

3i) Do you agree with Ofcom's assessment that television continues to have an essential role in delivering the purposes of public service broadcasting?:

Yes

3ii) Do you agree that UK-originated output is fundamental to the delivery of public service broadcasting purposes?:

Yes

4i) Do you agree with Ofcom's conclusions about the way that other digital channels and interactive media contribute towards the public purposes?:

Yes

5i) Do you agree with Ofcom's assessment of the implications of different economic scenarios for the UK TV market for the future prospects for delivery of the public purposes?:

Yes

5ii) Do you agree with Ofcom's analysis of the costs and benefits of PSB status?:

Yes

6i) Do you agree with Ofcom's vision for public service content?:

6ii) How important are plurality and competition for quality in delivering the purposes of public service broadcasting, and in what areas?:

Very important

6iii) In maximising reach and impact of public service content in the future, what roles can different platforms and services play?:

6iv) Do you agree that the existing model for delivering public service broadcasting will not be sufficient to meet changing needs in future?:

Yes

10i) Do you agree with our assessment of the possible short term options available relating to children's programming:

Yes

11i) Do you agree that new legislation will need to be in place by 2011 in order to ensure continued delivery of the public purposes in the medium and long term?:

Yes

Comments:

I am writing as the joint Managing Director of a small, specialist independent production company who also provides consultancy services to Channel 4 regarding animation matters. I am very concerned about the threats to the future of Channel 4 funding, summarised in the Executive Summary Paragraph 1.18 and subsequent sections.

I have been involved in the commissioning and production of live-action and animated children's TV programmes for nearly 10 years and I want to stress how vital it is that Channel 4 maintains its PSB status. Over the last 25 years Channel 4 has funded hundreds of short films by talented animators who would never have found funding elsewhere. Through three schemes - Animate, jointly funded by Channel 4 and the Arts Council, MESH, which had support from NESTA, and AIR which was based at the Bradford Museum of Film, Photography and Television, approximately 15 short films a year have been produced, alongside an extensive Channel 4 funded training and career development programme. The short films produced via the Channel 4 schemes regularly win awards at film festivals around the world. The result of all this support is that the UK now has one of the highest concentrations of animation talent of any country in the world, producing world class children's TV, commercials, pop videos and feature films.

This year, in my capacity as animation consultant to Channel 4, I am managing the launch of a brand new broadband channel called 4mations, which will be designed and built by the UK's foremost animation studio Aardman. 4mations will provide a platform for all the many award winning short films made over the years through the Channel 4 schemes, as well as films made by the rising stars of the future and will also nurture and develop the UK animation community via a range of new training initiatives, competitions and paid commissions. It will also provide a unique environment for animators to support one another, get vital professional input and advice and act as a springboard for the careers of animators who might not ordinarily have access to the industry. Another of the initiatives coming out of 4mations is a new short film scheme jointly funded by Channel 4, the UK Film Council and its regional and national Strategic Partners to support new and emerging talent throughout the UK.

Channel 4 is putting a significant amount of money into the launch of 4mations and it is important that this is recognised as a vital contribution to the creative health and economy of the UK. 4mations is a perfect marriage of an online initiative specifically tailored to a web audience with the production of content that still has an outlet on television. This sort of initiative would not have been started by any other UK broadcaster. Channel 4's unique relationship with smaller producers and willingness

to fund experimental work is in danger of being eroded by lack of funding. Channel 4's PSB status must be preserved to ensure the continued vitality of the UK's broadcasting landscape.

I also believe that the move to create more programmes for older children on Channel 4 is a good one and should be extended. The BBC does an admirable job of providing a broad children's output but they do not address the needs of children older than 11 years of age. Channel 4 should be given every support to address the major gap in the market. In general the problem of lack of funding for UK produced children's funding is a deeply serious one and short term intervention is required to ensure the long term health of the UK's children's TV industry. The children's TV industries in countries such as France, Canada and Australia are thriving with Government support and the children in those countries are presented with positive images of themselves and their own culture. Sadly, the same is increasingly not the case in the UK. A production tax credit system would definitely help the ailing industry in the short-term and allow the UK Producers to work on a level playing field with foreign providers of content. It would be fatal to leave all of the UK's children's television provision in the hands of the BBC. While the BBC does an excellent job with its children's programmes there needs to be healthy competition for the best ideas to thrive.

I am happy to contribute more to the PSB debate if required.