- Do people feel currently available programme information is adequate or do they want more programme information to inform their viewing?
- Do people act on programme information?
- Will people have greater programme information needs in the future?
- Does programme information mitigate offence?
- Are they concerned about what is currently shown on television and what concerns them?
- Do opinions towards programme information change on detailed consideration?
- What type of content information format would they prefer in the future (i.e. text versus age ratings versus symbols versus no change)?

3.2 Methodology

Earlier research indicated that peoples' top-of-mind opinions towards programme information and content labelling can change once they have had a chance to think about the issues in detail. It was therefore important to build this deliberative process into the quantitative methodology so that responses gathered accurately represented peoples' true feelings on the subject. A multi-phased approach was developed in order to allow for the deliberative process to take place and be reflected in the results of the research. The research process started with an initial face-to-face interview with respondents in their homes and a follow-up telephone interview at a later date once they had a chance to think about the needs of programme information in the context of their own viewing decisions.

The survey sample was recruited to allow for analysis of core sub-groups of interest (for example: parents, young, old, single, multichannel). The research also boosted sub groups of PVR users and VOD users (video-on-demand) to ensure there were sufficient numbers of time-shifted viewers to provide robust findings.

[1] A personal video recorder is a device that records television in digital format on a hard drive. TiVo and Sky+ are examples of PVRs.

[2] A service in which the viewer can request and control a copy of a programme

Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**
Recruitment, 20 minute face to face survey which covers all three core elements above (n = 1225)	In-home task-based exercise that encourages heightened awareness of content issues	Post deliberation telephone interview (15 minutes) – includes similar questions to phase 1 in order to measure potential changes in opinion (n = 709)

Respondents were over-recruited at phase 1 to ensure a robust sample at phase 3.

At phase 1 there were 1225 completed interviews, plus a boost of 112 VOD users. The 1225 total includes 178 PVR users. By phase 3 the total number or respondents completing all 3 stages of the interview had dropped to 709 respondents, plus 30 VOD user boost interviews. The 709 total includes 98 PVR owners. The reason for the fall in numbers is due to people's unavailability at the phase 3, which could be due to a variety of reasons, including being away on holiday or simply loosing interest in participation.

Fieldwork was conducted between 4th August – 10th October 2005.

The sample split by platform was as follows:

	Terrestrial only viewers (162)	**Multichannel viewers (547)**	**PVR owners (98)**	**VOD boost[3] (phase 1=112) (phase 3=30)**
	%	%	%	%
Male	40	51	55	65
Female	60	49	45	35
16-34	20	35	42	47
35-54	30	36	40	46
55+	50	29	18	7
ABC1	53	54	64	81
C2DE	47	46	36	19
Children	23	34	38	37
No children	77	66	62	63

[3] **Note**: because the VOD user group at stage 3 is small (n=30) the sample profile and question responses within the report are from the larger stage 1 sample (n=112).

Throughout the report there are references to findings being “at a significant level”. This means that the results are statistically significant to the 95% level. In other words, if the research was to be conducted 100 times, 95 times out of 100 you would achieve the same results.

The sample profile indicates that:

- Terrestrial viewers tend to be older (50% are aged 55+) and more female (60%)
- Multichannel viewers tend to be younger (35% are 16-34) and one-third (34%) have children
- PVR owners are younger still (42% are 16-34), more up-market (64% ABC1), and slightly more male (55%)
- VOD users are the youngest group (47% 16-34), predominately ABC1 (81%) and more male (65%)

These platform profiles should be kept in mind when considering the results as there are some important influences:

- Age is strongly influential when considering attitudes towards offence i.e. there are higher levels of offence among older age groups and lower levels among younger people.
- PVR and VOD users tend to be younger AND male (and potentially contain more early adopters) – therefore their attitudes towards content issues are more likely to be a consequence of their demographic profile than influenced by the technological environment and time-shifted patterns of viewing behaviour.

Section 4

Current programme information needs

This section looks at viewers' current usage of programme information for guiding programme making decisions. It also looks at satisfaction with existing levels of programme information. The section then looks at type and frequency of offence.

The analysis throughout the section focuses on the differences, if any, between terrestrial and multichannel homes. Where relevant, PVR and VOD household responses are also noted. The differences between terrestrial, multichannel, PVR and VOD households allow us to look at households at different stages along the digital pathway in order to understand if viewers in households with higher levels of time-shifted viewing (e.g. PVR and VOD households) have different attitudes towards content than those households who are tending to watch more 'scheduled programming'.

We take a more detailed look at parents in the next chapter.

Other demographic differences are pointed out where appropriate.

4.1 Sources of programme information used to inform viewing decisions

Viewers use a wide range of information sources to help them plan their television viewing including traditional print media, electronic sources including the EPG and teletext, as well as more informal methods such as channel flicking and familiarity with programme scheduling. It should be noted that channel flicking is a method of finding programmes but does not provide any information about the nature of the programme content – the implication of this activity is that there is risk of viewing harmful or offensive material at random whilst flicking channels after the watershed.

People are generally still reliant on print media as their main sources of programme information, particularly the older age groups (64% of those aged 55+ use television listing magazines or magazine and newspaper supplements as their main source of programme information compared to 34% of 16-34 year olds, who also show a preference for the EPG). There are differences in multichannel and terrestrial homes, largely driven by the availability of the EPG within multichannel households. Informal channel flicking is also more prominent in multichannel homes. This is likely to be driven by more channel choice, thus this method operates as a quick method of finding programmes of interest.

Figure 1

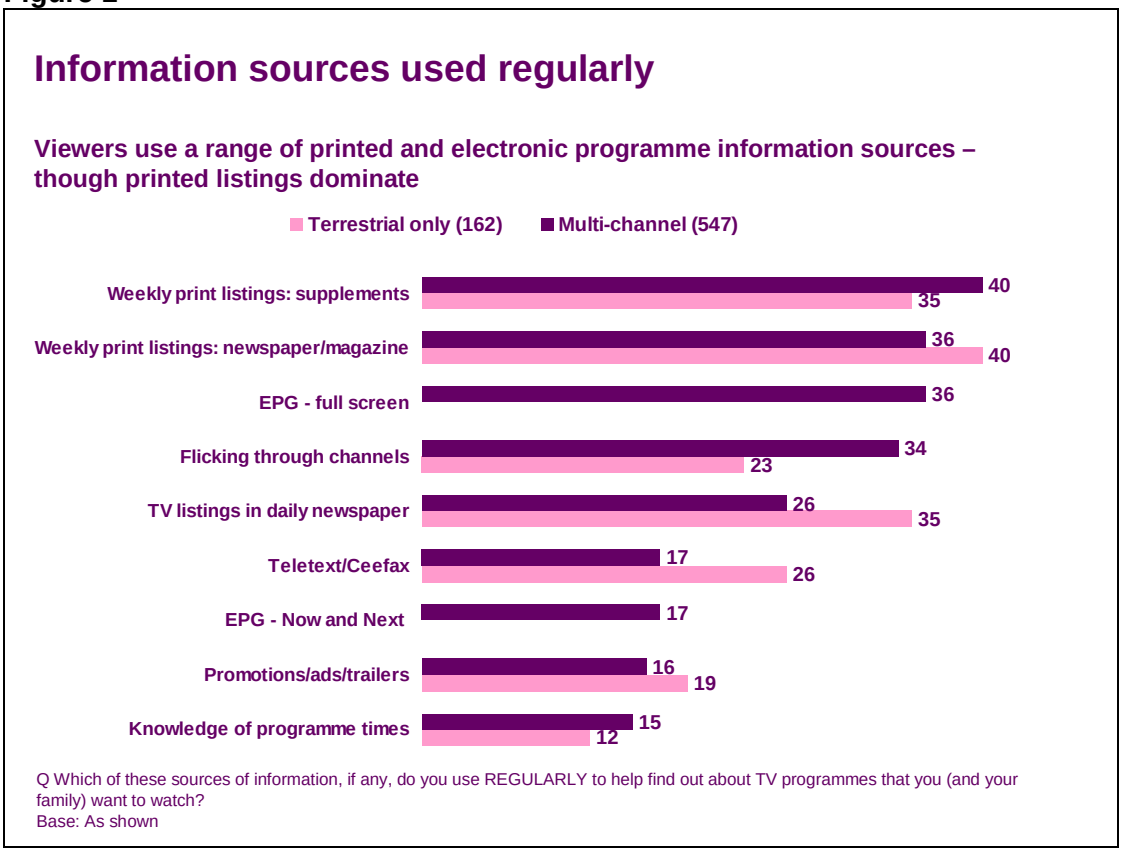


Figure 1 indicates there are some differences in behaviour observed in programme information sources used by platform. This is largely driven by the additional availability of the EPG within multichannel homes, alongside the greater need for programme information given the wider availability of channels. This is clearly demonstrated though the data when looking at the average number of programme information sources by household:

Terrestrial	2.26
Multichannel	2.86
PVR	3.12

In terms of demographic differences, older viewers are more likely to use printed material to assess programme content (46% mention weekly television listings in newspaper or magazine supplements). This is likely to be influenced by the older age profile of terrestrial homes (50% of terrestrial households are made up of people aged 55+) and therefore not having access to the EPG. Conversely, younger viewers were more likely than average to flick through channels (40%), use the now-and-next EPG option (22%) or teletext (26%). This could reflect a stronger preference for electronic media information and/or be a reflection that more younger people live in multichannel households.

When multichannel respondents were asked which programme information sources they used for the less well-known cable and satellite channels (which are usually not covered in print listings), it was found that information came mainly from the on-screen menu

(34%) and channel flicking (34%). This may reflect the limited availability of programme information for these channels.

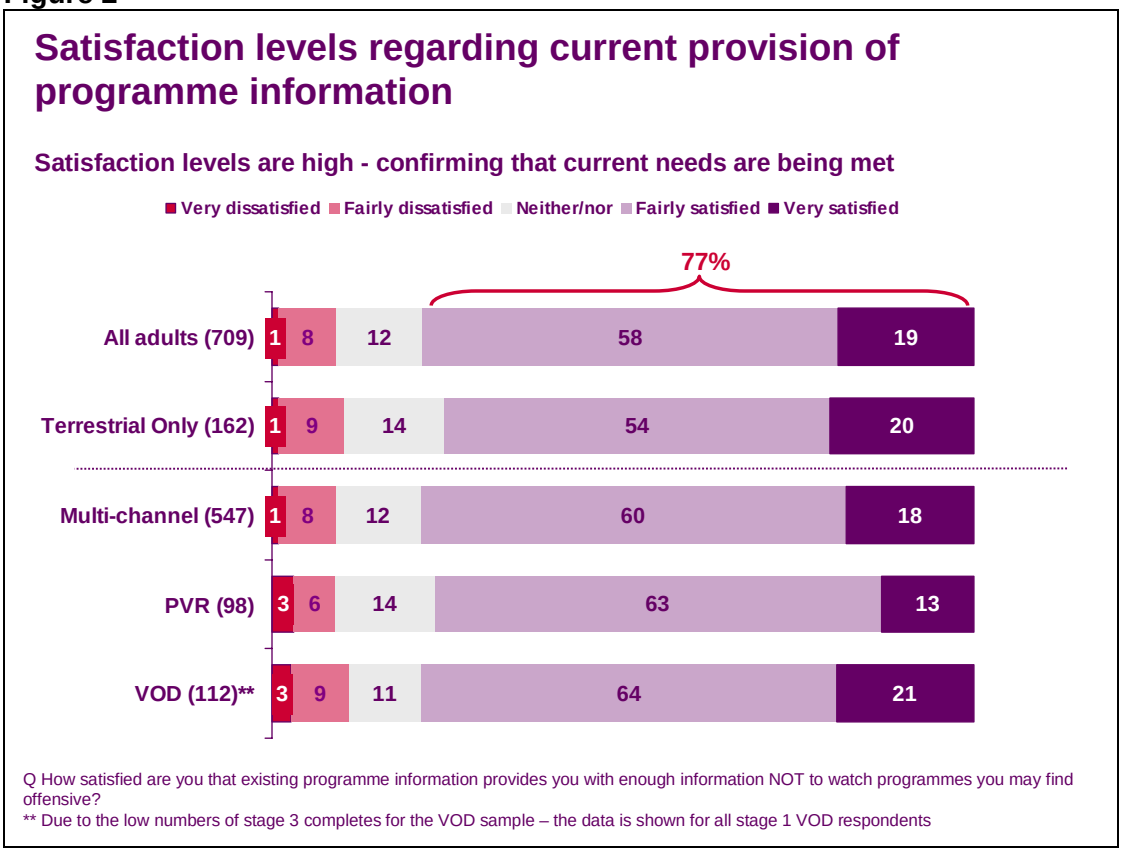
4.2 Satisfaction with existing sources of information

The majority of adults in the sample (77%) claimed they were either fairly or very satisfied with existing sources' ability to deliver information on potentially harmful or offensive programming. Only a small minority were very dissatisfied with existing sources of information providing sufficient information NOT to watch potentially harmful or offensive programming. This suggests that, on first consideration, current needs are felt to be met.

There were no major differences by platform user type (terrestrial, multichannel, PVR, VOD) indicating that on top-of-mind consideration satisfaction levels do not vary among viewers where a larger proportion of their viewing is 'off schedule'.

There were no significant differences between the various demographic or viewer types.

Figure 2



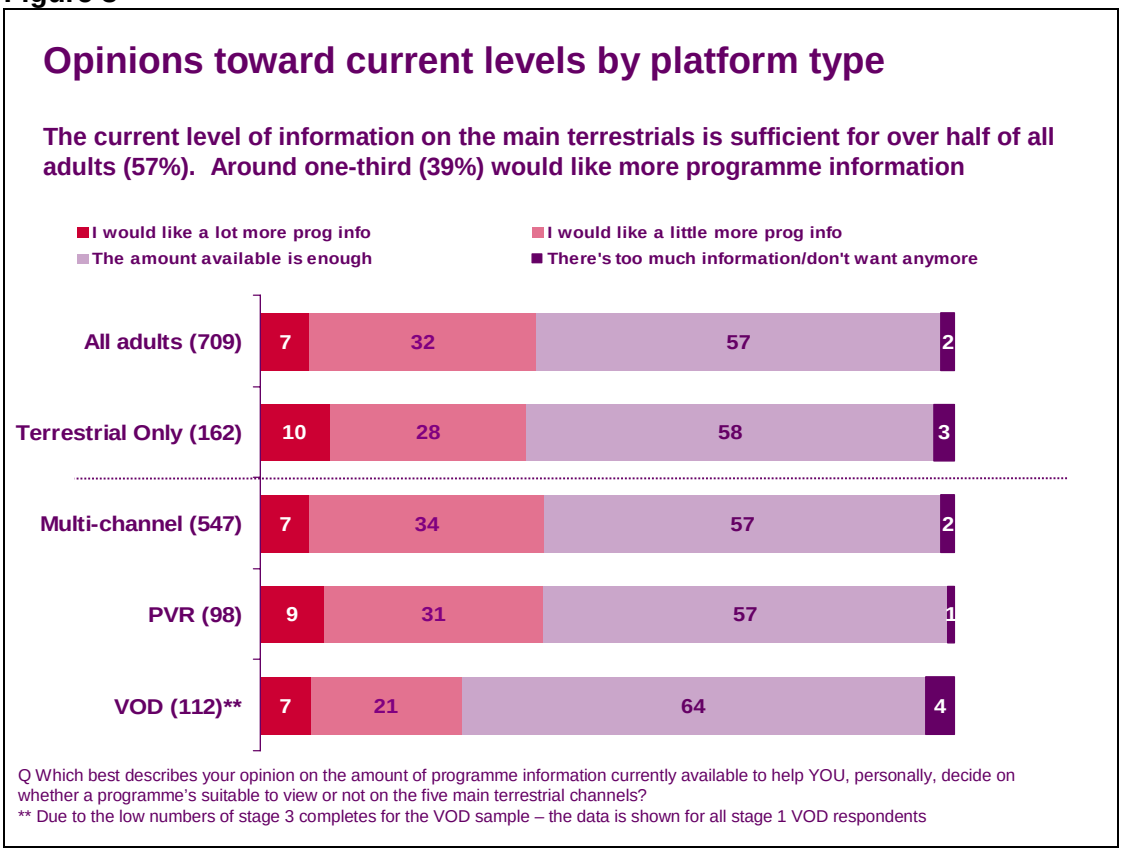
Q How satisfied are you that existing programme information provides you with enough information NOT to watch programmes you may find offensive?
** Due to the low numbers of stage 3 completes for the VOD sample – the data is shown for all stage 1 VOD respondents

4.3 Opinion towards the current amount of programme information available

In terms of the current amount of programme information available to inform viewing on the five main terrestrial channels, over half of viewers (57%) claimed that they felt that the current amount of information available was enough – suggesting that current needs are being met for a majority of viewers. About a third of adults in the sample thought they would like 'a little more' programme information and less than one-in-ten (7%) felt they would like 'a lot more' information. A very small group of viewers (2%) felt that there is already too much information available and don't want any more.

The pattern of response is similar across all the platforms.

Figure 3

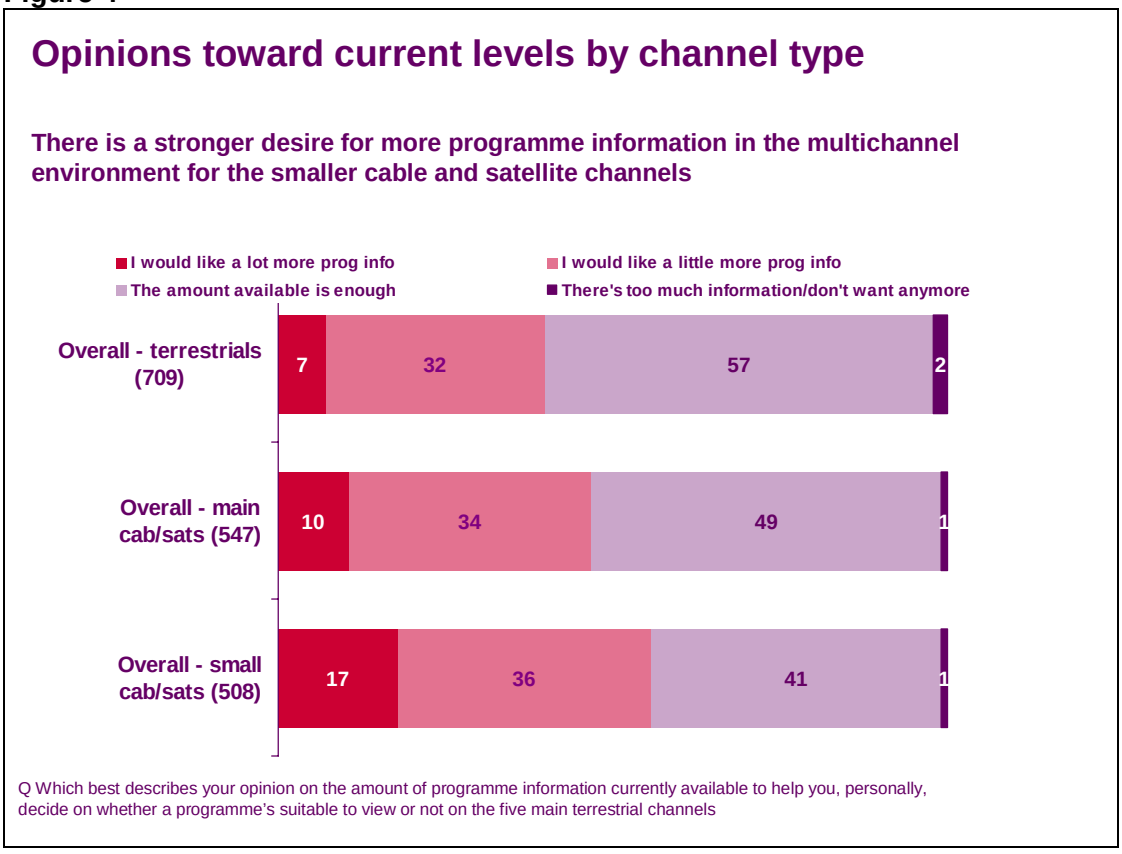


Significantly more 16-34 year olds (42%) claim that they want 'a little more' programme information and significantly more adults aged over 55 think the amount of current information available is enough (65%). There are no significant social grade or gender differences.

Opinions towards levels of programme information available were asked separately for the main cable and satellite channels and the smaller cable and satellite channels, as well as the five main terrestrial channels (BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, C4, Five). The results are displayed in the Figure 4. What can be seen is that there is a stronger demand for

programme information in the multichannel environment - particularly for the smaller less frequently listed cable and satellite channels. This is not surprising given there is currently little or no printed content information available for these channels.

Figure 4



4.4 Concerns about television content

When asked directly how concerned people are with what is shown on television nowadays, around half of all adults (49%) claim to have some level of concern, 15% voicing strong concerns. Those individuals who say they are concerned about what is shown on television were less satisfied with current levels of information.

In terms of demographics, concern appears to be correlated with age. There is significantly more concern among:

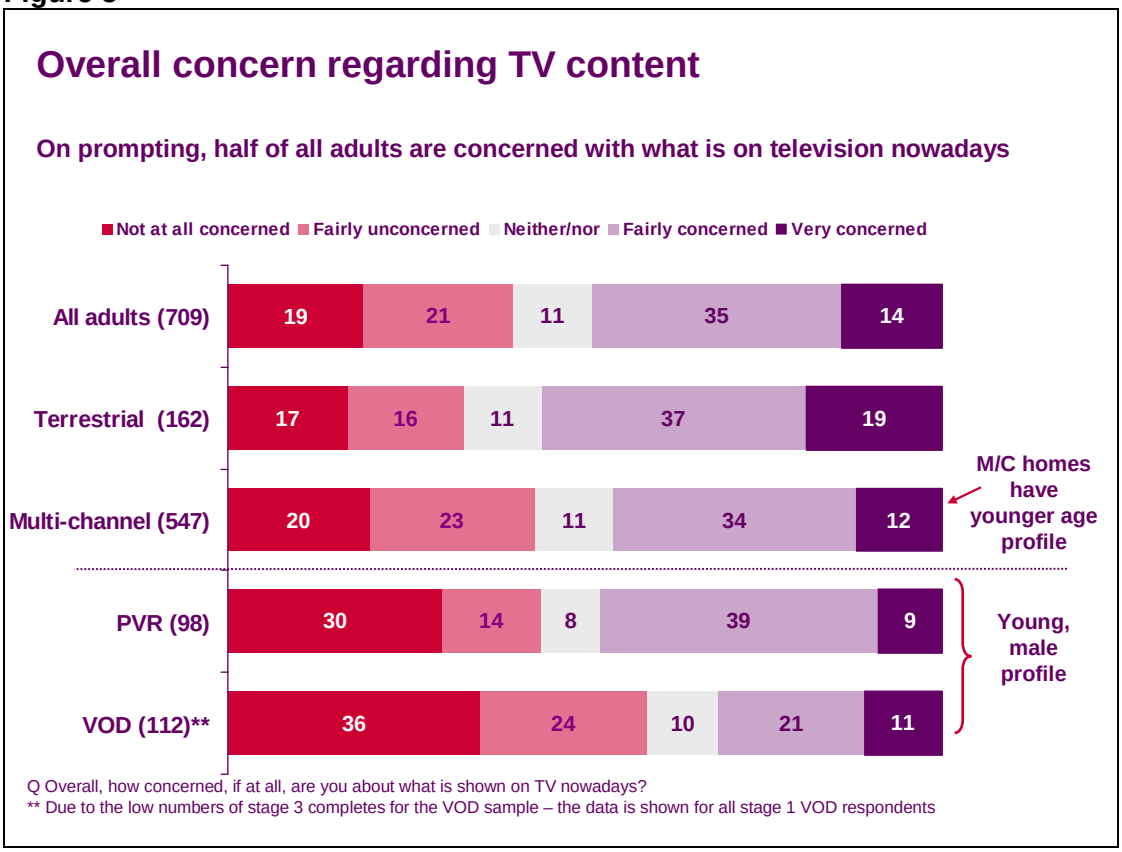
- 35-54's (52% very or fairly concerned)
- 55+ (61% very or fairly concerned)

Females express more concern (57%) than males (39%).

When looking at platform differences, viewers in terrestrial households are more concerned than multichannel households although this is likely to be a product of their demographic profiles i.e. terrestrial households tend to have an older age profile (50% are aged 55+) and are more female (60%).

PVR and VOD users (who are younger, male and more upmarket) are the groups indicating least concern.

Figure 5



4.5 Frequency of offence

Claimed frequency of offence among viewers is fairly polarised. Around one-third of viewers claim to see something that offends them or that they consider to be unsuitable at least a few times a month, or in some cases, more often. Whilst 1-in-4 claim they rarely or never see anything that offends them.

The sub groups who are more regularly offended (at least a few times a month) include:

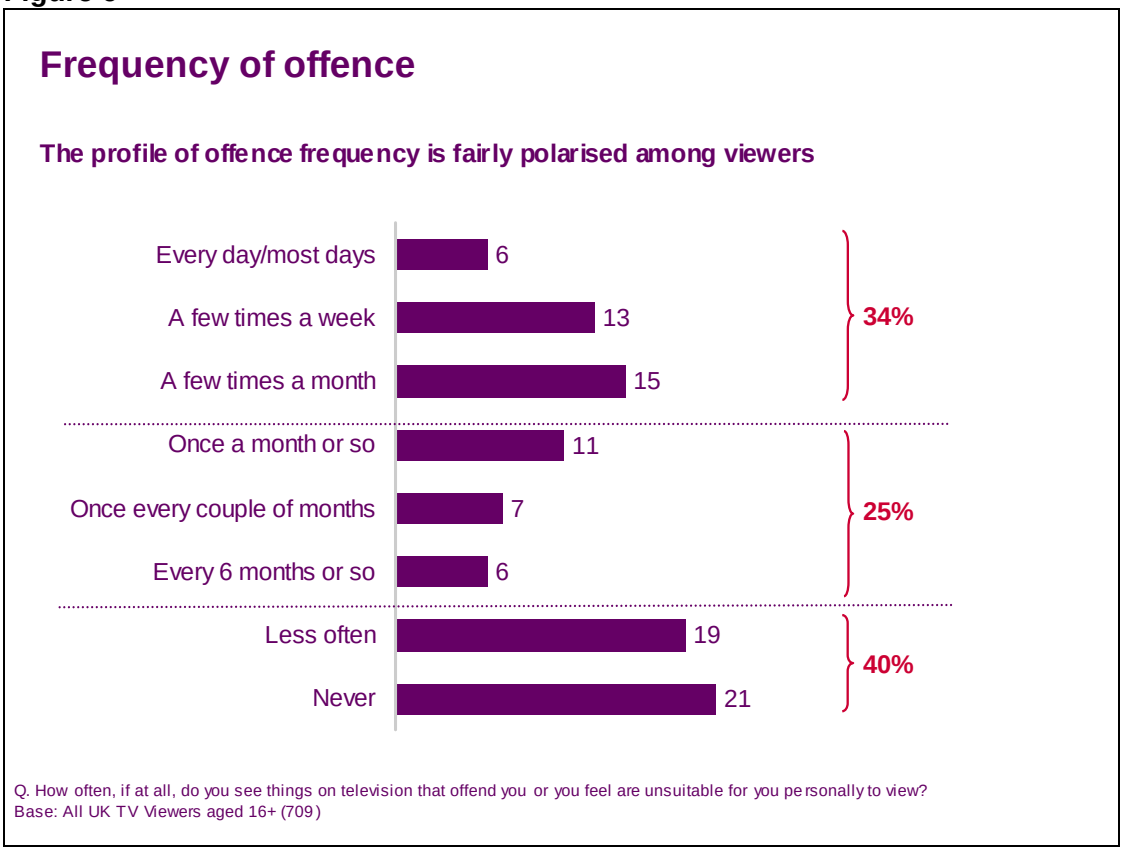
- Females (40%)
- 35-54's (38%)
- 55+ (43%)

By contrast, the following sub groups are more likely to claim they are never offended:

- Males (29%)
- 16-34's (27%)
- C2DE's (28%)

Linking this to programme information needs, viewers who feel they do not get enough programme information are more likely to be offended more frequently.

Figure 6



Among those viewers who are 'ever offended' by things shown on television, the majority will switch-off (75%) or switch over (42%). The over 55's are significantly more likely to do both of these things.

4.6 Content likely to cause offence

These responses are based on viewer opinion and sensitivities to the subject matter. They do not reflect the levels of *actual* broadcast output.

Violence and bad language were the subjects spontaneously mentioned by television viewers as issues on television that would offend them (among those claiming to be ever offended by anything on television nowadays). Graphic violence, sexual content and people behaving badly also gained high levels of mentions, particularly once prompted. Nakedness, immorality and a general decline in broadcasting standards received the lower levels of mentions but were still listed by around 1-in-3 respondents on prompting.

Cause of offence	Spontaneous	Prompted	Total mentions
	%	%	%
Violence in general	53	14	67
Bad/offensive language	50	14	64
Sex/sexual content	41	8	49
Graphic violence	36	27	63
People behaving badly	22	25	47
Depiction of racism	21	28	49
Depiction of drugs/drug taking	19	27	46
Bad role models	19	28	47
Disrespectful content	18	19	37
Bad taste	17	20	37
Immorality	16	15	31
Nakedness	15	12	27
Decline of standards (generally)	14	19	33

Q: What is it about programmes on television that offends or concerns you nowadays, if anything?
Base: All UK television viewers aged 16+ who have ever been offended by things on television (478)

Women were more likely to be offended by all of these categories than men. There is also an age correlation with the level and amount of offence increasing with age. There was however a notable exception; younger people were more likely to be offended than older viewers over the issue of the possible depiction of racist behaviour.

Viewers who are offended by things that they see on television turn off their televisions (42%) or change channel (75%) if they see or hear something that offends.

Females (46%), people aged 55+ (60%) and people with terrestrial television (55%) are significantly more likely than other sub groups to switch off or turn over their television if they see something that offends them.

A very small minority would complain to the broadcaster (2%) or the regulator (1%).

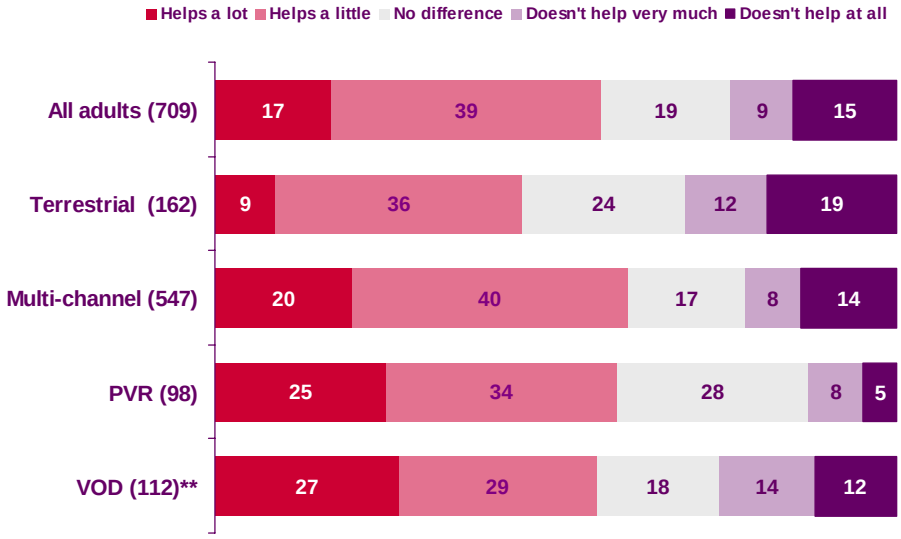
4.7 Mitigation of offence

Over half (56%) of all adults said that it helped ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ if they knew beforehand that a programme may contain harmful or offensive material. One in five said it didn’t make any difference, and the remaining quarter (24%) claimed that it didn’t really help very much.

Figure 7

Mitigation of offence

Information mitigates offence for many – particularly among multi-channel households



Q. If you know beforehand that a programme contains scenes that some people may find unsuitable or offensive, does this help in reducing the level of offence you might feel?
Base: All UK TV Viewers aged 16+ who are ever offended by what is on TV (478)

Contents information's ability to mitigate offence was considered more helpful among younger viewers, parents, and in multichannel households.

When asked to recall their responses to hearing or seeing programme information prior to broadcast, four-in-ten (40%) claimed that they had in the past decided not to watch the programme as a result. Others claimed to have watched the programme to judge for themselves whether the material was harmful or offensive or not (38%), or decided to watch the programme and turn over or off if it contained something they considered offensive (36%).

Women, older viewers and ABC1's were more likely to make the decision not to watch a programme based on content information.

Section 5

A look at parents

Section 4 of the report looked at usage and attitudes towards programme information as a tool for planning viewing and avoiding potentially harmful or offensive material, as well as investigating issues that may cause offence among viewers. This section looks at the same issues but highlights the differences between parents and non-parents. This focus on parents is an important one and warrants its own section because previous consumer research, and indeed much of the current regulatory focus with regard to broadcasting output, concerns the protection of persons under the age of 18. It is therefore important to isolate the opinions and attitudes of parents and carers of under 18's.

5.1 Parents' usage of programme information

Parents use programme information in much the same way as non-parents. However, the main difference is that parents tend to use a higher than average number of sources:

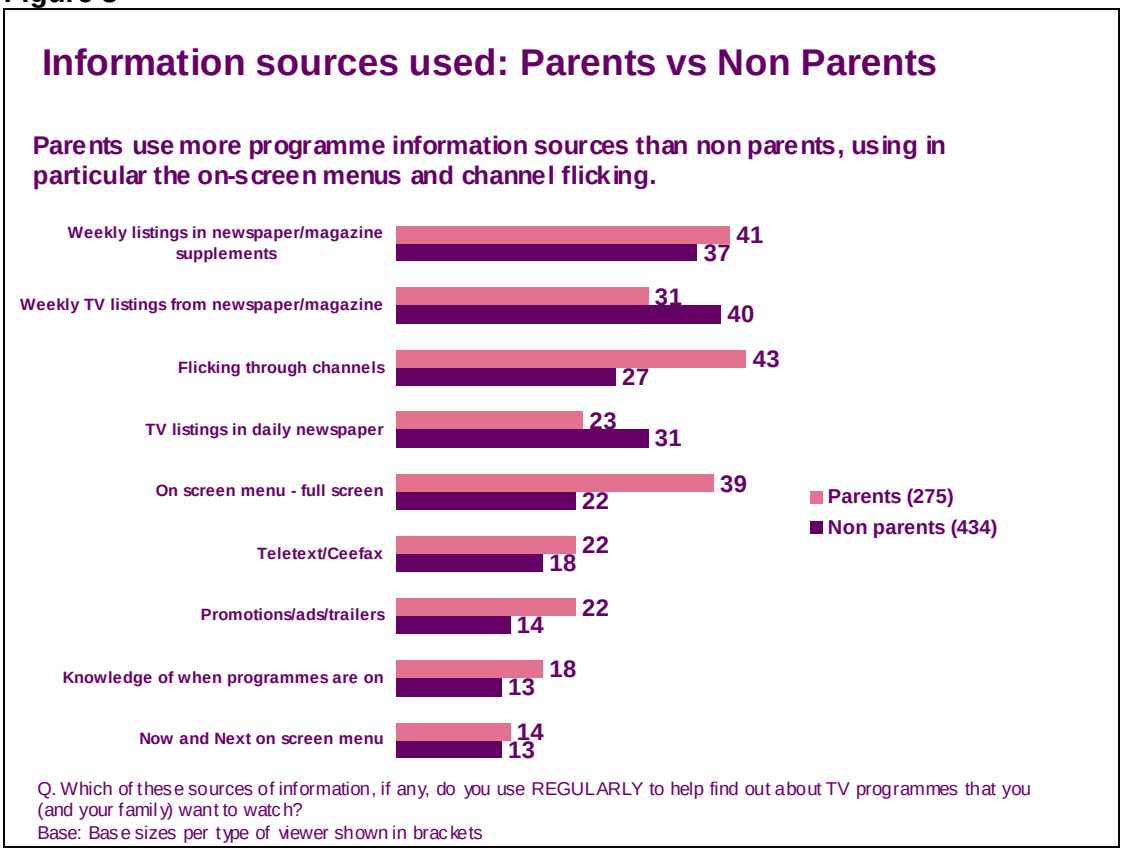
- 3.06 Parents
- 2.56 Non-parents

This is likely to be driven by the fact that households with children are more likely to have multichannel television, therefore have the additional availability of the EPG as an information source. The wider availability of channels also generates a stronger need for programme information.

Parents are more likely than non-parents to flick through the channels. This may be driven by the fact that they have more access to multichannel television and channel flicking tends to be more common in multichannel homes.

Channel flicking is a method of finding programmes but does not provide any information about the nature of the programme content – the implication of this activity is that there is risk of viewing harmful or offensive material at random whilst flicking channels after the watershed.

Figure 8



In addition to having a higher than average use of the usual sources of programme information, parents are also more aware of other content control measures than non-parents (see table below). Age classifications for films, in particular, are more relevant to parents than non-parents.

Awareness of content control methods	Parents	Non-parents
	n=275	n=434
	%	%
Age classification for films	89	73
The 9pm watershed	85	76
Pre-programme announcements	64	71
Channel specific measures (e.g. PIN)	37	34
Content advice pages on Ceefax/Teletext	17	22

Q: Are you aware of these ways to find out about suitability of programmes for you and your family to watch?
Base: Base sizes per type of viewer shown in brackets

59% of parents claim to have used BBFC age classification for films when making decisions about their children's viewing, compared to 14% among non-parents. Usage of the watershed among parents is also fairly high with 41% claiming they use this as a tool for managing their children's viewing, compared to 14% among non-parents[4]. Despite

[4] The watershed is 9pm for all channels except premium subscription movie channels where is starts at 8pm.

the small base size (terrestrial parents n=45), there are indications that parents in terrestrial households use the watershed as a means of advising on programme suitability more frequently than parents in multichannel homes.

Usage of content control methods	Parents	Non-parents
	n=275	n=434
	%	%
Age classification for films	59	14
The 9pm watershed	41	14
Pre-programme announcements	32	24
The programme title itself	21	20
Content advice pages on Ceefax/Teletext	17	22

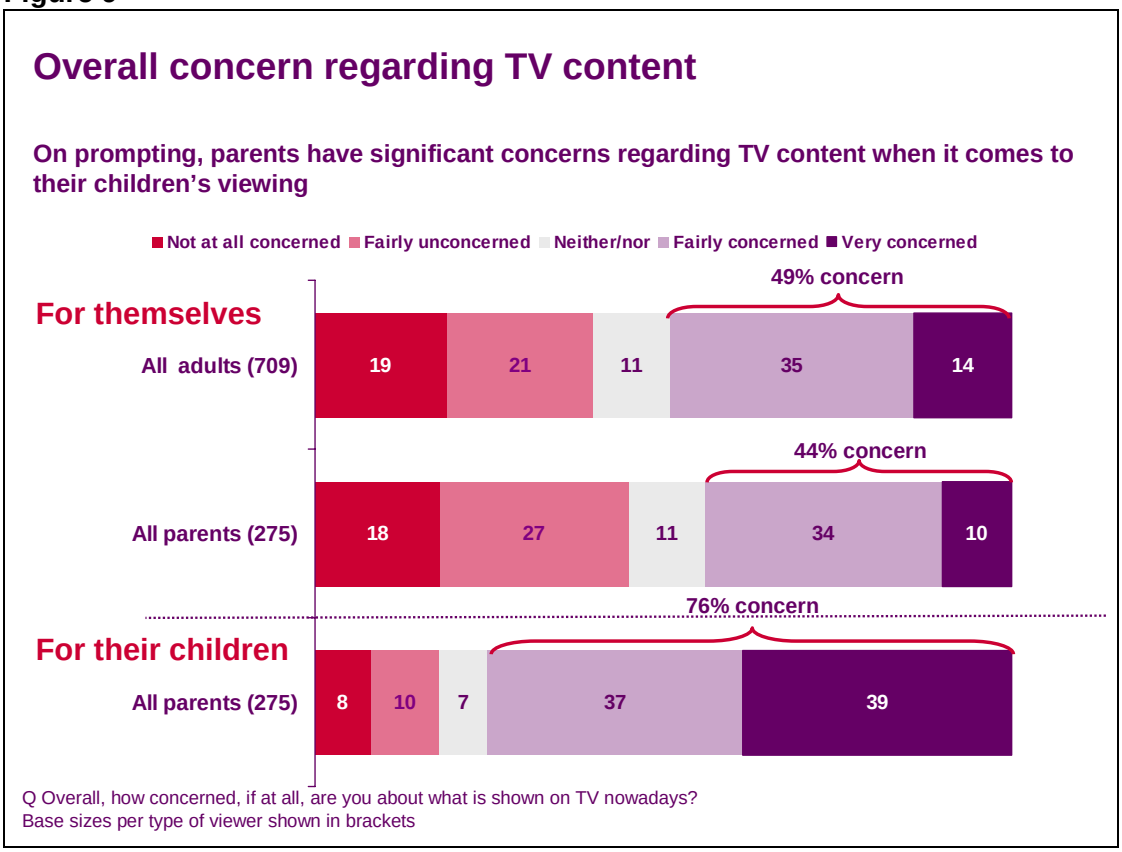
Q: Which of these ways have you ever used to find out about suitability of programmes for you and your family to watch?
Base: Base sizes per type of viewer shown in brackets

5.2 Attitudes towards potentially unsuitable broadcast material

There are significant differences amongst parents over concerns that their children may be exposed to unsuitable, harmful or offensive programming. As adults responding for themselves, parents claimed not to be particularly concerned about their own viewing (44% concern). However, as parents, a significant majority (76%) have concerns regarding their children's viewing.

There are no significant differences between multichannel parents and those in terrestrial only households.

Figure 9



ABC1s and people who watch less television were most likely to express concern about what their children watched on television.

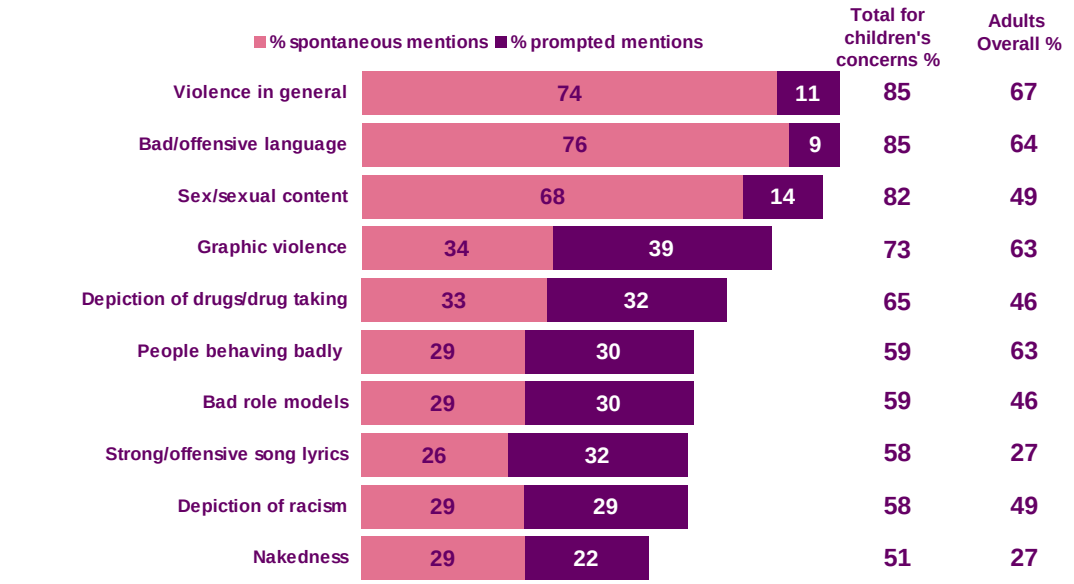
5.3 Content issues that offend

If they are offended as adults, those issues that offend them continue to offend them as parents but to a much greater degree, particularly regarding violence, and bad language. Sexual content also becomes more of an issue, as does offensive song lyrics.

Figure 10

Issues that offend and concern parents

The same issues that offend them as adults, offend them regarding their children's viewing, but to a greater degree.



Q What is it about programmes on TV that offends or concerns you regarding your children's nowadays, if anything?
Base: All UK TV viewers aged 16+ who have ever been offended by things on TV (478)

5.4 Parental intervention in children's television viewing

A significant majority of parents intervene in children's viewing either before or during broadcast. Three-quarters of parents claimed they had stopped their child watching something at one or other time **before** a programme started and over two-thirds claimed to have stopped their children viewing once a programme had started.

Stopped children watching before programme had started		**Stopped children watching once programme had started**	
	%		%
Yes - many times	19	Yes - many times	15
Yes - occasionally	41	Yes - occasionally	36
Yes - hardly ever	15	Yes - hardly ever	17
Total - yes	**75**	**Total - yes**	**68**
No	25	No	31

Around 1-in-5 parents (19%) send their children out of the room when something unsuitable comes on. 1-in-7 (14%) claim they feel uncomfortable but may continue to watch. Only a small fraction claim to have complained directly to the broadcasters (2%) or Ofcom (1%).

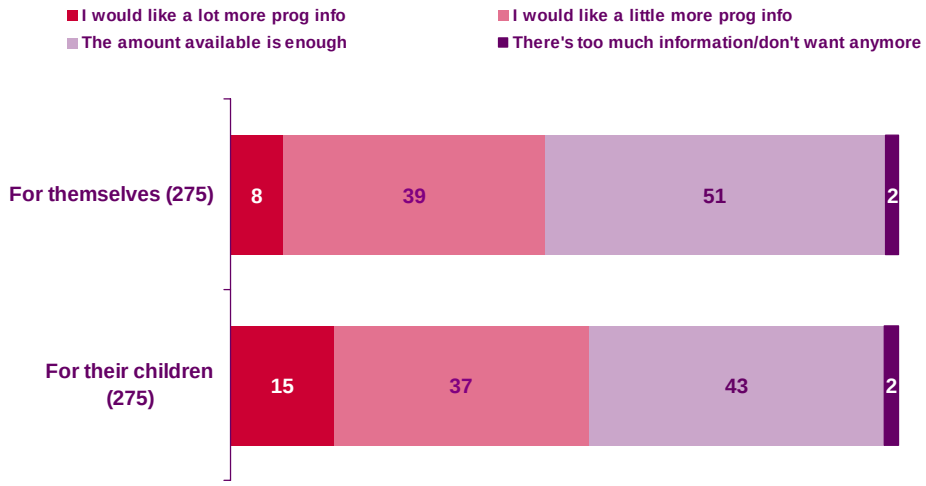
5.5 Attitudes towards the amount of existing programme information

In terms of the current amount of programme information available to inform viewing on the five main terrestrial channels, parent's needs are greater than non-parents and there are significantly more who want 'a little more information'.

Figure 11

Programme information needs for their children (5 main terrestrial channels)

Parents want 'a lot more programme information' than is currently available when considering content information for their children



Q Which best describes your opinion on the amount of programme information currently available to help you, personally, decide on whether a programme's suitable to view or not on the five main channels

Bases: Base sizes per type of viewer shown in brackets

There is a much stronger demand for programme information in the multichannel environment, and this demand is even stronger among parents - particularly relating to the smaller unlisted cable and satellite channels. Here 61% of parents would like more information compared to 49% of non-parents.

Opinions towards current levels of programme information	Multichannel Parents (216)	Non-parents (292)
	%	%
I would like a lot more programme info	16	17
I would like a little more programme info	45	32
Net want more	**61**	**49**
The amount available is enough	35	44
There's too much info/don't want anymore	0	2

Programme information's ability to mitigate offence is stronger among parents with 69% considering it helpful compared to 45% among non-parents.

Section 6
Post deliberation

The research consisted of a multi-stage design:

- Phase 1 - face-to-face survey in-home
- Phase 2 - in home deliberation period
- Phase 3 - telephone follow-up interview

This section of the report discusses the phase 3 follow-up section that took place once people had thought about the issues in more detail. During the in-home deliberation week they were left with a diary that encouraged them to make note of their usage of programme information and any programming that they consider to be unsuitable, harmful or offensive.

A multi-stage approach was taken because previous qualitative research had indicated that top-of-mind responses were not always the same as considered responses. This is common when researching issues that are generally of low interest. By introducing a period of deliberation this enables respondents to think about the issues in more detail and raise their awareness of and consider their attitudes towards the issue.

It should also be noted at this point, that a consequence of deliberation may be to over-heighten awareness towards the issue and sometimes strength of attitudes can become over-inflated. This is a natural response to “hot housing” an issue that is not normally thought about in much detail. The magnitude of heightened awareness is immeasurable but should be keep in mind when going through the results in this section.

All the results contained within this report are detailed for respondents that took part in all 3 stages of the research. At stage 3 the total number or respondents completing all 3 stages of the interview totalled 709, including 98 PVR users and 30 VOD users.

The questions asked at phase 3 were a similar series of questions to those asked at phase 1 – thus enabling any shifts in attitudes to be recorded.

6.1 Effectiveness of the deliberative process

We know from the survey results that the deliberation process has an impact on responses as the data demonstrates that the average claimed number of programme information sources used post deliberation was much higher than pre deliberation (7.61 sources post deliberation compared to 2.62 pre deliberation).

In terms of exposure to harmful or offensive material, just under half (45%) of viewers claimed to have seen at least one programme during the deliberation phase that contained potentially harmful or offensive material. There were no significant differences between parents and non-parents on this measure.

Over half (54%) claimed to have heard programme information warnings about the potential harmful or offensiveness or unsuitability of programmes during the deliberative phase.

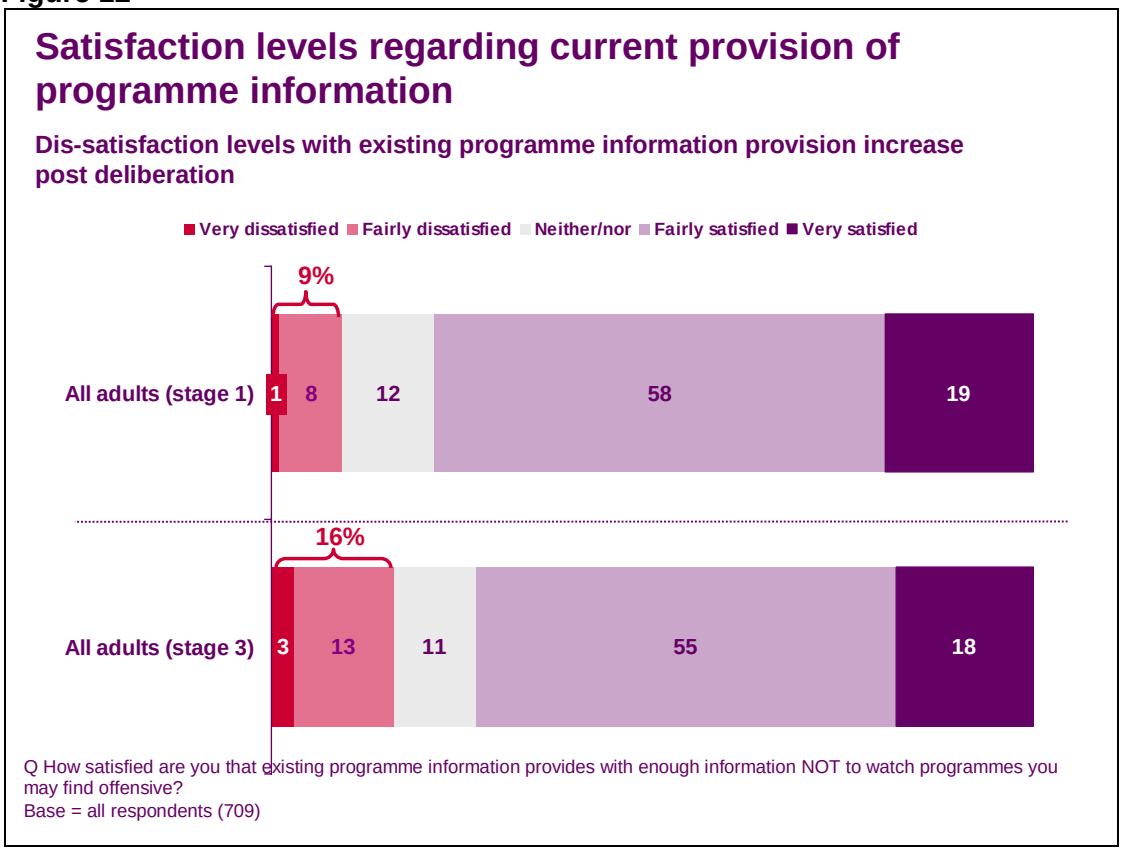
Among those claiming to have seen unsuitable material, the majority (70%) decided to watch the programme to judge for themselves whether or not it contained harmful or

offensive material, some of whom (29%) chose to turn over if they considered the material unsuitable.

6.2 Shifts in satisfaction levels towards programme information post deliberation

When asked about satisfaction levels towards exiting sources of programme information, there was a significant decrease in satisfaction post deliberation. Pre-deliberation 9% of respondents claimed to be dissatisfied. Post deliberation this increased to 16% - representing a statistically significant movement.

Figure 12



Dissatisfaction levels were marginally higher in households with children (18%) than no children (14%), although not significantly so. When looking at sub sets of parents, parents of primary school age children were the most dissatisfied (23%) even though the likelihood of them seeing potentially harmful or offensive material at the time they usually watch television is very small.

There were no observed differences between terrestrial and multichannel households.

The younger age range (16-24's) were the least dissatisfied (9%).

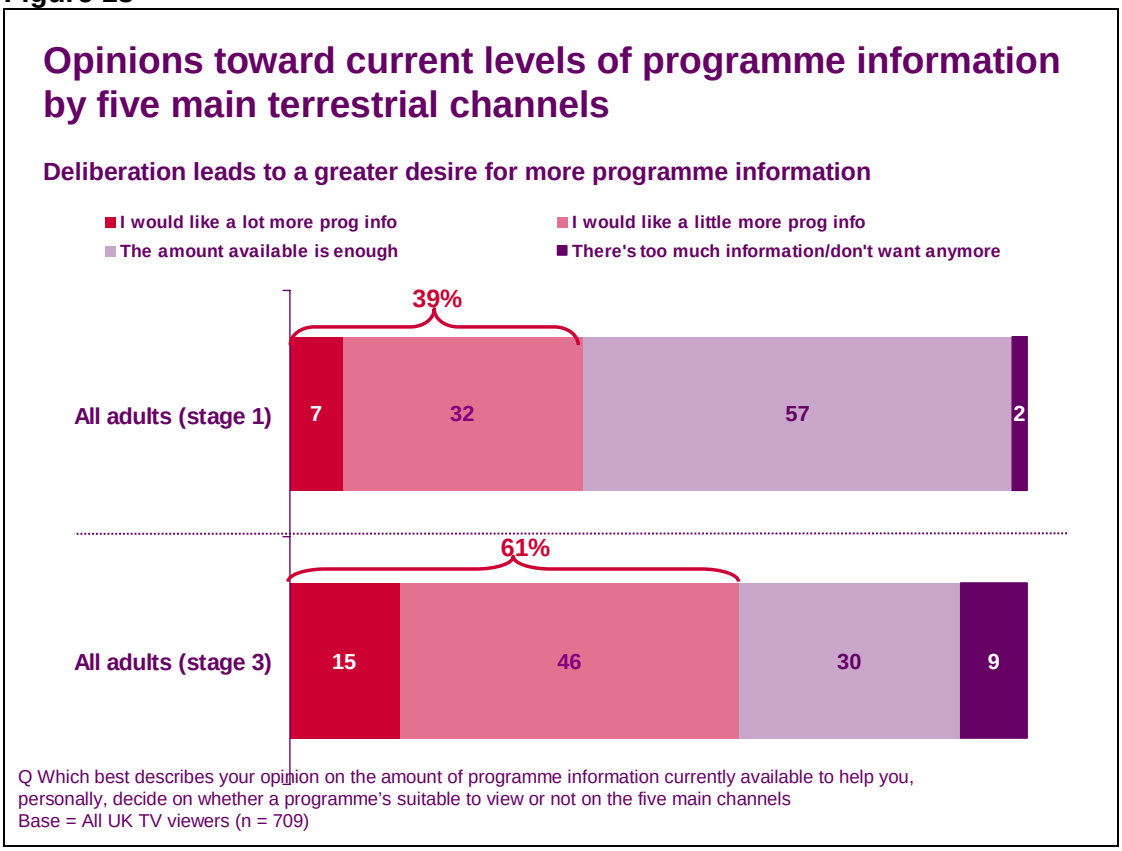
6.3 Shifts in opinion towards the current amount of programme information available

Significant shifts in opinion were observed in attitudes towards the amount of programme information currently available to inform viewing on the five main terrestrial channels. At phase 1 over a third of adults (39%) in the sample thought they would like more programme information (7% felt they would like 'a lot more information'). Following deliberation the total number of adults requiring more programme information increased to 61%, (with 15% claming to require a lot more). Parents in particular want 'a lot more' (20% compared to 13% among non-parents), with the strongest demand among parents of primary school age children.

Conversely, there is also an increase in the number of viewers who feel there is already too much information available and don't want any more (from 2% to 9%). These viewers are more likely to be older, male, C2DE, with no children.

The pattern of response is similar across all the platforms and there are no significant differences between households.

Figure 13



A similar pattern of response is seen for the main satellite and cable channels and the smaller unlisted satellite and cable channels. And again, the greatest demand for 'a lot more information' is measured for the smaller unlisted satellite and cable channels.

6.4 Shifts in opinion towards the ability of programme information to mitigate offence

Post deliberation, amongst those viewers who were ever offended by what they see on television, twice as many claimed that it helped a lot to have advance information. Pre-transmission information helps to reduce offence.

Belief that information helps to reduce offence was significantly higher at phase 3 among women, adults aged 35-54 and parents.

Viewers in terrestrial households were least likely to feel that programme information helps to reduce offence.

Figure 14

Mitigation of offence

There is an indication that programme information mitigates offence. This also increases after deliberation

Q. If you know beforehand that a programme contains scenes that some people may find unsuitable or offensive, does this help in reducing the level of offence you might feel?
Base: All UK TV Viewers aged 16+ who are ever offended by what is on TV (478)

6.5 Attitudes towards regulation (post deliberation)[5]

When asked which statement they best agreed with, the vast majority of adults (80%) claimed they felt '*broadcasters should be allowed to show programmes that contain challenging or offensive material after a clear warning'*. The remaining 20% were split equally between '*Even though some people may be offended, broadcasters should be allowed to show programmes that contain challenging or offensive* material' and '*broadcasters should not be allowed to show programmes that contain challenging or offensive material'.*

[5] These questions were only asked at the post deliberation phase.

Respondents consider broadcasters should be allowed to show challenging or offensive material were more likely to be male, C2DE, and have no children.

Respondents who were more opposed to challenging or offensive programme content tended towards the older age groups, and terrestrial homes. This is likely to be linked to the finding that age is a key driver for attitudes towards content.

When asked who is most responsible for what children watch on television the majority (87%) said parents were. 7% felt the broadcasters were responsible and 5% the regulator. There were no significant differences between sub groups.

When probed for a second time ‘who else is responsible’ the broadcasters (51%) came ahead of the regulator (39%)

Section 7

Alternative programme information concepts

As discussed in Section 3, changes in audiovisual content distribution and creation are driving changes in consumption. This may make traditional models of content control increasingly less effective. Key changes include growth in multichannel television, growth in on-demand viewing and television-like content being created for multiple platforms. Consumers have the potential to 'time-shift' their viewing choices thus rendering the traditional methods of content control less effective. Combined, these changes significantly decrease the ability of consumers to rely on existing content control measures to protect themselves and their families from harmful or offensive materials.

With these changes in mind, viewers were asked to evaluate 4 possible options within an EPG environment for programme content information in order to gain some insight into what form of programme information people may prefer in the future.

The four options discussed in the research at both phase 1 and phase 3 included:

- Maintain the status quo (The current EPG)
- Symbols
- Text based descriptions
- Age based guidance

Full descriptions of the above, as shown to respondents in the research, can be found in appendix A.

7.1 Preferred programme information option

At phase 1 'Text based description' was the preferred option (46%) followed by 'Symbols' (30%) 'Age based guidance' (13%) and the current EPG (7%). The remaining 3% didn't know which they preferred.

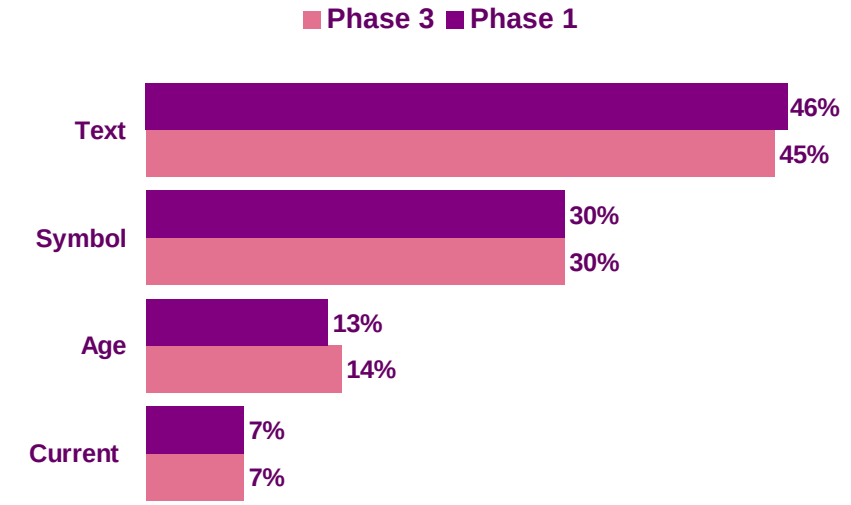
ABC1's had a stronger preference for 'Text based description' (51%) and 16-24's had a stronger preference for 'Age based guidance' (22%).

The main reasons given among those who preferred text based descriptions were that it gives more information than the others and is clearer.

Figure 15

Preferred programme information option

Favoured option for programme information is consistently text option and viewers think that the system should be uniform across channels



Q. (Stage1/3) Now that you have seen all four options, which do you feel would be the best in giving information about potentially unsuitable or offensive programmes on television?
Base: All UK TV Viewers aged 16+ (709)

Post deliberation, the 'Text based description' option remains the preferred option with 45%. ABC1's continued to express higher preferences for this option (50%) than the other social grades (39%). Again, reasons stated for its preference were centred around it 'being helpful', 'more detailed' and 'telling you exactly what you need to know'. 84% of the sample claim it was either 'quite (42%) or 'very' (42%) helpful when asked directly.

'Symbols' were preferred by just under one-third of the sample (30%). There were some concerns expressed by some over the interpretation of the symbols. Not everyone would necessarily know what they mean or recognise them – this potential for misunderstanding/ambiguity was considered to be problematic by some. There were however some who thought that symbols were instantly clear, a good idea and would be easier to understand by children and those with reading difficulties.

Next to the current EPG, age ratings were the least preferred. Reasons for concern included that ratings do not give sufficient information, and also that age ratings are not necessarily a good guide to the actual content. It was however considered a good option by some parents.

Appendix A – Stimulus material

The following figures detail the stimulus material that was shown to respondents during the course of the research to illustrate the potential future labelling options.

Option A: The current EPG

Option B: Text based descriptions

Option C: Symbols

Option D: Age based guidance

Appendix B – Sample profile

Profiles (%)	All UK TV viewers aged 16+ (709)	Multichannel viewers (547)	Terrestrial only viewers (162)	Parents (275)	Non-parents (434)	PVR owners (98)	VOD users (112)
Male	48	51	40	44	50	55	65
Female	52	49	60	56	50	45	35
16-34	31	35	20	35	29	42	47
35-54	35	36	30	64	21	40	46
55+	34	29	50	1	49	18	7
ABC1	54	54	53	52	55	64	81
C2DE	46	46	47	48	45	36	19
Children	31	34	23	100	-	38	37
No children	69	66	77	-	100	62	63
Multichannel TV	76	100	-	82	73	99	100

Appendix C – Profile of PVR Owners

PVR users tended to be younger, male, ABCI and are less likely than the average to have children.

	PVR owners	**Terrestrial viewers**	**Multichannel viewers**
	n=98	**n=162**	**n=547**
	%	%	%
Male	**55**	40	51
Female	45	60	49
16-34	**42**	20	35
35-54	**40**	30	36
55+	18	50	29
ABC1	**64**	53	54
C2DE	36	47	46
Children	38	23	34
No children	**62**	77	66

One-third (35%) had acquired a PVR within the last year. Another third (33%) within the last 1-2 years and the remaining third claimed to have owned a PVR for more than 2 years.

Around two-thirds (68%) of PVR users claim 'hardly any' or 'only some' of their viewing is currently recorded. Around one-fifth (22%) claim 'most' or 'all' of their viewing is recorded. This suggests that the vast majority of PVR users are not currently time-shifting much of their viewing and continue to watch most of their viewing 'off-schedule'.

PVR users are recording a wide variety of genres for a wide variety of reasons, including 'programmes that are on when we are out' (49%), 'episodes of my favourite shows' (46%), 'late night programmes I wouldn't normally stay up to watch' (39%), and 'programmes I would never normally watch as they clash with my regular viewing' (30%).

One-third of PVR users claim to be watching more television then they watched previously. Over half (54%) claim to be watching the same amount of television as before. 14% say they watch less television than before.

Half (49%) say that having a PVR has expanded their viewing and they are now watching different types of programmes than previously.

The majority of PVR users (73%) are not concerned about seeing unsuitable programmes outside of broadcast times, and a similar (70%) proportion think that the amount of programme information currently available is enough.

When looking at claimed viewing behaviours, there appears to be slightly less viewing of pre-programme announcements among PVR users (27% claim to watch less), although the biggest decreases in viewing are seen among commercial breaks and end credits.

PVR owners who watch programmes recorded on their PVR (n=87)	**Pre-programme announcements**	**Commercial breaks**	**End credits**
	%	%	%
Watch more	11	5	4
Watch the same	52	32	38
Watch less	27	46	40
Never watched	10	17	18