

Title:

Prof

Forename:

David

Surname:

Hutchison

Representing:

Self

Organisation (if applicable):

Visiting Professor in Media Policy Glasgow Caledonian University

Email:

X

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep nothing 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

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Comments:

I wish to comment on one issue, the local ownership rules. See below.

Question 1: We welcome any further evidence on our assessment of the media economic landscape, including key examples of international regulatory best practice that you believe may be relevant to this review:

Question 2: We seek views and supporting evidence on our recommendation to remove the local radio service level ownership rules.:

Question 3: We seek views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the local cross media ownership rules be liberalised.:

I support the decision not to recommend any changes to the national cross media ownership rules but do not support the proposed relaxation of the local ownership rules.

The problem - not for the first time in these discussions - is the word 'local'. A local newspaper and a local radio station may well share the same market, but a Channel 3 licence will normally cover a much broader area - a region. So if one company were to own a newspaper and a radio station in the same small geographical area, that would give the company a monopoly of local news provision, regardless of the ownership of the Channel 3 licence which included that part of the country. The two out of three rule only makes sense in a country, like the USA or Canada, where it is possible to find genuinely local newspapers, radio stations and television stations covering the same distinct geographical areas.

What Ofcom is proposing, despite all the caveats to the effect that the relevant companies have no appetite for expanding from one medium to another at the moment, would pave the way for real local news monopolies in the commercial sector. Underfunded internet alternatives would be unlikely to have the ability to offer genuine competition.

Question 4: We seek views and supporting evidence on our recommendation to retain the national cross media ownership rules.:

Question 5: We seek views and supporting evidence on our recommendation to remove the national multiplex rules.:

Question 6: We seek views and supporting evidence on our recommendation to retain the restrictions on broadcast licenses.:

Question 7: We seek views and supporting evidence on our recommendation to retain the appointed news provider rule. :

Question 8: We seek views and supporting evidence on our recommendation to retain the media public interest test in its current form.: