Title:

Mr

Forename:

Paul

Surname:

Harris

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

P Harris

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?:

While there is competition between the services, they compete to some extent in different markets - it is quite straightforward for the majority to get pay channels through cable or satellite if they so choose, whereas DTT serves a market that has developed into a tradition of public service over the last 60 years.

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

About 1/10th as much as if pay channels were kept on services that don't use spectrum belonging to the public and forced to open up to a la carte pricing.

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?:

There is a lack of competition, but that is based on the dominance of Sky/Virgin, which would not be helped by allowing them to broaden their oligopoly.

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?:

This is a central point - providers don't really compete in the sports field in particular because they deal in unique events. Exclusivity deals mean that if Sky is showing Premier League soccer nobody else is, at least to the same extent. Giving the companies yet more outlets for that same material would presumably increase their profits, allowing them to strike even more exclusive deals, and with greater exclusivity come higher prices for the consumer.

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?:

That it would be detrimental is so obvious it almost goes without saying - a monopoly supplier of anything, especially one with the power Sky already has, will inevitably restrict choice and increase prices for everyone. And as long as it is allowed to build its monopoly it will increase its stranglehold on sports and movies, removing content that the developers of alternate delivery mechanisms could use to boost their services.

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 biggest issue for me is that Sky's decision to encode in a particular form of MPEG4 format, while welcome technologically (why wasn't this done for all of Freeview?) might set a precedent for future broadcasters that is based on what suits Sky, not what is best for the consumer.

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

Another box to purchase, potentially one that is exclusive to the Sky content, is obviously confusing as well as wasteful. In addition anything that dilutes the idea of FTA is confusing - as consumers we thought that the spectrum was being auctioned off to provide TV services, but now we have to pay again.

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?:

I'd say it's beneficial to between £20 (the cost of a new decoder box) to £2000 (the cost of buying a new TV with sufficient SCART sockets, a new DVD Recorder, a new DVR, etc).

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

There's a huge problem, which is that the purchase of possibly hundreds of thousands of new boxes and associated equipment, the dumping of 'obsolete' hardware, and the standby costs for all these extra boxes are all environmental nightmares.

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?:

1. Mandatory a la carte pricing.
2. Additional spectrum fees.
3. Requirement to offer *all* of the channels they carry through their other services.

Additional comments: