

Name and title under which you would like this response to appear:

Selective viewer

Representing:

Self

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep name/contact details/job title 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

Question 1: To what extent do you consider that DTT, DSat, cable and IPTV are in competition with one another for subscribers of pay TV services ? either at present or in the future?:

There is not really fair competition across all platforms. This was shown earlier in the year when ntl/Virgin media had to remove Sky channels from cable or pay a substantial price increase.

The removal of Sky from cable was, I believe, part of an overall plan. It's no coincidence that very shortly after its removal from cable, there was an intensive marketing campaign involving posters, stalls in shopping centres and mailshots. Indeed, I still get junk mail from them about every 2 or 3 months. Needless to say it ends up in the bin.

If Sky want to remove News, Sports News and Three from Freeview, let them, but do not let them provide replacement pay channels on Freeview. It will leave room for other channels on the platform.

Besides, what's the point of calling the whole platform "Freeview" if certain channels within it require to be paid for?

Question 2: To what extent do you consider the Proposal is likely to deliver benefits to the consumer?:

I do not see significant consumer benefits. If a consumer wishes to pay for the provision of extra TV channels it is easy to contact Sky and have a satellite system installed.

Question 3: To what extent do you consider that there is scope for sustainable competition in pay TV on the DTT platform and, more broadly, across all pay TV platforms?:

I am not at all convinced that there is scope for this. The reason is simple - if a consumer wishes to pay for TV services, Sky will install the equipment for free and actually have an attractive TV/Internet/phone package on offer at the moment.

Question 4: What are likely to be the key aspects of competition between providers of retail pay TV services on the DTT platform? E.g. what is the role of premium sports and movies content?:

If I were in charge of any future strategy I would direct TV services towards specific platforms - FTA channels on DTT and pay services on cable or satellite. On satellite it's easier to monitor the viewing of pay services as the STB requires to be connected to a phone line, and what if a hacker cracks the encryption used in DTT?

Question 5: Do you consider that if Sky were to become the only provider of pay TV on the DTT platform it would be likely to have a significant detrimental effect on competition in the long term? How might this affect the development of other platforms for the delivery of pay TV services?:

In the interests of competition, no one provider of any service should be allowed to become the sole provider. Is this not contrary to EU rules on fair trading anyway?

Question 6: To what extent, if at all, do you consider that the Proposal would be likely to lead to any of the public policy concerns outlined at Section 4?:

The very reason for DTT's existence. Freeview should do as its name suggests, be free to view. It appears to me that there are a number of broadcasters who are quite keen to get viewers to pay for whatever TV service they provide. This mindset is one in which money is first, and while I am not averse to private companies making healthy (not excessive) profits, broadcasters must strike a balance between moneymaking and PSB. I am not convinced that the correct balance exists in the minds of some broadcasters.

Question 7: Specifically, to what extent do you consider that the Proposal would be likely to lead to consumer confusion?:

I think that consumers are well enough advised and are inherently knowledgeable enough not to be confused.

Question 8: To what extent do you consider that it is beneficial for consumers to be able to obtain Sky and existing DTT pay TV content without having to purchase separate STBs?:

It is quite unacceptable that a separate STB should be required to receive DTT. This is more likely to lead to confusion, not to mention a mess of wiring at the back of a set. Also, if a consumer were to purchase a brand new TV with integrated Freeview, he or she may not be very pleased at then having to buy an additional STB.

Question 9: Do you consider that the Proposal might lead to any additional public policy concerns:

At the moment, all the TV sales outlets are exhibiting the benefits of HDTV. Ofcom should be looking at the provision of HDTV on the DTT platform. Would the provision of pay TV services on DTT occupy bandwidth which could be used to provide HDTV?

Question 10: If Sky becoming the only provider of pay TV services on the DTT platform were likely to have a significant detrimental effect on competition, do you consider that it is possible to address this through a set of additional conditions and/or directions? If so, what form should those conditions/directions take?:

Given what Sky have done over the past few months, it appears to me that they have a strategy, which is to supply TV services entirely from their own platform. Evidence for this is provided in my response to Q1, and in Sky's proposal to broadcast using a standard which is not compatible with existing STBs.

Additional comments:

As a selective watcher of TV, I have a set of principles: I pay for the BBC through my TV licence, and enjoy the privilege of watching TV without commercials. Other broadcasters receive their funding from commercials and associations, and more recently, premium rate phone calls. If I were to pay for these services, it would mean four revenue streams for the broadcaster and my principles prevent me from doing this.

I can fully understand that payment for watching sport, recent films or adult content is totally justified as attendance at these events (or purchase of adult magazines/DVDs) would be paid for anyway, but payment for what I call "ordinary" TV cannot be justified.

In the short term, DTT must expand and should include provision of HD and STBs should be able to receive HD broadcasts.

In the medium term, I am inclined to agree with Greg Dyke, former DG of the BBC, which is that TV will be totally on demand delivered through broadband. When this happens, there will be no problems. A football match will be purchased in exactly the same way as a song is purchased from Apple's iTunes, and there will be no need for Sky Sports or Setanta. In fact, that's the way it should be. After all, you don't require a monthly subscription to obtain groceries from a supermarket.

