

Question 1: Do you agree that public service provision and funding beyond the BBC is an important part of any future system?:

Absolutely. The reality is that Channel 4 in particular now has a role almost equal to that of the BBC in maintaining a high standard of innovative and significant public service broadcasting. If we look at the totality of public service broadcasting in the UK, against the background of the proliferation of digital channels and the transformation of the internet in delivering content, Channel 4 can rightly claim that in several areas it is delivering more effectively than the BBC. Notably in current affairs, News (Channel 4 News being considerably less 'dumbed down' than the BBC's 10'Clock), prime time documentaries, and historical drama. None of these categories are cheap, and without proper funding beyond advertising revenue, they will inevitably wither on the vine.

Question 2: Which of the three refined models do you think is most appropriate?:

Clearly, Model 2 is the most appropriate. Ofcom's Phase 2 consultation document makes it clear that there is widespread support for PSB extending beyond the BBC, giving audiences a wide range of ideas, voices, and opinions. It can be argued that Channel 4 has, in recent years, been more adventurous, more innovative than the BBC in the field of current affairs - tackling stories (like 'Undercover Mosque') that Ofcom has recognised as valuable and intrinsic to the role of public interest journalism.

Question 3: Do you agree that in any future model Channel 4 should have an extended remit to innovate and provide distinctive UK content across platforms? If so, should it receive additional funding directly, or should it have to compete for funding?:

Yes, Channel 4 needs constantly to refresh its remit to innovate and challenge. The reality of technological change - and the way in which the under 30's access media - means that cross platform content is essential.

Question 4: Do you think ITV1, Five and Teletext should continue to have public service obligations after 2014? Where ITV1 has an ongoing role, do you agree that the Channel 3 licensing structure should be simplified, if so what form of licensing would be most appropriate?:

Ideally, yes. The problem is that so much of ITV1's traditional public service inheritance has been allowed to lapse that the corpse may not be able to be revived. Even Coronation Street seems like a pale parody of its former self. The problem with ITV1 is that it is neither genuinely populist (with the exception of a small roster of reality shows) nor driven by strands of quality programming.

Question 5: What role should competition for funding play in future? In which areas of content? What comments do you have on our description of how this might work in practice?:

The obvious areas would include drama, current affairs, and documentary. Too often, the core problem with commissioning in television has been an obsession with the short term. This has damaged creativity, and is deadly for all but the few cash rich super-indies. So I would encourage a kind of star chamber system, in which broadcasters bring indies' strongest ideas and proposals to compete for money. Too often in the past, hugely expensive projects have gone through on the nod because of informal friendships and out of a sense of obligation, of debts being repaid, and, worse, a mistaken sense that 'X' was a pillar of PSB and therefore deserved a series.

Question 6: Do you agree with our findings that nations and regions news continues to have an important role and that additional funding should be provided to sustain it?:

Absolutely. But we seem to have reached a kind of half way house, in which it is recognised that the current regional newsroom system is economically unviable, and yet there's a reluctance to grasp the possibility of running much smaller news hubs serving smaller localities. The new low cost broadcast and editing technology opens up the possibility of local TV fulfilling the same function as the local press - something local papers have understood by running video on their websites.

Question 7: Which of the three refined models do you think is most appropriate in the devolved nations?:

Model 2.

Question 8: Do you agree with our analysis of the future potential for local content services?:

On the whole, yes.

Question 9: Do you agree with our assessment of each possible funding source, in terms of its scale, advantages and disadvantages?:

Yes.

Question 10: What source or sources of funding do you think are most appropriate for the future provision of public service content beyond the BBC?:

A modified form of the licence fee. As someone who pays both the licence fee and is signed up to Virgin Media, the licence fee if anything seems cheap at the price.

Question 11: Which of the potential approaches to funding for Channel 4 do you favour?:

Model 2. In order for Channel 4 to carry out its current remit, it will somehow have to bridge a funding gap of between £100m and £150m, depending on the length and depth of the economic downturn.

Question 12: Do you agree that our proposals for 'tier 2' quotas affecting ITV plc, stv, UTV, Channel TV, Channel 4, Five and Teletext are appropriate, in the light of our analysis of the growing pressure on funding and audiences? priorities? If not, how should we amend them, and what evidence can you provide to support your alternative?:

On the whole, yes.

Additional comments:

As the managing director of a smallish but high profile indy, making difficult, expensive, but important programmes for both the BBC and C4, I sense a deeply worrying sea-change in the character and significance of public service broadcasting. The transition from an almost civil service like security in big in-house production departments, to a nineteenth century dock labour style casualization is probably inevitable. But without proper and consistent funding, this form of television - which I still believe to be an integral part of our democratic way of life - the only people who will be able to afford to work in the medium will be either privileged young trustafarians or those in relationships with partners holding down 'proper' jobs in well paid professions. It's already happening, and it worries me a great deal.