

Title:

Forename:

Surname:

Name withheld 28

Representing:

Self

What additional details do you want to keep confidential?:

Keep name confidential

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:

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, they have potential to help some people some of the time, but they are not the soel solution and they are not suitable for a large percentage of VI people who do not own or cannot use a touch screen device as easily or efficiently as sighted people.

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?:

Yes. In my experience, the vast majority of those over 65 do not own and do not consider themselves able to use a touch sfreen device as easily or efficiently as sighted people. I am in the age group you might expect to be a devotee of touch screen technology, but for the purposes of finding out what is on television, it seems to me to be a slow, frustrating and challenging solution.

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? :

No. We want the same access to EPGs at the same time at the same price. There can be no room for compromise here. To be very blunt: Without access to the EPG I have no idea what is on television and therefore am very unlikely to watch anything. Television is a prime means of access to culture, information, entertainment and being part of society and there can be no justification for VI people having less access to it.

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. It is easy to use, intuitive and requires little training, prior knowledge or additional cost. Where better to find out what is on television than on your television? It allows seamless ability to record a programme, switch to it, find out more information rather than having then to go to a different device.

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?:

I am not in a position to answer this

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?:

It would be feasible, presumably quicker and presumably more cost-effective, yes. There is a parallel here with the roll out of set-top boxes before the digital switch-over which worked well.

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? :

Absolutely not!

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?:

I am not in a position to answer this question.

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?:

I am not in a position to answer this question. I would add though: "Can providers afford not to include such measures that allow VI people to access information about what is on television? There is a blurred boundary here between cost and corporate social responsibility.

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)?:

There may be scope, but usability must be considered here. If there is even a second's time'lag between pressing a key and hearing the information, that is unacceptable. Any solution must allow access at the same speed and efficiency as sighted people enjoy. the quality of the speech from a server may not be as good, with stutters which are unacceptable.