

Title:

Forename:

Surname:

Name withheld 30

Representing:

Self

What additional details do you want to keep 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:

I am a Virgin Media customer and lost my vision 4 years ago. I currently use the TV Anywhere service, which has allowed me to continue using many aspects of my cable TV. Without the app, I struggle to use the service and have to memorise what the buttons on the remote do and where my favourite TV channels are.

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? :

They are useful. However, what happens if the service is not available or stops working? The user has no backup plan. I am a Virgin Media user and quite often use their TV Anywhere service, and have quite often experienced situations where TIVO has been too busy, or I have been unable to login or the service has had a fault and been off-line. This has resulted in me not being able to control my set top box without speech, which includes using the EPG, view content I have already recorded and so on.

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?:

I agree, there is no way you could get my a parents to learn how to use something like this, or even own a SMART device. Some people prefer the tactile controls and convenience of a remote control.

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? :

Do Google and Apple charge customers extra to use their built in accessibility features? No! Do we charge extra for sub titles or audio description? No! Domestic products should adopt an inclusive design, which will allow more users to purchase/subscribed to a service. This is revenue that the service provider would not have been able to collect before, as users would not have been interested in using their service. It also means advertisers can reach more people too. It also make sense on ethical grounds. People can become disabled due to age, illness or injury. Do you really want to lock those people out?

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? :

Much easier yes, and much more convenient and no worries about having to connect to an external service which could go offline. Building directly into a TV would be particularly welcome, as no additional hardware is required. Users should also be able to set the TV up without any sighted assistance, which includes tuning the TV in and enabling audio description.

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?:

There should be no technical obstacles in 2014. The technology is already there.All we are asking for is an accessibility API

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?:

Build accessibility in by default, don't bolt it on. Then the product can be released to all customers at the same time.

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? :

Loyalty and good customer service is priceless

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)?: