

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Charles

Surname:

Crisp

Representing:

Self

Organisation (if applicable):

Email:

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:

The consultation document covers most of the current technologies which are available now. The difficulty is the variations produced as the market competes.

What it does not mention is the future of digital technology which may include speech and gesture control.

It also assumes that TV will remain a ground based system when it is more likely to be internet based in the not too distant future.

How many of the current methods will stand the test of time? It seems that with each generation of development it changes, sometimes substantially. The gap between the changes is becoming shorter adding to the cost for anyone attempting to use the latest equipment or method.

There is also the built in obsolescence which occurs when the supplier of say a programme changes the way the information is supplied which is no longer compatible with the set, screen or reader method.

The answer may be to make the controlling device programmable so as to be able to deal with the inevitable changes.

This could be in the form of an 'app' as used by the smart phone or tablet which might include speech recognition. It could be a keypad or touch screen device.

It might start with the basic voice command such as 'switch on', followed by 'play BBC 2 with audio description'. More complex commands could be added and the programme would talk back to confirm the action.

This is an oversimplification but such a device would help those with no hands as well as poor sight.

It would be helpful to extend talking programme guides to include those of the personal video recorder. These can be equally difficult to programme and recall.

I would conclude by saying that the problem with long consultation such as this, however well-meant is that by the time a decision has been made the digital technology will have moved on making the conclusion unworkable.

My advice is to get on with-it.

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? :

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?:

Question 3:Do respondents consider that would it 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? :

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? :

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?:

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?:

Question 7: Do respondents consider that would it 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? :

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?:

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)?: