
BBC iPlayer Competition Assessment

Baseline content volumes update

STATEMENT:

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BBC iPlayer baseline volumes

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out a baseline of the content currently available on BBC iPlayer, which has now been updated with volumes of hours of content. Setting out these baseline volumes provides increased transparency for stakeholders and Ofcom; it provides us with information on the scale of BBC iPlayer and enables us to track any changes made to it in the future.
- 1.2 In our Competition Assessment of the BBC's proposals to extend the availability of content on BBC iPlayer (the BCA Final Determination), we decided that the BBC could proceed with implementing its proposals, subject to conditions and guidance.¹ The conditions included, among other obligations, requirements on the BBC to retain data on the content that is made available on BBC iPlayer and to consider what measures of performance for BBC iPlayer will be included in each BBC Annual Report.²
- 1.3 In the BCA Final Determination we included a table, provided to us by the BBC, listing the different categories of content on BBC iPlayer (along with information on their definitions and availability).³ This table did not provide information on the volume of content available. Under Condition 1, we therefore required the BBC to provide us with the volume of hours of content currently made available on BBC iPlayer in each category.
- 1.4 Accordingly, the BBC has now provided us with the volume of content that was available in each category of Table A3.1 of the BCA Final Determination on 29 May 2019.⁴ We have set out these volumes in Table 1.1 below.
- 1.5 We may request updates from the BBC on the amount of content on BBC iPlayer. This will allow us to understand any changes to the volume of content on BBC iPlayer, including in categories that were not part of the BBC's proposals scrutinised in the BCA Final Determination, such as BBC Three programmes.

A **Welsh version** of this document is available.

¹ Ofcom, 2019. [BBC iPlayer Competition Assessment: Final Determination](#)

² Ofcom, 2019. [BBC iPlayer Competition Assessment: Final Determination](#), Annex 2.

³ Ofcom, 2019. [BBC iPlayer Competition Assessment: Final Determination](#), Annex 3, Table A3.1.

⁴ The BBC has told us that it selected this date at random when it began the exercise of assessing everything that was available on BBC iPlayer.

Table 1.1: BBC iPlayer baseline (including the Proposal and other content categories)

Category	Type and definition	Currently (including Ofcom’s Interim Directions)	Volumes ⁵ (approximate hours)	Following approval of the BBC’s proposals ⁶
Normal Business Standard availability of programmes on BBC iPlayer	Network: BBC One / Two / Four / News / Parliament All new programmes published to BBC iPlayer from BBC Network channels, and to which new standard availability will apply, including commissions and acquisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissions available for 30 days • Repeats available for 30 days • Acquisitions available for 30 days, subject to rights • Some programmes (e.g. News, Sport & some acquired) available for shorter period due to rights reasons) 	2175 ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most programmes will be available for 12 months from first availability of the final episode in the current series • Some programmes (e.g. News, Sport & some acquired) available for shorter period due to rights and relevance reasons • Repeats available for 30 days from first availability of the final episode of a series (if the repeat is outside the BBC’s Normal Business or Extended Availability proposals)
	Children’s All new children’s content published to BBC iPlayer, including commissions and acquisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissions available for 30 days • Repeats available for 30 days • Acquisitions available for 30 days, subject to rights • Small volume of BBC iPlayer only commissions (e.g. for 12-15 year olds) 	775 ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most programmes (including online only) available for full public service licence period (i.e. 5 years from first availability of the final episode in the current series) • Some programmes (e.g. some acquired) available for shorter period due to rights reasons • Repeats available for 30 days from first availability of the final episode of a series (if the repeat is outside Normal Business or Extended Availability proposals)

⁵ These volumes approximate the amount of content (rounded up to the nearest 25 hours) available on BBC iPlayer on 29 May 2019.

⁶ The baseline assumes that the BBC fully implements the Proposals and is able to secure appropriate rights to programmes to do so – it may be that not all programmes are available for the full time periods set out.

⁷ This measures all ‘Network’ content, where the content was first made available on BBC iPlayer within the past 12 months.

⁸ This measures all ‘Children’s’ content, where the content was first made available on BBC iPlayer within the past 5 years.

Category	Type and definition	Currently (including Ofcom’s Interim Directions)	Volumes ⁵ (approximate hours)	Following approval of the BBC’s proposals ⁶
Extended Availability (beyond Normal Business) [X]	Returning series Past series of returning titles made available to provide full series box sets on BBC iPlayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small number from trial⁹ available for varying periods 	525	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama and scripted comedy: Up to 50% of current returning titles available as Box sets (c.25 titles each year) Children’s: Returning titles available as Box sets (c.30 titles each year) Other genres: Returning titles available as Box sets (c.25 titles each year)
	Archive series Titles brought back to BBC iPlayer that are no longer in commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small number from trial available for varying periods 	325	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama and scripted comedy: Up to 35 scripted archive titles available at any one time Children’s: c.50 Children’s archive titles available as full box sets (all series) at any one time Other genres: Variable volume of predominantly non-commercial¹⁰ titles (c.50 individual series each year)
	Extended availability for non-returning titles 12 months further BBC iPlayer extension beyond first 12 months (i.e. 24 consecutive months) for selected non-returning titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small number from trial available for varying periods 	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama and scripted comedy: Up to 50% of non-returning scripted titles available for a further 12 months (c.25 titles each year) Children’s: N/A – due to 5 year standard Other genres: Variable volume of predominantly non-commercial singles and one-off series available beyond initial 12 months (c.100 individual series each year)

⁹ The “trial” that the BBC refers to is the same as what we refer to as the ‘2018/19 Interim Changes’ in Section 2 of the BCA Final Determination.

¹⁰ Non-commercial in this context means content that is typically, currently, not likely to be of interest to commercial VOD services. It excludes scripted comedy and drama, as well as commercial factual content (factual content which is likely to be watched by a broad section of the public and therefore likely to have commercial appeal).

Category	Type and definition	Currently (including Ofcom's Interim Directions)	Volumes ⁵ (approximate hours)	Following approval of the BBC's proposals ⁶
	<p>Network acquisitions</p> <p>A small number of acquisitions may be available for more than 12 months (in line with market practice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisitions are a small part of the BBC's overall content offer and are generally available in line with Normal Business 	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The availability for acquired programmes will vary, as the BBC has to buy acquisitions in an open market and the terms are set by the seller. Acquired content may be available on BBC iPlayer for different periods, including longer than 12 months
<p>Pre-existing regulatory approvals for extended availability outside of Normal Business and Extended Availability</p>	<p>Permanent collection - "from the archive"</p> <p>A small selection of additional archive BBC content available "permanently" (i.e. until the BBC decides to take it down) from BBC iPlayer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small number of titles are published to BBC iPlayer as permanent collections, historically under the BBC Four brand but now branded as "From the Archive"¹¹ This low level of volume and activity focuses primarily on knowledge, culture and arts. In addition, some programmes are chosen to showcase exceptional public service content from the past to a new generation across a range of genres and to ensure the overall offer is reflective of all BBC TV output 	350	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change. The BBC will continue to publish on BBC iPlayer a small number of titles "From the Archive" This will continue to be distinct from the BBC's proposals for extended availability for archive BBC content
	<p>BBC Three programmes</p> <p>Both commissions and acquisitions made available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BBC Three is an online only channel that offers a range of innovative and distinctive content created especially for 16-34 year olds in the 	375	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to current availability patterns for BBC Three

¹¹ The BBC Four service licence set out that BBC Four could "offer...some news and current affairs output on-demand for an unlimited time period after initial broadcast" and "offer programming including archive, for an unlimited time period after initial broadcast as part of a permanent collection of on demand content". On average the BBC releases 70 programmes a year under this Trust permission. BBC, April 2016. [BBC Four Service Licence. Issued April 2016](#), page1.

Category	Type and definition	Currently (including Ofcom's Interim Directions)	Volumes ⁵ (approximate hours)	Following approval of the BBC's proposals ⁶
	on BBC iPlayer under the BBC Three brand	<p>UK, including long and short form video.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New commissions are available for at least 24 months, with the ability to extend further. Acquisitions are made available in line with what the BBC can secure in the market 		
Non-network programmes available through BBC iPlayer outside of Normal Business and Extended Availability	Nations only Content specifically commissioned for the BBC in the UK's nations, often in national languages, which only receives a linear transmission in each nation (e.g. Alba, S4C, BBC Scotland, BBC One/Two national opts) not on network TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of Nations content, including S4C/BBC Alba is available in line with Normal Business Some selected content has extended availability to reflect different commissioning strategies within the nations.¹² 	650	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of Nations content will be available in line with the new Normal Business; a small amount will continue to be available for an extended period
	BBC iPlayer only short and long form commissions (excluding Children's, Nations and BBC Three)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some BBC commissions published to BBC iPlayer with no linear transmission Availability varies by programme but is generally longer than 30 days, reflecting commissions for VOD rather than for linear transmission 	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change. The BBC will continue to experiment with BBC iPlayer only commissions but has no current plans for significant changes

¹² The BBC has formal partnerships with MG Alba and S4C to provide content on BBC iPlayer. The BBC Trust BBC Online Service licence set out the BBC iPlayer "may offer access to programming from S4C". BBC, June 2016. [BBC Online and Red Button Service Licence. Issued June 2016](#), page 11.

Category	Type and definition	Currently (including Ofcom's Interim Directions)	Volumes ⁵ (approximate hours)	Following approval of the BBC's proposals ⁶
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This includes short and long form content 		
	BBC iPlayer/online only coverage of seasonal events (e.g. Wimbledon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-demand content published around seasonal events, with availability in line with the rights the BBC can secure for this content As this is events based, this content is often available for limited time periods around these events when it is most relevant 	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change. The BBC will continue to use BBC iPlayer to provide coverage of seasonal events
	Third party (not for profit) programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As set out in the BBC Online service licence from the BBC Trust, BBC iPlayer may carry a "small selection of editorially suitable content commissioned by other third parties" which must be "Not-for-profit cultural and arts organizations, which can support the delivery of the public purposes"¹³ 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change. The BBC expects to continue to publish small volumes of third-party content in line with its pre-existing BBC Trust approval

¹³ BBC, June 2016. [BBC Online and Red Button Service Licence. Issued June 2016](#), page 11.

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Category	Type and definition	Currently (including Ofcom's Interim Directions)	Volumes ⁵ (approximate hours)	Following approval of the BBC's proposals ⁶
	Content from BBC website made available on BBC iPlayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small volume of short and long form content from the BBC website that is also made available on BBC iPlayer if there is an audience need (e.g. clips from programmes, trailers for BBC programmes, other content such as BBC Stories) • This content has different patterns of availability based on rights 	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change. The BBC will continue to use BBC iPlayer to publish some BBC website content where it may benefit audiences
	Radio: Audio-visual content commissioned by BBC Radio with no linear (TV) transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically commissioned alongside Radio events. Includes, for example, live performances 	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change. The BBC will continue to publish some audio-visual BBC Radio content to BBC iPlayer, some of which may be available for longer than Normal Business