

Title:

Dr

Forename:

Mark

Surname:

Dobie

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

Mark Dobie

Representing:

Self

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

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?:

Only to the extent that each platform can reach a different set of customers. I believe it is the content that primarily drives the competition for pay TV services and if it is compelling enough then customers can adopt other platforms if necessary.

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

I believe the proposal is not at all beneficial to the consumer. Those consumers who would appreciate the choice of pay TV from Sky are likely to already have the choice of satellite or cable platforms and will have the choice of IPTV in the future. The remaining consumers will be losing channels from freeview where capacity is already a scarce resource.

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 imagine that the pay TV customer base is quite a small proportion of the whole TV viewing population. If several pay TV providers were to compete on the DTT platform then this could deprive the majority of consumers of a disproportionate number of channels on an already limited platform. The scope for competition in pay TV on DTT is limited. Considering all platforms, the usual competition rules should be able to ensure a competitive market.

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?:

For sport I think the key aspects are live and comprehensive coverage. For movies I think it is about convenience.

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?:

Yes it would be detrimental. If Sky have a monopoly on one platform they can use those potential viewers when negotiating for rights to content on all platforms. They could use a strong position on one platform to gain advantage over competitors on other platforms, leading to a less competitive market overall.

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?:

I do not believe that the proposal would adversely affect the digital switch over process.

I do believe that the technical concerns of running two CA systems in parallel are valid.

I strongly echo the concern described in 4.10 that the early adoption of MPEG4 by Sky would add to the confusion, especially if this is technically different to a

subsequent adoption of MPEG4 by freeview.

The technical issues of better compression from MPEG4 along with HD broadcasting should be sorted out properly, once. I would not want to see these decisions influenced by hurried choices made by Sky in an effort to rush into a new market. I would prefer the future of the freeview platform to be standardised first, followed by whatever competition can occur. This is my main objection to the proposal.

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

To a very great extent. Many people are used to buying a television only. If there is a choice of receivers and a choice of televisions and a choice of recorders with one or other or mixed capabilities then it can only add confusion. People will buy freeview branded equipment and then wonder why they can't see all the channels that are advertised as being available on freeview.

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 would be most beneficial to retain the strength of the freeview brand by ensuring that all freeview equipment can be used to watch all freeview services. Sky seem to be suggesting launching an alternative DTT platform with a combined Sky and freeview box, at the expense of some freeview capacity. This can only be to the detriment of freeview and its viewers and lead to dilution of the freeview brand.

When freeview needs to change in the future, this should be a single exercise that results in an improved freeview platform for all providers, advertisers and viewers.

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

No.

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?:

My strongest concern would be to ensure that the platform itself is open, in the sense that any manufacturer should be able to incorporate the reception of Sky pay TV services into their products. This would at least allow for the possibility of equipment that can be used with all DTT services and might help to limit customer confusion

Additional comments:

Thank you for consulting the public on this important issue concerning the future of TV broadcasting. I look forward to your decision.