

Title:

Ms

Forename:

Pauline

Surname:

Broom

Representing:

Self

What additional details do you want to keep confidential?:

No

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

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Additional comments:

I think speaking EPGs make TV much more accessible to blind people like myself and better identification of audio descriptive programmes. Being able to read out menus would be extremely useful to us who live alone and cannot rely on others to read these for us.

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? :

Yes. Today's technology empowers blind people significantly, and therefore the more they can access, the better. Blindness is a very lonely handicap, and accessible communication technology addresses that and makes the difference.

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?:

No. At the moment there are much more telephones, mobile phones, tablets, and these are more accessible than in the past. Blind people often embrace any technology that helps them. The economic issue raised by this question does not apply to everyone; some older people can afford decent mobile devices as they do not have children to support. Most importantly, it all comes down to a person's state of mind: if you're healthy and determined, then you can learn to use any technology you want.

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? :

Personally, I would say yes; however, this is a question that should be put in front of the Government. Families of blind people would probably pay more for speaking EPGs if that makes the blind person's life better.

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 I think so, this should make visually-impaired people's life better, especially for those who are not tech-savvy. I think speaking EPGs would be a fantastic idea.

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?:

Without so each visually impaired viewers will remain excluded.

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?:

Yes they should be prioritised.

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. That would be discriminating against a person disadvantaged by having a disability.

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?:

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?:

Whatever additional costs could easily be covered from their profits.

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)?: