

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Gordon

Surname:

Forster

Representing:

Self

What additional details do you want to keep confidential?:

No

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

none

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Additional comments:

I have lived with AMD for 16 years with the familiar fuzzy overall vision with central loss, reading requires optical, digital or human assistance. These are compounded by frequent bouts of Charles Bonne random virtual patterns. My v.a. is 3/60 both eyes.

I use Freeview and Freesat TV for viewing and recoding. Units are permanently set to deliver any AD through built-in speakers. The most informative speaking information comes from my TVonics DTR-HD500 HDD recorder box which includes current tuning info, adequate EPG info, full talking recording and most navigation instructions. The poor remote I can live with.

For Freesat I have great difficulty viewing programme names, numbers broadcasts, EPG and recordings, but reception and AD is good.

I am very disappointed that broadcasts in, or extracts in a foreign language that provide translated sub-titles invariably do not provide a talking version as 'AD'

Question 1:Do respondents agree with Ofcom?s initial assessment that apps for mobile devices have the potential to be useful for those people with visual impairments who feel confident using touch-screen technology and can afford a suitable mobile device? If not, why not? :

Probably yes but with the latest TVs incorporating a PC, but not on my touch screen mobile, I find my TVonics DTR-HD500 easier to use .

Question 2:Do respondents agree with Ofcom?s initial assessment that apps for mobile devices are less likely to meet the needs of the majority of visually-impaired people who are 65 or older, both because they are less likely either to own a suitable mobile phone and because touch-screen apps present a number of actual and perceived barriers to use. If not, why not?:

Yes, I am 79 and do use a smartphone for some operations but I would need to assess any app I don't think my current TVs compatible.

Question 3:Do respondents consider that it would be reasonable for visually-impaired viewers to pay more than sighted viewers for the ability to use EPGs or substitutes for the same purposes as sighted viewers? If so why? :

No, my TVonics DTR-HD500 was bought for a similar price as inaccessible units. After the manufacturers said it was 'not possible' the RNIB paid for all the development work including the smart chip with a text to speech engine - a gateway to talking Door entry systems, environmental (heating) controls and accessible white goods.

Question 4:Do respondents agree with Ofcom?s initial assessment that the speaking EPGs integrated into TVs and set top boxes may be easier for people with visual impairments to use than touch-screen apps? If not, why not? :

Yes

Question 5:Do pay TV service providers such as Sky, Virgin, Talk Talk and BT TV see additional obstacles that would prevent them from committing to including text to speech capabilities in the next planned upgrades to the receivers they offer to subscribers? If so, what are these obstacles? Absent regulation, would these obstacles make it impossible on commercial grounds to commit to the necessary investment?:

I do not know

Question 6:If the cost of providing speech-enabled receivers to all those who subscribe to particular pay TV services would entail a substantial delay to the roll-out of such receivers to all subscribers, would it be feasible, quicker and more cost-effective to offer suitable equipment first to viewers with visual impairments?:

I do not know

Question 7:Do respondents consider that it would be reasonable to expect visually-impaired viewers to pay extra for equipment that allows them to use EPGs or substitutes for the same purposes as sighted viewers? If so, why? :

No

Question 8:Do licensors such as Freesat and Freeview see obstacles to using their leverage to require manufacturers to incorporate speaking EPGs in future versions of products authorised to use their brands, such as Freetime and Freeview Connect?:

I do not know

Question 9:What are the main types of cost that pay TV service providers would face in incorporating speaking EPG features into the next generation of their set top boxes?:

I do not know

Question 10:What is the scope for connected platforms to avoid the need for specific TTS provision within consumer equipment by using cloud-based resources (e.g. speech files on a central server delivered to the device as required)?:

This is clearly possible but every VI viewer then must have access to the cloud which certainly is not the case yet.