

Governors' review of services Television

Overview

We have taken action over the past few years to clarify and strengthen the distinctive public service purposes of BBC Television. This action, the result of our consultation with licence payers, has led to a wider range of output, increased investment in distinctive public service genres such as arts, current affairs, history and science, and a corresponding decrease in less distinctive genres such as makeover and reporting celebrities. We note that the audience research informing Ofcom's recent review of public service television supports this shift in emphasis.

This year was the first full year of the BBC's digital television channels and we are encouraged by the progress so far. Both children's channels are now solidly established; BBC Three's risk-taking approach is helping to refresh genres such as comedy, factual and current affairs in a schedule refocused to enhance its distinctiveness, and we have supported BBC Four's early success by approving a modest increase in funding for drama and comedy.

Against this background, we are concerned about a decline in perceptions of quality of BBC output in general, and that the perception of the value placed on BBC Three and Four remains low. Work will be done in the year ahead to understand these perceptions better.





1	2	4
	3	5

1 Pompeii
BBC One's dramatic reconstruction of the Roman city's final day

2 Michelangelo
Biography of the Renaissance genius on BBC One

4 Born to Win
Searching for athletes with the talent to make it to the top

3 Canterbury Tales
The Man of Law's Tale retold for the BBC One audience

5 Panorama
A special edition dealt with the issue of asylum

BBC One

Remit

BBC One aims to be the UK's most valued television channel, with the broadest range of quality programmes of any UK network. The channel is committed to widening the appeal of all genres by offering the greatest breadth and depth within them. BBC One is committed to covering national events and issues, showcasing landmark programmes and exploring new ways of presenting specialist subjects.

BBC One has a unique significance as it accounts for approximately one-third of BBC programme spending, has the widest reach of any BBC service, and many people use it as a measure of all BBC services. Its public service role is to deliver breadth and depth across all genres and, as we have set out in our review of objectives (pages 12 to 22), we have actively encouraged management to reshape the channel to make this public service purpose clearer.

There is evidence that the strategy is delivering results. This year BBC One reached more of its potential audience than last year and, in research, audiences judged it to be the channel offering the best quality output in 12 out of 22 genres, including key genres such as news, current affairs, comedy and period drama. However, audience perceptions that the quality of BBC Television is declining are worrying, and we need to do more to understand this better.

Over the past year there has been increased investment in serious factual output – including history, science, natural history and business. This has been visible on screen both as increased hours in these genres and in higher-profile output.

BBC One has also endeavoured to make serious subjects accessible to a wide range of audiences. This has been done through new technologies, for example, bringing ancient Rome to life in programmes such as *Pompeii: The Last Day* and *Colosseum, Rome's Arena of Death*; and through complementary scheduling, for example, by broadcasting a documentary about Charles II in the same week as the period drama *Charles II: The Power and the Passion*.

As well as offering a range of genres, BBC One aims to offer a breadth of output within genres to cater for the audience's differing levels of knowledge and interest. For example, a more challenging arts strand, *Imagine*, was launched in 2003 to complement Rolf Harris's Sunday evening programme and one-offs such as *The Divine Michelangelo*. Our initial accountability work with audiences on arts output indicated that this had been well received (see page 14).

We are pleased to note that during 2003/2004 it has been BBC One's more ambitious dramas, such as *State of Play* and *The Canterbury Tales* that have made most impact. Audiences have scored these for memorability as highly as national sports events such as Wimbledon.

396

thousand hours of BBC TV and radio in 2003/2004

4.7p

cost per hour per home spent with the BBC

For more broadcasting facts and figures, see pages 58 to 67 and 136 to 146

Governors' review of services Television

In a year when BBC journalism has been under intense pressure, leading to fears that it would step back from tackling difficult subjects, it was particularly pleasing to note the impact made by *The Secret Policeman*. This undercover investigation of racism among police recruits from Greater Manchester, Cheshire and North Wales came under strong attack from the Home Secretary before it was broadcast. But after it had been shown he accepted that the BBC had been justified in its methods. As a result of the programme, police training methods were changed and a number of police officers resigned.

During the year the channel provided extended coverage and analysis of Iraq, the Conservative Party leadership result and the Hutton Inquiry. Four *Panorama* specials in peak time examined topical issues, and there were three 'event days' offering a range of output on the subjects of asylum, consumer debt and the NHS. In December, BBC One cleared its lunchtime schedule to cover the England rugby team's victory parade through London.

In a relatively quiet year for sports output, memorable coverage included World Athletics, Six Nations Rugby and Wimbledon. *Grandstand* was relaunched with a modernised format at the start of 2004. This was a busy and largely successful year for television sports rights: *Match of the Day* will return on Saturday nights and long-term contracts for Six Nations Rugby, Wimbledon, horse racing and the FA Cup were signed. The loss of the Boat Race was disappointing however.

BBC One continued to create entertainment events that bring the UK together such as *Children in Need* and the interactive quiz *Test the Nation*. A notable new format was *Born to Win* which searched for the next generation of British sporting talent. The winners were awarded sports bursaries and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) was sufficiently impressed to add a bursary of its own. The project produced a valuable spin-off by encouraging participation in sport – more than 25,000 pupils took part in a *Born to Win* activity.

Despite these successes, entertainment continues to be a challenge for BBC One as it balances priorities between distinctiveness which implies innovation and risk-taking, and the necessity to meet the needs of a mainstream audience which suggests the familiar and trusted. Finding successful original formats for Saturday nights remains a particular challenge.

We particularly welcome BBC One's launch of a range of new comedy titles in peak time this year. While the new commissions have had varying degrees of success they have made the channel the UK's biggest investor in this notoriously risky genre, an investment which must continue if BBC One is to live up to its comedy heritage. Furthermore, to be successful, the channel needs the confidence to give its commissions time to develop when initially faced with disappointing ratings.

While BBC One met all the commitments outlined in the Statements of Programme Policy, we have a duty to ensure that the channel's schedule, as well as its programmes, best serves audience needs. We have asked our team of advisers to undertake an independent study to assess whether or not the channel has the best balance of output in peak time. We will report on the outcome next year.

Consultation with our independent advisory body, the Central Religious Advisory Committee (see page 77), has already highlighted some disquiet over the place of religion in the BBC One schedule. Work will be undertaken over the next year to assess the effectiveness of the religion strategy we approved in 2002 which promised high-impact religious programming on BBC One alongside *Songs of Praise* and *The Heaven and Earth Show*. While research indicates that the BBC remains the preferred channel for religion, we are concerned that there may not be enough landmark output in peak time to make a regular impact with viewers.



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1 Later with Jools Holland
Music lovers at a recording of the late-night BBC Two show

2 The Office
First shown in BBC Two, this show won an unprecedented two Golden Globes in the US

4 Seven Wonders...
Celebrating Britain's industrial heritage

3 The Day Britain Stopped
Innovative drama-documentary investigating transport issues

BBC Two

Remit

BBC Two sets out to be a mixed-genre channel combining serious factual subjects with comedy and drama to bring challenging, intelligent television to a wide audience. The channel identifies ambition and innovation as its key values. BBC Two aims to create programmes that inspire and excite audiences.

We approved a new strategy for BBC Two in March 2003 and the results have started to show on screen this year.

The new strategy aims to underline BBC Two's distinctive public service role as a channel offering a more challenging mix of output than BBC One. BBC Two's broad range of genres, with a strong, distinctive factual core, appeals to a wider audience than the digital networks BBC Three and BBC Four.

The strategy commits the channel to offering audiences greater variety across the analogue channels by reducing the volume of lifestyle programmes – especially makeover – between 8pm and 9pm, and to increasing the presence of genres such as arts and current affairs in peak time, with more serious documentary output at 9pm.

As a result of the strategy, funding has shifted away from entertainment, and there has been an increase in hours of factual programming on the channel, including history, science, business, current affairs, learning and intelligent entertainment such as *Mastermind*.

Effort has been put into attracting new audiences to non-entertainment output by developing new ways of presenting traditional genres. In history, for example, *Seven Wonders of the Industrial World* looked at the Industrial Revolution through seven engineering achievements of the era; *Restoration* engaged the audience's interest in local historic buildings through a national vote which, with the Heritage Lottery Fund, raised £3.5million to restore the winner, the Turkish baths in Manchester.

BBC Two has also found ways of reinventing aspects of its music, arts, and factual output through the use of drama. In arts output, the results have included memorable accounts of the lives of great artists including Beethoven and the poet Philip Larkin. In factual output, *The Day Britain Stopped* was an innovative 'what if?' account of a day when Britain's transport system came to a catastrophic halt.

Drama is also central to BBC Two's new peak-time current affairs strand *If...* which was launched in March. We welcome BBC Two's commitment to this new scenario-based analysis programme which is examining a wide range of issues and helping to generate and inform political debate.

The work we have done with audiences and with people working in the arts (see page 14) has highlighted a perception that the arts are of low priority to the BBC and that one factor in this has been the lack of a regular television arts strand. We therefore welcome the planned launch of a new weekly peak-time arts and culture programme on BBC Two.

Despite increased competition, BBC Two has managed to hold its reach over the past year and approval of the channel is also marginally up on last year with a higher proportion of the audience perceiving the channel as "up to date". Research also suggests that audiences perceive BBC Two as offering the best range in seven genres and quality in six.

However, the strategy is still in its infancy and we will continue to monitor its implementation and the success of the new strands in delivering a distinctive service that meets audience needs.

Governors' review of services Television

BBC Three

Remit

BBC Three aims to offer an intelligent, ambitious mix of programmes which reflect the things that matter to young British adults. The channel is committed to a mixed schedule of news, current affairs, education, music, arts, science and coverage of international issues, as well as to high-quality, innovative drama, comedy and entertainment.

BBC Three was launched in February 2003 as a mixed-genre digital channel aimed at young adults – a group relatively underserved by traditional public service broadcasting. It has had some early successes and now regularly reaches over a fifth of its core audience of 25–34 year olds each week. Genres that have made an early impact include current affairs (*The Third Degree*), comedy (*3 Non-Blondes*, *Little Britain* and *Nighty Night*), animation (*Monkey Dust*) and science (*Body Hits*). A selection of programming concerned with parenting (*Little Angels* and *Who Rules the Roost?*) also made a mark. Some of this innovative output has already successfully transferred to the analogue channels, benefiting their viewers.

The channel's factual output has tended to be dominated by celebrity, relationship and lifestyle content that veered into competitor territory. This is being addressed – for example, the celebrity-focused *Liquid News* has been dropped from the schedule.

The channel set out to be innovative, experimental and risk-taking. It has attracted criticism because some of its output is controversial. But this is inevitable, given the channel's ambition to present key aspects of public service broadcasting in new

ways that appeal to young adult audiences. We see the channel as a bold attempt to reconnect these viewers with public service broadcasting and, while it still has some way to go, we will continue to support it so that it is given the time it needs to prove itself.

The channel originates material but also repeats – and premieres – some programmes from BBC analogue channels. This allows audiences to catch up, or view at times that may be more convenient – and it also brings viewers to the channel who can then be introduced to originated programmes scheduled immediately after these shows. As the channel matures, one challenge is to reduce dependence on output from other channels, and the consequent audience perceptions that it is a place to catch up on programmes first shown on BBC One or BBC Two rather than for original programming.

The channel must also focus on building on its successes in comedy, current affairs and science, and reap the benefit of its investment in drama to bring a young mainstream audience to this genre.

But a key challenge remains news. The hourly *60seconds* bulletins have proved popular and regularly receive audiences four or five times the channel average, but the main peak-time news has found it hard to craft a format that will capture and keep the attention of its target audience. The success of current affairs on BBC Three (through *The Third Degree* strand) suggests there may be an appetite for a longer bulletin allowing a more analytical approach. As a result, the original 15-minute evening news has been replaced with a 30-minute nightly news analysis programme.

1,556
hours of news on BBC One

82%
of BBC Three programmes
were specially commissioned



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1 Shakespeare's Globe
Live: Richard II from the reconstruction of Shakespeare's theatre

2 The Alan Clark Diaries
Dramatisation of his life and times was a big hit for BBC Four

4 Gauguin: The Full Story
Waldemar Januszczak's exploration of the French artist's life and times

3 The Third Degree
Flagship current affairs from BBC Three

5 Little Britain
Cutting-edge comedy from BBC Three

BBC Four

Remit

BBC Four aims to serve audiences in search of greater depth and range in their viewing. Its ambition is to be British television's most intellectually and culturally enriching channel. BBC Four offers a distinctive mix of documentary, performance, music, film and topical features as a satisfying alternative to more mainstream programming.

Since its launch in March 2002, BBC Four has become the most watched channel of its kind. *The Alan Clark Diaries*, co-commissioned with BBC Two, averaged 856,000 viewers during its first episode – one of the highest-ever recorded audiences for an original drama on a UK digital channel. The channel has found a distinct audience – which tends to be a little younger than that of the factual channels that are its closest competitors. The output generates very positive press reviews and focus group research underlines the value viewers place on it.

The channel has been a success and deserves more investment. We have approved a measured increase in BBC Four's budget to enhance the channel's output of event drama and intelligent comedy. There is good evidence that this will enable BBC Four to appeal to a wider audience.

The channel's distinctively public service proposition lies partly in its international outlook and intellectual ambition, partly in the range of its schedule (competitor channels offer highly specialised niche programming) and partly in its high proportion of original commissions of UK-originated output.

In addition the channel takes seriously its vision of becoming strongly valued for its contribution to the UK's cultural life, as well as to the landscape of broadcasting. To this end it has worked with major galleries to make exhibitions available to a national audience, actively supported the foreign-language film distribution sector in the UK, worked with theatre producers to bring both commercial and subsidised production to the screen, and maintained its sponsorship of the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction. Building partnerships with other institutions is a productive way for the channel to increase its impact, promote its presence, and deliver public value to the wider arts community.

BBC Four has real potential for growth. Many people who would value its output have not yet made the transition to digital television. The channel needs to make further progress in appealing to that wider audience. The channel has made good use of the potential of interactivity to build awareness, for example the online *Black Flash* vote to find the greatest British black footballer prompted debate on BBC Radio Five Live and iXtra and gave the channel access to new and wider audiences.

But we are clear that maximising the channel's potential for growth must be achieved without either diluting the key elements of its unique proposition – or by lessening the commitment to more thoughtful, challenging programming on the analogue channels, particularly BBC Two.

42%
of BBC Four was music and arts

1,293
hours of factual programmes on BBC Two

For more broadcasting facts and figures, see pages 58 to 67 and 136 to 146

Governors' review of services Television

The CBBC Channel

Remit

The CBBC Channel offers a distinctive mixed schedule for children aged 6–12, encouraging them to find out more about existing interests or inspiring them to develop new ones and helping them to understand and embrace the world around them. The channel puts an emphasis on encouraging participation.

The CBBC Channel was launched in February 2002 as a dedicated children's digital channel. Its distinctiveness rests on the quality of its output, the range of its schedule (with clear commitments in news, education and drama), the low repeat level, and the high proportion of UK-originated material in a market where children's channels mostly show acquired and often imported programming.

The CBBC Channel's philosophy is "learning through fun". This means introducing an element of learning and life skills development across a large part of its output including drama and factual. The schedule also includes *Class TV*, a four-hour block of schools programmes transmitted every day during term time. These programmes are designed primarily for use in the classroom and are focused on the school curriculum.

The target age range is difficult to reach. Typically they are short of time and want a channel that delivers something just for them. The channel initially struggled to communicate its mixed-genre offering, but over the year it has improved its performance and now reaches nearly a million viewers a week.

Experimentation has indicated that more frequent but shorter news bulletins are most effective at reaching and engaging this audience in news output. While the number of bulletins has been increased from two in 2002/2003 to seven a day in 2003/2004, the channel has failed to meet its commitment to 85 hours of news in 2003/2004. The strategy is to gradually increase the overall volume of news in the schedule.

Interactivity has been promoted by placing live content at the core of the schedule and by connecting with the audience via mail, telephone, email, SMS and online.

The challenge going forward is to keep up with the channel's demanding and sometimes fickle audience by developing innovative content across the entire range of genres.





1	2	4
	3	5

1 Balamory
Pre-school series for CBeebies made in Scotland

2 Tracy Beaker
Original children's drama about growing up in care for CBBC

4 Newsround
The children's news show, given extra airtime on The CBBC Channel

3 Big Cook, Little Cook
Children's cookery show – a big hit for CBeebies

5 bbc.co.uk/cbeebies
The pre-school website is one of the BBC's most popular

CBeebies

Remit

CBeebies offers new, high-quality, mainly UK-produced programmes to educate and entertain the BBC's youngest audience. The service provides a range of pre-school programming designed to encourage learning through play for children aged five and under, in a consistently safe environment.

CBeebies was launched in February 2002 as a dedicated pre-school digital channel. Its philosophy is "learning through play". All the programming is linked to the Government's Foundation Stage Curriculum.

The channel has been a success from the start. It is now the most watched children's channel. It has received very positive press comment and high praise from the viewing public which places a high value on its friendly, innocent and safe environment, its educational content, and its high element of UK programming. The CBeebies website has proved a particularly valued resource and has become one of the most popular BBC sites.

One challenge facing the channel is to develop new, high-quality, UK-originated animation suitable for the CBeebies audience. The original aspiration to invest directly in animation co-production has proved hard to meet because of higher than expected costs.

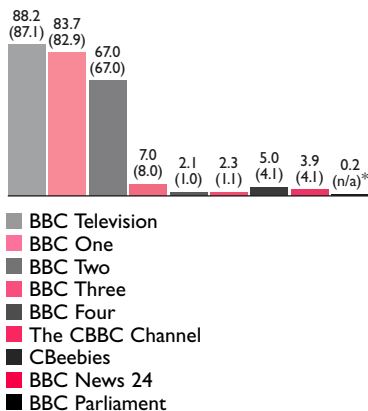
However, an alternative model has been adopted where the channel pre-buys animated titles with third parties – the channel investment usually does not exceed 25%. The same model has been used for The CBBC Channel where similar problems have been encountered. It has proved a value-for-money way to buy the channel an early editorial stake in the content to ensure its suitability for the CBeebies audience.

966
hours of drama on
The CBBC Channel

Six
new talent initiatives from
BBC Three

For more broadcasting facts and figures, see pages 58 to 67 and 136 to 146

Weekly reach of BBC Television services 2003/2004 (% all homes)



Source: BARB, TNS/Infosys, age 4+, average 15-minute weekly reach for the year. * BBC Parliament has only been measured since September 2003
Note: Figures for 2002/2003 appear in brackets