



Perceptions of, and attitudes towards, television: 2010

PSB Report 2010 – Information Pack H

Research Document

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Executive summary

Background

This is the third year in which the research data from a number of general broadcasting-related questions have been published alongside Ofcom's Public Service Broadcasting Annual Report.

Ofcom tracks a number of broadcasting-related questions using the Ofcom Media Tracker¹.

The Media Tracker is conducted by Continental Research. It employs face-to-face paper and pencil interviewing (PAPI), conducted by an interviewer in respondents' homes among adults aged 15+ who have a working television set in their homes. Once collected, the data is then weighted to be representative of the UK population.

In 2008 and 2009 the survey was conducted in two waves – with at least four full weeks of fieldwork per wave. In each of these years the first wave was conducted in April and the second in October. In previous years a more continuous method had been used, in which sections of the survey were asked throughout the year. The effect of this is that the 2008 and 2009 survey data may be more affected by seasonality, media events and public opinion. In addition the interviewing methodology has changed. In previous years CAPI (computer-aided personal interviewing) was used.

Given the above significant changes in methodology, we do not recommend making direct comparisons of results in 2008 and 2009 with data collected before this time, although the historic data are included within some overview tables. We recommend that the results are more usefully viewed selectively; providing a picture of public opinion in 2008 and 2009.

There were no major changes in 2009 results compared to 2008 results. The below is a summary of the key 2009 results.

Viewing habits and preferences

BBC One remains the nation's preferred television channel.

- 45% of viewers in analogue terrestrial-only homes said they would choose BBC One if they could have access to only one channel. Second most mentioned was ITV1 (33%).
- 26% of viewers in multichannel homes chose BBC One, closely followed by ITV1 (20%). Sky Sports (1/2/3/Extra) was the third most popular channel, at 7%; followed by Five at 4%, and then Channel 4 at 3%.
- Younger multichannel viewers (15-24s) were disproportionately likely to choose Sky Sports (1/2/3/Extra), E4 and Channel 4 (11%, 11% and 7% respectively).

¹ Some of the questions monitored have remained the same since the Independent Television Commission (ITC) first began the survey, then known as The Public's View. This survey became Ofcom's Residential Tracker in 2005. From 2008 the Residential Tracker then split into two separate surveys – the Technology Tracker and the Media Tracker.

Sources of, and attitudes towards, news

Television was most people's main source of world and local news.

- Television was mentioned by 75% of respondents as being their main source of world news and by 49% as being their main source of local news. The internet was the second most-mentioned main source of world news (9%) and newspapers were second most mentioned as main source of for local news (22%).
- 72% of respondents perceived television news as providing a fair and unbiased source of world News coverage.
- Impartiality of television news was considered important almost universally (93% saw this as important).

Programme standards

While over half of respondents felt that programme standards had remained the same over the last 12 months, around a third felt they had got worse.

- 54% of respondents said that television standards had stayed the same over the past year, while 33% said that programme standards on television had got worse.
- Older people and respondents living in Freeview homes were the least happy with standards; these were the subgroups most likely to claim that standards had got worse.
- More repeats (65%), a lack of variety (33%) and more bad language and/or violence (25%) were the most-cited reasons why programme standards were felt to have got worse.

The majority of respondents had never been personally offended by anything seen or heard on TV.

- 28% said that they had been personally offended by something they had seen or heard on television, although most stated even though they personally found something to be offensive they accepted that others should be allowed to see these things.
- Offence levels were highest among older people and women.
- Bad language (46%) was the primary cause for complaint, while 28% mentioned violence and 23% mentioned bad taste/shock tactics content.
- Channel 4 (33%) and ITV1 (31%) were mentioned most as the channels where offensive material had been seen. For both channels these proportions are lower than in 2008 (Channel 4, 39%, and ITV1, 35%).

Most viewers believed that there was too much violence and swearing on television.

- 51% said they thought there was both too much violence and too much swearing.
- 32% still felt there was too much sex shown on television. However, 58% felt that there was about the right amount.

- 43% felt there was too much intrusion into other's people's lives on television. 46% said that the amount was about right.
- Older people and women were more likely to say that there was too much sex, violence, swearing and intrusion into other people's lives on television.

Protection of children

Around half (49%) of all respondents believed that parents are responsible for ensuring that children do not see unsuitable programming, while 45% believe it is the joint responsibility of parents and the broadcasters.

- Knowledge of the watershed continued to be high (91%), although fewer respondents were aware of the actual time that it comes into force on terrestrial television (81%).
- 37% of multichannel parents claimed they were not aware that on pay-per-view channels it is possible to buy and view films rated 18 at any time of day. A fifth of multichannel respondents (20%) felt that the ability to order and watch films rated 18 at any time of day was a bad idea.
- Nearly a quarter of multichannel parents (24%) said that in the last month they had actively prevented their children from watching something on television that they felt was unsuitable (mostly by switching over the channel – 44% mentioned this response).
- Nearly a fifth of multichannel parents (19%) stated they did not know if their television system had a facility to block access to certain channels.

Television advertising

More viewers felt that current levels of advertising on television were acceptable (48%) but they would not want any more, but around one in three (35%) felt there was already more than they were happy with.

- Among analogue terrestrial-only respondents, 43% felt that current levels of advertising on ITV1, Channel 4 and Five were acceptable while 36% felt that there was already too much.
- Among cable respondents, 52% felt that current levels of advertising on ITV1, Channel 4 and Five were acceptable, while 31% felt that there was already too much.
- Among satellite respondents, 46% felt that current levels of advertising on ITV1, Channel 4 and Five were acceptable, while 38% felt that there was already too much.
- Among Freeview respondents, 51% felt that current levels of advertising on ITV1, Channel 4 and Five were acceptable, while 34% felt that there was already too much.
- The proportion of respondents who said that more advertising would be acceptable was low across all respondents, regardless of the TV platform owned.
- Similar proportions of multichannel viewers felt that current levels of advertising on other (non-terrestrial) channels were either acceptable (42%) or that there was already too much (40%). Satellite respondents were more likely to report they felt there was too much (45%).

Advertisements were more likely to mislead than offend.

- 27% had ever found an advertisement to be misleading, compared to 16% of respondents who had ever found an advertisement offensive.
- Older people more commonly reported an advertisement to be offensive.

Introduction

Ofcom tracks a number of broadcasting-related questions using the Ofcom Media Tracker. Some of the questions monitored have remained the same since the Independent Television Commission (ITC) first began the survey, then known as The Public's View. These questions on broadcasting continue to provide a valuable picture of viewer opinion.

This is the third year in which the research data from these questions have been published alongside Ofcom's Public Service Broadcasting Annual Report.

The report consists of five main sections. It starts by looking at viewing habits and preferences in terms of television channels. It then explores sources of, and attitudes towards, News, both local and national. We then look at programme standards and attitudes to offensive material on television. Attitudes towards the watershed are reported, with particular emphasis on the protection of children. The report concludes by looking at attitudes towards television advertising.

Given the above changes in methodology, we do not make direct comparisons of results with years before 2008 throughout this report, although the historic data are included within some overview tables. We recommend that the results are more usefully viewed in isolation, providing a picture of public opinion in 2008 and 2009 (highlighted in red throughout the document).

The Media Tracker survey will continue to be conducted using fieldwork at two points during the year. The PAPI format first employed in 2008 will continue in use, making data for 2008 onwards directly comparable.

Viewing habits and preferences

Television channels

Traditionally, this survey explores channel loyalty, by asking respondents to select their first-choice channel. Respondents are asked the question: 'if you could have only one of the television channels you currently receive at home, which one would you choose?' The question was asked of analogue terrestrial-only and multichannel respondents separately.

Table H.1 shows the responses to this question. In 2009, the most popular choice among analogue terrestrial-only respondents was BBC One (mentioned by 45%), followed by ITV1, mentioned by 33%.

This ranking was also the case among respondents from multichannel homes, with 26% mentioning BBC One and a fifth (20%) mentioning ITV1. Sky Sports (1/2/3/Extra) was the most-mentioned multichannel channel and third overall (7%). Five was mentioned by 4% of respondents, followed by Channel 4 and BBC2 at 3%. E4 and Sky One were both also mentioned by 3% each. No other multichannel channel was mentioned by more than 2% of respondents.

In 2009, 56% of multichannel respondents mentioned one of the five main PSB channels as their first-choice channel. If the PSB portfolio channels are also included, the proportion who mentioned one of these as their first choice of channel was 68%.

Table H.1

Base	All analogue terrestrial-only						All multichannel					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	381	459	346	258	300	174	596	980	1054	1231	1687	1870
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
BBC One	43	30	45	43	41	45	28	30	33	29	26	25
BBC Two	7	14	9	10	7	3	3	5	4	5	2	3
ITV1	26	32	21	23	30	33	20	23	16	20	20	20
Channel 4 (S4C in Wales)	11	12	12	10	10	9	5	5	6	5	5	3
Five	6	4	5	4	4	2	3	3	4	3	4	4
Total terrestrial	93	92	92	90	92	92	59	66	63	62	57	56
Total multi-channel	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	36	31	34	34	39	40

* 'Don't know' and 'none of these' not shown

* (Q: 'If you could have only one of the television channels you currently receive at home, which one would you choose?')

As may be expected, the appeal of specific channels differs by demographic group, as shown in Table H.2. The youngest age group (15-24 year olds) was less likely to mention BBC One (13%) and ITV1 (14%) than any other age group. They were also more likely to mention Sky Sports (1/2/3/Extra) (11%), E4 (11%) and Channel 4 (7%). BBC One's dominance over ITV1 was greatest within the oldest age group (respondents aged 45+), at 35% and 21% respectively. Among multichannel respondents, 60% of 15-24 year olds mentioned a multichannel channel as their first-choice channel, compared to 29% of those aged 45+.

Table H.2

Base:	Channel would choose if could have only one, by age - 2009		
	15-24	25-44	45+
	320	706	844
	%	%	%
BBC One	13	20	35
BBC Two	0	2	4
ITV1	14	21	21
Channel 4 (S4C in Wales)	7	7	2
Five	4	4	4
Total multichannel	60	42	29

* 'Don't know', 'None of these' and 'Other' not shown

* (Q: 'Thinking of television channels, if you could have only one of the television channels you currently receive at home, which one would you choose?')

Having established which channel respondents would choose if they could only have one, the survey went on to ask: '*which one channel would you say you value the most?*' As in previous years, the 2009 responses were almost identical to the question about which channel they would choose if they could only have one (Table H.3).

Table H.3

Base: All analogue terrestrial-only	Channel valued the most compared with first-choice channel - 2009	
	Valued the most	First choice channel
	174	174
	%	%
BBC One	44	45
BBC Two	4	3
ITV1	29	33
Channel 4 (S4C in Wales)	11	9
Five	1	2

Base: All multichannel	Channel valued the most compared with first-choice channel - 2009	
	Valued the most	First-choice channel
	1870	1870
	%	%
BBC One	25	25
BBC Two	3	3
ITV1	20	20
Channel 4 (S4C in Wales)	3	3
Five	4	4

*'Don't know' not shown

*(Q: 'Which one channel would you say you value the most?')

Attitudes to television

The survey went on to ask respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with four statements about people's attitudes towards certain types of content. Table H.4 details the responses.

In 2009, the statement '*If people want to pay extra to watch particularly sexually explicit programmes not available on other television channels they should be allowed to*' attracted

widespread agreement; a total of 75%, which remained fairly consistent among different age groups.

The statement '*if people want to pay extra to watch particularly violent programmes not available on other television channels they should be allowed to*' also attracted a high level of agreement (66%). Agreement with this statement was significantly higher among the 15-24 age group (73%) compared to the 45+ age group (59%).

However, the last two statements attracted more disagreement. For the statement '*things that are likely to upset or offend even a minority of people should not be shown on television at all*', agreement was 22%, higher among the oldest age group (25% among 45+). For the statement '*I think films shown after 10pm should have the sex, violence or swearing cut out*', agreement was 17% overall, but significantly higher amongst the 45+ group, 20%, compared to 11% and 15% among 15-24s and 25-44s respectively.

Table H.4

	Attitudes to four statements about television - 2009				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no opinion
Base: All respondents	%	%	%	%	%
(1) If people want to pay extra to watch particularly sexually explicit programmes not available on other television channels they should be allowed to do so	25	50	6	2	3
(2) If people want to pay extra to watch particularly violent programmes not available on other television channels they should be allowed to do so	22	43	11	4	3
(3) Things that are likely to upset or offend even a minority of people should not be shown on television	6	16	32	20	4
(4) I think films shown after 10pm should have the sex, violence or swearing cut out	5	12	37	24	3

Sources of, and attitudes towards, news

Respondents were asked questions about the medium they used to find out about local news and world news, and also about the importance of the impartiality of news.

Local news

Respondents were first asked: 'Can you tell me what is your main source of news about what is going on in your own local area?' Television was mentioned most frequently - by 49% of respondents in 2009. This was followed by: 'any newspaper' (22%); radio (11%); talking to people (7%) and the internet (5%). Table H.5 tracks the main sources of local news since 2000.

Table H.5

Base: All respondents	Main source of news about what is going on in local area									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Television	34	28	48	44	46	46	46	47	49	49
Any newspaper	31	46	32	37	36	29	29	27	23	22
Radio	16	14	13	12	12	10	11	10	11	11
Talking to people	14	7	3	2	5	4	5	6	7	7
Internet**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	4	4	5

*'Don't know' and 'other' not shown

*(Q: 'Can you tell me what is your main source of news about what is going on in your own local area?')

** Internet – no data pre-2005 available

Respondents in the oldest age group (45+) were more likely to mention newspaper (23%) or radio (12%). The youngest group (15-24s) were more likely to mention 'talking to other people'. The internet was mentioned by 5% overall, although this figure varied across the age groups - 9% among the 15-24 group, 6% among 25-44s and 2% among those aged 45+.

Overall, 2% of respondents stated they did not get/watch news - although this figure was higher among the youngest age group (15-24s), 5%, than among the other age groups.

In order to try to gauge opinion on coverage of local events, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: 'My local/regional television company reports well on events and news in my local area'. On the whole the majority (71%), agreed with this statement, with agreement highest in Scotland (82%) and lowest in London (56%). Across the nations there was significant variation; overall, 70% of respondents in England agreed with the statement, compared with 77% of those in Northern Ireland and 63% in Wales.

World news

Respondents were asked about their main source of world news. Table H.6 shows the data relating to this question. Television was still mentioned as the main source of world news by

three in every four respondents in 2009, 75%. The internet was second most-mentioned, by 9% of respondents.

Table H.6

Base: All respondents	Main source of world news									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Television	72	66	79	78	77	72	72	70	76	75
Internet**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	5	8	6	9
Any newspaper	13	16	9	10	11	10	10	8	6	6
Radio	9	14	8	7	7	9	8	9	7	6

*'Don't know' and 'other' not shown

*(Q: 'Can you tell me what is your main source of news about what is going on in the world today?')

** Internet – no data pre-2005 available

Younger respondents (15-24) were less likely than the other age groups to name television (67%), particularly when compared to the 45+ age group (81%). Respondents from the 15-24 age group were also more likely to name the internet (18%) as a source of world news, compared to 12% of 25-44s and 3% of the 45+ group. Besides television, those in the 45+ age group were more likely to mention radio (7%) compared to the 25-44s and 15-24s (5% and 1 % respectively).

Those in the highest socio-economic grades (AB) were less likely to name television, compared with those in the lowest socio-economic grades (DE), at 67% and 86% respectively. Those in AB socio-economic grades were more likely to mention newspapers (9%), and radio (8%). Women were more likely to mention television (78%) and men were more likely to mention the internet (12%).

Respondents were then asked which one television channel was their preferred source for getting world news. The highest response was world news shown on BBC One, mentioned by 28% of respondents. This was followed by BBC News/BBC News 24, which was mentioned by almost a quarter of respondents (24%). News on ITV1 was mentioned by one-fifth (20%) of respondents and Sky News by 16%. Respondents under 45 were more likely to mention Sky News as their preferred channel compared with respondents aged 45+; who were more likely to mention BBC One News.

A further question asked respondents which, if any, sources they trusted and felt presented fair and unbiased world news coverage. Overall, more respondents felt that television gave a fairer and more unbiased source of world news coverage than any other medium, mentioned by 72% of respondents overall. However, those in the oldest age group (45+) were more likely to mention television than the youngest age group (15-24) – 74% and 67% respectively. The internet was the second most-mentioned - by 7% of all respondents. Younger respondents (15-24s) were more likely to choose the internet (13%) compared with 9% of 25-44s and 4% of those aged 45+.

Those in the highest socio-economic grades (AB) were also more likely to mention the internet (11%) compared to those in the lowest socio-economic grade (DE), 5%. Radio was mentioned third most overall, by 6% of respondents, with the older respondents (45+) most likely to mention it (8%). Overall, newspapers were mentioned by 3% of respondents, higher among those in the highest socio-economic grades (AB) than among those in the lowest

socio-economic grades (DE), at 5% and 2% respectively. Women were more likely than men to trust television most to present fair and unbiased news of world events, at 74% versus 69%. Men were more likely to trust the internet, at 10%, compared to 5% of women.

Impartiality of news

Respondents were read out the following paragraph: *'When talking about the news, impartiality means that each side is reported with equal weight, and that the organisation doing the reporting is not allowed to express their views on the merit of each side of the case. In the UK, television and radio channels are required by law to be impartial. Newspapers and the internet, while still having to be accurate, do not need to be impartial. How important do you personally think it is that news in general is impartial?'* Almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) felt that it was 'very important'; a further 28% felt it was important. Overall only 1% of respondents felt that it was unimportant. Respondents were then asked how important they personally felt it was that news from a variety of different sources was impartial. A strong majority of respondents felt that it was important for television news to be impartial (93%), followed by radio (89%), then newspapers (88%), internet (79%) and magazines (73%).

Programme standards

Overall standard of television programmes

Respondents were asked how they felt about quality and standards within programmes. First they were asked a general question: 'Do you feel that over the past year, television programmes have improved, got worse or stayed the same?' Table H.7 details the trends in the responses to this question since 1999. The proportion saying that programmes had got worse was 33%, although the majority response was 'stayed the same', mentioned by 54% of respondents.

Table H.7

Base: All respondents	Opinions about television programmes in general										
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improved	8	13	12	12	15	10	10	13	10	13	11
Got worse	31	28	46	47	40	42	40	35	41	32	33
Stayed the same	59	59	41	40	44	46	47	49	46	53	54

*'Don't know' not shown

*(Q: 'Do you feel that over the past year, television programmes have improved, got worse or stayed the same?')

The age of the respondent has a significant bearing on their responses. Older respondents were much more likely than younger respondents to say programmes had 'got worse' and less likely to say they had 'improved' or 'stayed the same'.

Looking specifically at platform breakdown, 28% of analogue terrestrial-only respondents felt that standards had 'got worse'; compared with 38% of respondents in Freeview homes, 31% in cable homes and 29% in satellite homes. Twelve per cent of analogue terrestrial-only homes felt that standards had 'improved', compared to 8% of respondents in Freeview homes, 15% of respondents in cable homes and 12% in satellite homes. Table H.8 details the responses to this question across the age groups and platform breakdowns.

Table H.8

	Total	Opinions about all television programmes, by age and platform - 2009						
		Age			Platform			
		15-24	25-44	45+	Analogue terrestrial-only	Cable	Satellite	Freeview (any)
Base	2044	344	749	951	308	339	825	850
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improved	11	17	13	7	12	15	12	8
Got worse	33	16	26	44	28	31	29	38
Stayed the same	54	63	59	47	56	52	57	51

* 'Don't know' not shown

*(Q: 'Do you feel that over the past year, television programmes have improved, got worse or stayed the same?')

Those respondents who said that programme standards had improved were asked to specify in what ways they felt this had happened (overall numbers of these respondents are small, at around 11% of the total sample, so the figures should be treated as indicative only). The

main response was 'wider range of programmes' mentioned by 51% of respondents, followed by 'improved quality' cited by 43% and 'more interesting' programming, 35%.

The survey then went on to ask those respondents who said that programme standards had got worse in what ways they felt standards had fallen. As has been found in previous years, the most popular response was 'more repeats' (65%) followed by people saying 'lack of variety' (33%). Around 9% of respondents said 'too many reality programmes'; while the total proportion of respondents mentioning 'more sex', 'bad language or 'violence', as a reason for declining standards was 8%, 14% and 11% respectively. Women were much more likely to cite any of 'more sex', 'bad language' or 'violence', mentioned by a total of 41%, compared to a total of 23% of men.

Quality of programmes and channels

Respondents were then asked whether programmes had, over the past year, improved, got worse or stayed the same, specifically in terms of quality. Nearly two-thirds of respondents claimed that, in terms of quality, programmes had 'stayed the same', (64%). One in five (20%), felt that programme quality had 'got worse', while 12% of all respondents said that programme quality had improved. There was some variation between ages, and as with the previous question, those aged 45+ were much more likely to say that programmes had 'got worse' in terms of quality (26%), compared to 15-24s (9%) and 25-44s (16%). Respondents in the youngest group (15-24) 20% felt quality of programmes had improved, compared to 14% of 25-44s and 8% of the 45+ group.

Looking at platform breakdown, 13% of respondents in analogue terrestrial-only homes felt that quality standards had 'got worse', compared to 23% of respondents in Freeview homes, 22% of respondents in cable homes and 17% in satellite homes.

Offensive television content

The survey asked respondents: "Have you personally ever found anything on television to be offensive?" Table H.10 shows the trend data for this question. In 2009, 28% of respondents reported that they had found something on television offensive.

Table H.10

	Overall levels of reported offence												
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Base: All respondents	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Respondent offended	37	31	32	29	42	42	41	32	32	30	32	29	28

(Q: Have you personally ever found anything on television to be offensive?)

There were variations across the different age groups in the proportion of people reporting offence. (Table H.11). The youngest age group (15-24s) was the least likely to report having been offended; only 13% compared with 23% of 25-44s and 37% of respondents aged 45+. Other notable demographic differences observed were that men were less likely to have reported offence than women (23% and 32% respectively).

Table H.11

Overall levels of reported offence by age - 2009						
Base: All respondents	Total	Age			Male	Female
	2044	15-24	25-44	45+	1015	1029
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	28	13	23	37	23	32
No	72	87	77	63	77	68

*(Q: 'Do you personally see or hear things on television which you find offensive?')

The survey went on to try to ascertain on which channel(s) the offending material had been seen. The following table lists the results for the five most-mentioned channels. As in 2008, Channel 4 was mentioned the most frequently across those who had reported something offensive, by one in three respondents in 2009 (compared to 39% in 2008), closely followed by ITV at 31% (compared to 35% in 2008).

Table H.12

Base: All who saw or heard something offensive	Channels said to carry offensive material					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	697	502	486	458	581	564
	%	%	%	%	%	%
BBC One	28	25	28	29	24	27
BBC Two	17	17	15	15	8	7
ITV1	37	35	30	31	35	31
Channel 4 (S4C in Wales)	47	37	35	42	39	33
Five	26	19	18	19	18	15

*(Q: 'And on which channel or channels have you seen or heard something offensive in the last year?')

Respondents who had named a particular channel as having carried offensive material were asked about the nature of the offensive content. While there were slight variations across channels, overall the main responses related to 'bad language' (46%), 'sex/sexually explicit content' (31%), 'violence' (28%), 'bad taste/shock tactics' (23%) and 'disrespectful behaviour' towards certain groups, (17%).

The respondents who had reported offence were then asked: "*How do you generally react when you are offended by what you hear or see on television?*" In other words what do you do?" Over half (55%) said that they switched over to another channel, while 28% claimed to have switched off. About 11% said that they continued watching/did nothing. In total, 2% said they complained to the broadcaster or the regulator. The age of the respondent was a key factor in how they reacted to being offended. The oldest respondents (45+) were much more likely to claim that they switched off. Women were also more likely than men to say they switched off, at 31% and 24% respectively. Men were more likely to say "continue watching/do nothing", at 14%, compared to 9% of women. A further question was asked of those respondents reporting offence, asking them to choose which of three statements best described their attitude towards material which had offended them on television (Table H.13).

Table H.13

Base: All who saw or heard something offensive	Attitude towards offensive material - 2009					
	Total	15-24	25-44	45+	Male	Female
	564	46**	168	350	241	323
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Things which personally offended me should not be shown	22	12	17	25	25	19
Even though I was offended I accept others should be allowed to see	40	45	46	37	43	38
I think such things should only be shown <i>after a clear warning</i>	34	34	32	35	28	38

*'Don't know' not shown

*(Q: 'And which of these statements best describes your attitudes towards things which have offended you on TV?')

** Very small base – results not robust and should be used only for indicative purposes

As can be seen from the previous table, over a third (38%) of respondents felt that material they had found to be offensive should only be shown after a clear warning had been broadcast. Women were more likely to state this opinion than men (38% and 28% respectively). The oldest respondents (45+) were more likely to say that the things that had offended them should not be shown. Bu overall, most felt that even though they were offended themselves, others should be allowed to see the material (40% of all respondents who had reported offence).

The survey asked all respondents whether they thought there was 'too much', 'too little' or the 'right amount' of each of the four aspects: sex, violence, swearing, and intrusion into other people's lives, on television (Table H.14).

Overall, most respondents felt that there was too much coverage including 'violence', and 'swearing'. In respect of 'intrusion into other people's lives' and 'sex', most respondents thought that there was 'about the right amount' (46% and 58% respectively), although 43% felt there was 'too much' intrusion and just under one in three respondents, 32%, felt there was too much sex on television.

Table H.14

	Opinions about the amounts of coverage of four aspects of television - 2009			
	Sex	Violence	Swearing	Intrusion into other people's lives
Base: All respondents	%	%	%	%
Too much	32	51	51	43
Too little	2	1	1	1
About the right amount	58	44	44	46
Don't know	8	4	4	10

*(Q: 'Do you think in general that there is too much, too little or about the right amount of sex/violence/swearing/intrusion on television?')

Older people were more likely than younger people to say that there was 'too much' of all four aspects on television. Similarly, females were more likely than males to say there was too much of all four aspects.

Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that certain programmes showed material containing unfair treatment of people or organisations. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents agreed with this statement, and 32% stated that they were offended by material showing unfair treatment of people or organisations.

Protection of children

Protection of children

The survey went on to consider attitudes towards the protection of children. The first question asked all respondents whom they thought should be responsible for ensuring that children do not see unsuitable programmes. Table H.15 details the responses since 2004.

In 2009, around half (49%) of the respondents believed that it was mainly the responsibility of the parents to protect their children from seeing unsuitable programmes, while 45% believed it was the responsibility of the parents and broadcasters equally. This represents a shift in attitude compared to 2008 results, when more people felt it was the responsibility of both equally.

Table H.15

	Responsibility for children's viewing					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Base: All respondents	1034	2896	1451	1473	1987	2044
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly parents	45	43	43	42	44	49
Mainly broadcasters	5	5	5	4	4	3
Both equally	49	51	51	53	49	45

*Don't knows not shown

*(Q: 'Do you think it is mainly the responsibility of parents, broadcasters or both equally, to make sure that children don't see unsuitable programmes?')

The survey then explored respondents' knowledge of the existence of the watershed: "Broadcasters are required to show television programmes which are not suitable for children only after a certain time in the evening. Before now, were you aware of this?" Knowledge of the watershed continued to be high at 91%.

Respondents who were aware of the watershed were asked whether they knew at what time it came into force on terrestrial television. The majority of these respondents correctly said that it was at 9pm (81%). This correct time was then confirmed by the interviewer, and respondents were then asked whether they thought that 9pm was 'too early', 'too late' or 'about right'. Seventy-two per cent said that 9pm was 'about right' (Table H.16).

Table H.16

	Opinions about the 9pm watershed						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Base: All respondents	1186	1034	2176	1451	1473	1987	2044
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too early	25	32	26	25	23	15	15
Too late	7	7	6	6	8	8	10
About right	66	57	64	67	65	70	72

*'Don't know' not shown

*(Q: 'On terrestrial TV channels the time after which these programmes may be shown is 9pm, usually known as the 9 o'clock watershed. Do you think this is too early, too late or about right?')

Preventing access to certain programming

Respondents in multichannel homes were asked whether they were aware that on pay-per-view channels, where each film can be ordered individually, viewers can watch 12, 15 and 18-rated films at any time of day: *'Were you aware of these rules for pay-per-view channels before I described them?' About half, 52%, of respondents claimed that they were aware of this, while 37% said they weren't. Younger respondents had higher levels of awareness; 62% among those aged 15-24 compared to 58% of 25-44s and 44% of those aged 45+. Respondents with children also had higher levels of awareness, 59% compared to 47% among those without children in the household.*

Multichannel viewers were then asked for their opinion about programmes watched on a pay-per-view basis, and whether or not they thought that the rule (which enables people to watch films classified as 12, 15 and 18 at any time with the provision of a PIN number) was a good idea. Nearly half of these respondents, 48%, felt that it was a good idea. One in five thought that it was a bad idea.

Parents in the sample were asked whether in the last month they had actively prevented their child/children (under the age of 16) from having access to certain television programmes that they felt were unsuitable. Twenty-four per cent claimed that they had.

Those respondents who said that they had actively prevented their children from viewing unsuitable material were asked in what way they had done this (Table H.17). They were most likely to say that they had 'switched channel' (44%), followed by 'turned off' (27%).

Table H.17

	Actions taken to prevent access to certain programmes			
	Totals			
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Base: All parents of children under 16 in household who had actively prevented children having access to a programme in the past month	152	123	170	155
	%	%	%	%
Turned off	36	36	29	27
Switched channel	42	43	50	44
Telling them	14	14	9	17
Sent to bed	25	25	16	16
Parent lock (equipment/software to prevent children accessing certain TV programmes)	13	11	13	9
Take them out of room	7	9	8	3

* 'Don't know' not shown

* (Q: 'And how have you prevented your child(ren) having access to certain programmes on TV?')

The survey then asked all those respondents in multichannel homes whether their multichannel system had a feature that enabled them to block access to certain channels. Nearly half (48%) claimed that their system did have such a feature, just over two in ten (22%) said that it didn't, and just over three in ten (31%) said they didn't know. Those with children in the household which were more likely to be aware of the system (65%), compared to those without children in the household (35%).

The vast majority (82%) of respondents who claimed that their multichannel system had a blocking feature said that the system worked by using a PIN number or password. Around 15% of respondents said that they did not know how it worked. Around one in three (32%) respondents who were aware of a feature that allowed them to block access to certain channels, claimed to have ever used the blocking facility; this figure increased among those with children in the home (42%).

Television advertising

Awareness of promotional messages

The survey asked respondents whether they were aware of three different forms of promotional messages, other than advertisements:

1. Programme sponsorship
2. Trailers or promotions for particular programmes
3. Trailers or promotions for particular television channels

Table H.18 details the 2009 survey responses. In 2009, awareness of all three types of promotional messages was high (at least three-quarters were aware of each), with slightly lower levels citing awareness of channel promotions. Those in multichannel homes had greater awareness of all three types of message, compared to those in analogue terrestrial-only homes.

Table H.18

	Awareness of three types of promotional message - 2009					
	Total	Age			Channel reception	
		15-24 %	25-44 %	45+ %	Analogue terrestrial-only %	Multichannel %
Base: All respondents	2044	344	749	951	308	1870
Programme sponsorship	88	84	88	88	84	88
Programme trailers	83	85	82	83	75	85
Channel promotions	75	73	76	74	66	77

*Don't know' and 'None of these' not shown

*(Q: 'Which of the following are you aware of on television?')

Table H.19 shows the awareness of the three types of promotional messages over time.

Table H.19

	Awareness of three types of promotional message							
	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %
Base: All respondents	1191	1186	1034	1441	1470	1433	1987	2044
Programme sponsorship	91	89	78	78	73	80	87	88
Programme trailers	75	72	79	79	75	82	84	83
Channel promotions	62	56	71	71	65	76	76	75

*Don't know' and 'None of these' not shown

*(Q: 'Which of the following are you aware of on television?')

Attitudes towards advertising

The survey asked respondents a series of attitude statements about advertising with a four-point scale ranging from 'frequently' to 'never': "How often, if at all, do you find advertisements on television..."

- Are **informative** about products or issues?
- **Interfere** with your enjoyment of programmes?
- Are **truthful**?
- Are **clever**?
- Encourage negative or harmful **stereotypes**?
- Sound **too loud**?
- Give you something to **talk about**?
- Are **embarrassing**?
- Show **undesirable** behaviour that children might copy?
- Are **well produced**?

The words in **bold** are used as abbreviations in Table H.20 – a summary of responses by those who said 'frequently' or 'sometimes'. Respondents could answer on a four-point scale from 'frequently' to 'never', as well as a 'don't know' option.

The top two mentions in 2009 were that advertisements 'interfere with the enjoyment of programmes', mentioned by 79% of all respondents, and that advertisements were frequently or sometimes 'clever', 78%. The majority of respondents felt that advertisements were frequently or sometimes 'well produced', mentioned by about three in every four (74%).

Table H.20

General attitudes to television advertising						
Frequently or sometimes find advertisements . . .						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Base: All respondents	2070	1441	1470	1433	1987	2044
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Informative	65	66	68	63	69	68
Interfere	77	78	79	81	80	79
Truthful	60	59	63	59	63	62
Clever	79	77	78	77	79	78
Stereotypes	54	60	57	57	45	43
Too loud	63	63	66	68	61	63
Talk about	54	53	53	51	50	49
Embarrassing	30	36	32	29	24	23
Undesirable	67	69	65	64	51	46
Well produced	n/a	80	80	82	76	74

*(Q: 'How often, if at all, do you find advertisements on television are.....?')

Levels of television advertising

Respondents were asked what they thought about the current levels of advertising on television: 'Bearing in mind that some of the revenue from advertising provides the money to pay for programmes on ITV1, Channel 4 and Five, which of these statements best describes how you feel about the amount of advertising on these channels?'. Table H.21 shows the responses by respondents with different television platforms. Overall, 35% of all respondents said that there was already more advertising than they were happy with. Most respondents (48%) claimed that present levels on these channels didn't bother them but they would not want them to increase. Only 7% claimed that advertising levels could go up a little more before it bothered them.

Overall responses by respondents from different platform groups were fairly similar; although respondents in satellite homes were more likely than other platform groups to state that current levels of advertising were already more than they were happy with (38%). The proportions stating that it would be acceptable if levels of advertising on ITV1, Channel 4 and Five went up was low across all groups.

Table H.21

	Attitudes to amount of advertising on terrestrial channels - 2009				
	Total	Analogue terrestrial only	Cable	Satellite	Freeview
Base	2044	308	339	825	850
	%	%	%	%	%
A little more would not bother me	7	7	9	7	7
Present levels acceptable but don't want any more	48	43	52	46	51
Already more than am happy with	35	36	31	38	34

* 'Don't know' and 'not bothered' not shown

*(Q: 'Bearing in mind that advertising provides the money to pay for programmes on ITV1, Channel 4 and Five, which of these statements best describes how you feel about the amount of advertising on these channels?')

Table H.22, below, shows the responses given by multichannel viewers on the levels of advertising on satellite, cable and digital channels.

Table H.22

	Attitudes to amount of advertising on other (non-terrestrial) channels - 2009			
	Multichannel	Cable	Satellite	Freeview
Base: All multichannel respondents				
	%	%	%	%
A little more would not bother me	6	6	8	6
Present levels acceptable but don't want any more	42	44	37	44
Already more than am happy with	40	38	45	38

'Don't know' and 'not bothered' not shown.(Q: 'which of these statements best describes how you feel about the amount of advertising on satellite, cable and digital channels?')

Misleading and offensive advertisements

All respondents were asked whether they had ever found advertisements to be misleading. They could answer 'frequently', 'sometimes', 'rarely', 'never' or 'don't know'. Table H.23 details the responses. Just over a quarter (27%) said that they frequently or sometimes found advertisements misleading.

Table H.23

Frequency of encountering misleading advertisements on television						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Base: All respondents	2070	1441	1470	1433	1987	2044
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Frequently	9	7	6	8	6	7
Sometimes	30	29	31	28	20	20
Rarely	19	19	20	19	10	10
Never	38	39	36	40	53	53

*'Don't know' not shown

*(Q: 'How often if at all have you found that advertisements on television give you an impression of products or services which you later found to be wrong or misleading?')

Respondents were more likely to have 'frequently' or 'sometimes' encountered a misleading advert compared with one that had offended them (Table H.24); 16% said that they frequently or sometimes found advertisements offensive. Younger respondents were more likely to say that they had never been offended by advertisements on television - 72% of 15-24s reported they had never been offended, compared with 68% of 25-44s and 60% of respondents aged 45+.

Table H.24

Frequency of encountering offensive advertisements on television						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Base: All respondents	2070	1441	1470	1433	1987	2044
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Frequently	3	4	3	2	2	2
Sometimes	20	25	22	18	13	14
Rarely	33	29	31	30	18	16
Never	44	41	42	49	65	65

*(Q: 'How often if ever have you found advertisements on television to be offensive?')

Those respondents who had experienced an offensive advertisement were asked whether they thought that there was a time of day when the advertisement that offended them would be more acceptable. The majority, 57% said no, while 35% said yes. The respondents who felt that the advert(s) which had offended them would be more acceptable if shown at a different time were then asked when that time should be, and the most popular response was 'after 9pm' (39%).