

Name withheld 41

I am writing in response to the Ofcom consultation on making EPGs "talk" for blind and partially sighted people.

My mother is partially sighted and I am also a befriender to a blind lady and help at a blind club. All of the people I have spoken to are very frustrated that they are unable to find out when the viewing time for any of their favourite programmes or the news changes, for example when there are sports programmes which lead to alterations in the schedules. They are also unable to identify when new programmes which might be of interest are on and what is showing on each channel at specific times of the day so they have a choice of what to have on.

Everyone has confirmed that making EPGs "talk" would make their lives a lot easier. None are able to use touch-screen technology so this is not an option to them, and I believe that this would apply to many people who are over 65 and those who are visually impaired. As an example of what can be achieved, many banks have recently responded to a campaign by RNIB to make ATMs "talk" because visually impaired people found great difficulty in using the touch screens to access their money or, in many cases, it was impossible.

I do not agree that that it would be reasonable for the visually impaired to pay more than sighted people for the ability to use EPGs : this is penalising disabled people. It is important to remember that services should be made accessible to all, unless there is a very strong reason why this is impossible.

I trust that you will take these views into account when discussing changes with TV manufacturers.