

Listed Events.

Identifying television services that are free-to-view and widely available.

Introduction

techUK represents the companies and technologies that are defining today the world that we will live in tomorrow. 900 companies are members of techUK. Collectively our members employ more than the people that represent approximately half of all ICT sector jobs in the UK. These companies range from leading FTSE 100 companies to new innovative start-ups. The majority of techUK's members are small and medium sized businesses.

This response is made primarily on behalf of techUK's device manufacturing members. We do not seek to represent the views of other members but where those views have been expressed they have been included.

Consultation Questions.

Q1. Do you agree that our proposed methodology is appropriate?

In particular:

a) Do you agree that it is appropriate for us to consider the reception of TV programme services through all four main TV platforms, including IPTV?

Yes, techUK agree that reception via IPTV should be considered as part of the methodology. IPTV is and will continue to take a growing share of the distribution method for free-to-view services and therefore should not be excluded from future methodology.

b) Do you agree that it is appropriate for us to consider the reception of TV programme services on the main device in the house, being the largest screen - a TV set if that is available, or a computer or tablet if not?

Yes, techUK agree that it is appropriate for the largest screen device in the household to be considered as the main device for free-to-view service watching. If no TV set is situated within the house, then measurement of the next largest screen device, e.g. tablet/ computer, is a suitable measure.

c) Do you agree that it is appropriate for us to use data collected through the BARB ES survey in order to calculate the proportion of the population that can receive services?

We support the use of BARB to collect the data relating to the proportion of the population that can receive the services whilst BARB provides the most

comprehensive and accurate source of information. Should alternative providers of data become available or claim to be able to provide more accurate and representable data, then we would expect Ofcom to review the arrangements for measurement.

d) Do you agree that our proposed adjustment for individuals able to receive services on the commercial DTT multiplexes compared with the PSB DTT multiplexes is appropriate?

No comment.

e) Do you agree that our proposed approach in relation to IP multi-stream capability is appropriate?

We support the proposals and do not believe that it should be a requirement that the number of IPTV streams needs to exceed a minimum threshold for any given event, accepting that the event remains available also via digital terrestrial or satellite free-to-view distribution.

f) Do you agree that our proposed approach in relation to assessing the 'free-to-view' condition is appropriate?

We agree that free-to-view television can be distributed via DTT, Satellite, Cable and/ or via IPTV.

We do suggest that careful consideration is given to the 'free' access of PSB services, and what is defined as 'free'. PSB service reception is arguably not free as the viewer is required to pay a licence fee to the BBC in order to be able to view PSB services in their home, irrespective of whether that viewer also pays a subscription fee from a commercial content provider who also provides PSB services as part of their overall content package.

On Freeview and Freesat platforms the content can be received without additional charge once the viewer has the required digital devices and a BBC licence fee. Should PSB services only be available via IP at any point in time then it is possible that the viewer would also have to pay a charge based on the amount of data used to receive the PSB services delivered over IP. Increasing layers of distribution complexity do call into question the future definition of free-to-view services.

In the consultation Ofcom refers to "delivery via IPTV without additional financial charge". We are keen to understand Ofcom's definition of "without additional charge" and whether the charge for the IP data required to receive PSB services is viewed as an additional financial charge or not.

techUK believe that the fundamental offer of 'free-to-view' television changes when PSB content is only delivered via IP. The BBC have already made statements regarding their desire to move to an IP only distribution model within the earliest possible timeframe and therefore, whilst viewers should have the option to view PSB content via IP, we do have concerns that should PSB access move away from broadcast distribution then it will have a major impact on the free-to-view television proposition.

Question 2: Do you agree that our proposed approach for keeping the list of qualifying services up to date is appropriate?

We do not agree with Ofcom's proposals to exclude High Definition simulcast services from the list of qualifying services. The majority of viewers have access to devices that can receive HD services (as your research confirms).

There are virtually no large screen TVs now sold in the UK that are not HDTV compatible, circa 5 million HD TVs a year are sold in the UK, not including the high volume of HD compatible PVRs and STBs.

HD viewing as a percentage of total viewing is growing and is expected to continue to take an increased share of the total PSB viewing hours. Many signature listed events (e.g. major sporting events) are perfectly suited to the enhance image quality and viewer experience that HD services deliver vs SD, especially as the majority of large screen sets sold are now of a size of 50" or larger.

We believe that it is highly important that HD viewing/simulcasts are included in the qualifying criteria and we expect that research would show that the percentage of viewing via HD would be a higher percentage for listed events than the average viewing figures in total.