

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Darren

Surname:

Tratt

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:

In addition to television, DAB should also be made more accessible.

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? :

As far as mobile devices are concerned, I don't use touch screen, but I understand how other people may find them useful to access information on TV.

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?:

That's probably the case at the moment, as older people are not comfortable with mobile devices and touch screen technology. However, this is likely to change in the future, as more and more people will become accustomed to using smartphones.

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? :

Categorically No. we should not pay more, we already have to pay more for every extra piece of equipment or technology. Text-to-speech should be included in all the mainstream technological devices.

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's definitely easier and quicker to press a button than using touch-screen apps.

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?:

That's for them to assess, I don't fully know the technological aspects; what happens however is that visually-impaired people pay for subscriptions, but they can't access the services at their full, which is why many eventually decide to interrupt their subscription to a particular pay TV service.

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?:

Ideally, yes. A technology improves, however, they should be able to include TTS in their boxes, and this should not take long I presume.

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? :

Again, no. The only speaking set-top box available at the moment, TVOnics, comes at the same price as any other box.

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 don't know the technical issues; I would have thought that this will become less of a problem with time.

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 think there would be only slight cost implications for them; I imagine it would cost more to implement TTS on the boxes that are already out there, while it would definitely cost less for the next generation boxes. In terms of the types of cost, I would imagine that there would be some designing cost associated to implementing TTS, however these would only be initial costs.

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)?:

Companies would find it much easier to use cloud-based systems, as they would only need to design the technology to go on the cloud and then roll it out to all the receivers.