

May 2010



## IBT RESPONSE TO BBC *Putting Quality First* STRATEGIC REVIEW

### Summary

IBT welcomes this opportunity to respond to the BBC's *Putting Quality First* proposals. We support the ambition that the BBC should do fewer things better. In particular, we welcome some specific commitments made in the strategy review:

- More resources for international news gathering and a greater emphasis on stories from China and Brazil.
- More contemporary drama on BBC Two.
- More resources for children's programming.
- The ambition that the BBC's web pages should be more of a 'window on the web.'
- A renewed commitment to BBC Three.

We believe that all these changes offer important and timely opportunities for the BBC to strengthen its commitment to delivering the global purpose ('bringing the world to the UK') more effectively across a range of genres and engaging a range of audiences.

However, there are issues raised in the strategy review which give us cause for concern or require further clarification:

- Whilst we welcome the new five editorial priorities it is important that these complement and do not undermine the six purpose remits outlined in the BBC Charter.
- There appears to be ambiguity about whether or not the BBC is genuinely committed to moving away from the need for high viewing figures and audience share by 'putting quality first' when it axes services like *Switch* because they fail to reach large numbers.

We also have specific concerns which are not addressed in the strategy:

- There is an urgent need for news producers to reflect on the consequences for audiences of the narrow range of stories which are reported from developing countries. It is time for news bulletins to move away from the consistently negative images which continue to dominate coverage.

- There continues to be a distinct lack of ambition and a failure to take risks on mainstream channels like BBC One and Two when it comes to commissioning content which fulfils the global purpose.

## Putting Quality First – the Five Editorial Priorities

We agree with the Trust in supporting the editorial priorities laid out in *Putting Quality First*: 'the best journalism in the world, inspiring knowledge, music and culture, ambitious UK drama and comedy, outstanding children's content and events that bring communities together and the nation together'

While we support the ambitions of the strategy, IBT is concerned that any reprioritising of funding to support higher quality content should enable controllers to commit more funding towards content about the wider world and not lead to any reduction in budgets for international programming.

IBT has concerns that the five new editorial policies should not in any way replace or undermine the six purpose remits as laid out in the BBC Charter. We would like to be reassured by the BBC Trust and the BBC Executive that the purpose remits will still act as the core focus for controllers and commissioners, with the new editorial priorities acting as a motivator for greater ambition and innovation. IBT believes there is a risk that with six purpose remits and five new editorial priorities, controllers and commissioners could be overwhelmed with too many foci and this could result in confusion and undermine the ambition of both the purpose remits and the *Putting Quality First* strategy.

IBT sees this content reprioritisation as an ideal opportunity for better strategic delivery of the global purpose remit and we hope that it will lead to a greater ability among controllers, commissioners and producers to focus budget and talent on this purpose remit in the future.

### General

IBT's *Screening the World* (2008) report provides quantitative evidence which demonstrates that the information we receive on television about the world outside the UK is oversimplified and reinforces stereotypes, rather than increasing our understanding. The report noted, looking at non-news factual programming as a whole, that: *Africa receives relatively little coverage and is dominated by wildlife programming whereas the Middle East is dominated by conflict and disaster programming. Europe and North America together make up 47% of all international factual output and are characterised by high levels of travel and crime programming respectively*<sup>1</sup>. There is a need for commissioners to think more strategically about commissioning content which does

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<sup>1</sup> *Screening the World*, IBT, 2008 – quantitative research demonstrated a serious lack of programming about the wider world for children and a migration of serious international content from mainstream BBC One and BBC Two to BBC Four.

not reinforce stereotypes, but rather presents a more rounded view of life in other parts of the world.

The ambition to deliver the global purpose is well expressed in the annexe to the purpose remit which states that: *...a public service imperative for the BBC [should be] to make UK audiences aware of international issues, cultures and viewpoints. This should be achieved through the provision of engaging content across a wide range of genres and across all BBC platforms.*

We believe that on BBC One and Two the global purpose is mostly interpreted as falling within the responsibility of news and current affairs. If the BBC is to be distinctive in delivering this purpose then more thought needs to be given to the best way to incorporate international themes and stories across all genres and on all channels. Using IBT's most recent quantitative research<sup>2</sup> as the basis for our response, it is clear that the global purpose is not being adequately delivered and we have doubts that this will improve even if the *Putting Quality First* strategy is adopted because in a broadcasting climate in which ratings are considered highly important, genre commissioners outside news and current affairs need to be given incentives – which are not currently in place - to commission international content.

We would like to see the BBC adopt an approach which is less ratings-led and more innovative, ambitious and strategic – with an explicit aim of engaging mainstream audiences with content about the world around them.

### Reach

We believe that *Putting Quality First* is unclear on whether reach and viewing figures are to remain the principal measures of success for programming on the BBC.

We question the implicit suggestion on page 35 that reach equals success. When discussing the future of digital services, you note that *while audience usage of those services and their effectiveness at delivering the BBC's public purposes vary significantly* and also when discussing the provision for teenagers you note that it has failed to reach an audience and therefore it should be dropped. It seems clear that the failure to reach an audience or achieve ratings success is the reason for dropping these services.

Later, however on page 55, this suggestion that ratings should determine what the BBC does is contradicted. It is stated *This does not mean that the BBC's aim should be to attempt to maximise its share of audience consumption equally on every platform across all audience groups... rather, its ambitions to reach all licence fee payers should be based around its need to inform, educate and entertain broad audiences to meet its public mission.*

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<sup>2</sup> *Screening the World*, IBT, 2008 – quantitative research demonstrated a serious lack of programming about the wider world for children and a migration of serious international content from mainstream BBC One and BBC Two to BBC Four.

And later, again, this ambition is restated on page 58: *The BBC must always put quality first; recognising that it is better to serve a smaller audience with a higher quality programme than bigger audiences with a lower quality one...*

We welcome the fact that within the *Putting Quality First* strategy there appears to be a strategic ambition to rise above the need for large viewing figures/high share, yet, directly countering this ambition, there is also a move to cut services which fail in terms of their reach, for whatever reason, such as *Switch*. We find this apparent contradiction within the strategy concerning and would like to see clarification in this area.

IBT fully understands and accepts that the BBC needs to demonstrate its broad appeal through viewing figures and audience appreciation research, but we believe that in order to address market failure in the delivery of engaging content about the wider world for all audiences it needs to take more risks and be more ambitious, and less led by the need to achieve high ratings.

#### International News Gathering

IBT welcomes the ambition to *inform civic and democratic life at home and abroad* (Pg 25), and a *strengthened commitment to international newsgathering and reportage in parts of the world with growing geo-political importance such as China and Brazil*.

It is clear from IBT research<sup>3</sup> that the way the news agenda is determined across all news channels gives cause for concern. It has resulted, for example, in consistently negative coverage of developing countries. One in five (22%) adults say they often turn over to avoid news stories about the lives of people in poor countries – this is particularly true amongst 16 to 24 year olds. That said, a third (33%) would like to know more about how they can help – including 42% of 16 to 24 year olds.<sup>4</sup> The BBC needs to give its approach to news coverage more thought, going beyond negative news stories and providing a more contextual and rounded view of the world. In this way it can potentially address market failure in the provision of stories by departing from the traditional narrow news agenda.

IBT's *The World in Focus* (2008) research suggests that there is a real danger that a gulf is developing between a minority of UK citizens who are engaged by and thus well informed about life in other countries and the majority who are not engaged by it and therefore are ill informed about the wider world. This research provides evidence that BBC news bulletins, like all the main UK news bulletins, have a strong tendency to cover the same, relatively narrow, international agenda in terms of topics, countries and original stories. In the two weeks of the *World in Focus* study, 53% of all international coverage on the main bulletins concerned just three countries (USA, Australia and Israel).

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<sup>3</sup> *Screening the World, IBT 2008; The World in Focus, IBT, 2009.*

<sup>4</sup> COI RESEARCH REPORT For the Department for International Development, Attitudinal tracking study – February 2009

The BBC 10 o'clock bulletin was praised in *The World in Focus* for the percentage of stories which were international. However, we would like to see this bulletin widen the range of international stories which it covers by including more off-agenda stories which present an antidote to the relentlessly negative stream of news items which emanate from developing countries.

Additionally, as stated in IBT's submission on the Review of BBC Two, we believe there are two specific areas in which the channel could improve its international coverage. The first is with its international documentary strand, *This World*. This should be a stand out series in a prime time slot, a real 'appointment to view' at the heart of the BBC Two schedule, yet its slot is not a strong one and it has little marketing.

Secondly, we are concerned that there are severe constraints on *Newsnight's* ability to deliver a range of distinctive international stories. We are concerned that the strength of news analysis programmes, such as *Newsnight*, lies in their domestic coverage and would like to see special efforts made to encourage ambition and innovation in their international coverage, by the setting up of a special fund for independent producers to make international films which can be shown on *Newsnight* and on other news programmes. There is no doubt that this has been a particular strength of *Newsnight* in the past.

For example, the recent Haiti earthquake has been a huge story for all audiences yet it is already largely off the news agenda and there doesn't appear to be significant follow up to the story in other genres. We understand that one BBC channel controller recently said that everyone would be 'doing' Haiti after the quake, so it wasn't appropriate for them to commission material in the reconstruction period. Yet, IBT isn't aware that other broadcasters are planning to broadcast material in the aftermath. We would expect the BBC to be leading on this and perhaps there are programmes in production, but we are unaware of them. If they don't exist, we believe they should. This is a subject in which audiences have already demonstrated significant interest. We cite this as an example of the reluctance of BBC executives to take risks when commissioning international content.

Additionally, examining the attitudes of young people, a sector of the audience which is generally disengaged from current affairs and news, IBT's latest research, *Global Generation* which will be published in September 2010, shows that young people are deterred from watching news bulletins because the agenda appears 'top down' and thus they don't fully trust it. They believe that news has little relevance to their lives particularly as they don't see themselves and the issues which concern them on screen. When they are portrayed it is usually in a negative way in a story about youth crime or youth culture.

IBT believes it is essential that the BBC addresses the issue of how to engage young people in news and current affairs. BBC Three has had significant successes in this area with *Blood, Sweat and T-shirts* and similar series, but there is far more that needs to be done on BBC One and BBC Two if the next generation is to be engaged by news and current affairs on television.

Finally, on the BBC One Commissioning site, IBT believes it is worth noting that the only *Panorama* quoted as being inspirational in terms of what the channel is looking for now is *Primark: On the Rack* which was transmitted in 2008. We question whether there have been any other, more recent, international *Panorama* films which might act as examples of output that the channel is proud of and which might encourage producers to pitch ideas about the wider world. If there haven't been any *Panoramas* in the past two years which the BBC is keen to promote in this way, then this is a sad reflection of the paucity of current affairs programming which the BBC is proud of which tells viewers about the wider world.

#### Impartiality in News and Current Affairs

We support the BBC in its commitment to impartiality which features on page 26. Despite the substantial growth in internet use, television news remains the main source of information about the wider world for most people in the UK – most recent figures show that more than two thirds of people say that television news is their main source of information for finding out about the world<sup>5</sup>. The public trusts the BBC to deliver accurate and impartial coverage of the news and in order for this trust not to be undermined we believe that impartiality should be maintained at all costs.

#### BBC One and BBC Two

As stated above, IBT is concerned that the BBC lacks ambition and the preparedness to take risks in some areas of television, especially mainstream output on BBC One and Two which fulfils the global purpose. IBT's aim in making this submission is to demonstrate to the BBC that there are proven ways of engaging a mass audience on mainstream channels with stories from the wider world

Committing more resources to international content across a range of genres may appear to be a risky strategy because it is often said that programmes about the wider world attract fewer viewers than domestic programmes, but IBT believes that this fear that international content will attract fewer viewers is unfounded. There are many examples, quoted by the BBC itself, of successes with presenter-led factual programming and drama on BBC One and Two which disprove this. Also, as stated above, IBT believes it is vital that international content is not just restricted to news and current affairs which are so often negative and sensational.

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<sup>5</sup> OfcomPSB Review survey: Q12: 2,260 interviews 16+, October-December 2007, results for TV on main channels and TV on digital channels combined

IBT's audience research published in *The World in Focus* (2009) found that many viewers who do not watch news and current affairs output would nevertheless be interested in international stories in other genres for example drama, factual entertainment and documentaries. *The World in Focus* research stated that *viewers... see all programmes about developing countries as 'worthy' or 'difficult viewing'*. We believe there is an urgent need to redress this balance and present a wider range of stories on mainstream channels with a conscious effort to move away from the negative. The key to doing this is by commissioning engaging and innovative content outside news and current affairs, particularly on mainstream channels like BBC One and Two.

We believe that BBC One and Two need to give more thought to commissioning international content aimed at these viewers because there are programmes which do succeed in breaking through, for example factual entertainment formats like *Amazon with Bruce Parry* and *The Frankincense Trail*. In order to appeal to this audience group, programmes need to make connections that enable audiences to relate their lives to those of people living outside the UK. This is a major challenge for the BBC but we believe it is essential that this issue is addressed, if we are to avoid the growing gulf between the sector of the audience which is well informed and the sector which has little or no immediate interest in the wider world.

We live in an interconnected world and we believe that BBC One and Two with their ability to reach mass audiences have an important role to play in helping UK citizens to make sense of the world and to learn about the lives of people in other countries. If the UK is to develop and reach its full economic potential we need a population of global citizens, who are well informed about the world.

### Drama

*The World in Focus* (2009) research highlighted the importance of drama in order to engage a range of audiences, often those who are not engaged by news and current affairs. Single dramas such as *Mrs Mandela* and series such as *The Number One Ladies Detective Agency*, *Blood and Oil* and *Small Island* show that this engagement through drama can be achieved but scheduling, funding and marketing are key. We welcome the strategy in *Putting Quality First for ambitious UK drama and comedy – stimulating and entertaining audiences with stories about their lives and the world around them* but we would like to know whether *the world around them* includes the world outside the UK and, if so, we would like this ambition to be explicit.

### BBC One

IBT welcomes the fact that *Small Island* is mentioned as the type of dramas BBC One should continue commissioning. *Small Island* is also mentioned on the BBC Commissioning site as the type of drama commissioners are looking for in the future.

However, this is the only example which is cited which, IBT believes, demonstrates a lack of ambition to deliver the global purpose to as wide an audience as possible on BBC One.

### BBC Two

IBT welcomes the fact that *The House of Saddam* is mentioned in *Putting Quality First* as a programme the channel is proud of and we warmly welcome the ambition for international drama in *increasing the volume and range of strongly authored drama, reflecting the state of the nation and of the world*. Also we welcome the fact that there is ambition for comedy *ensuring a stronger role for BBC2 comedy...with a unique but accessible take on the world*, although, as mentioned above, we would like this commitment to international content in comedy to be explicit rather than implied.

On its commissioning site, BBC Two encourages producers to come up with more programmes like *The Frankincense Trail, The Long Way Round, Wild China, Amazon with Bruce Parry and Yellowstone*. IBT is encouraged to see that high quality, presenter-led documentaries such as these are being used as an inspiration and example of what the channel is trying to achieve in the future and we would like to see more of this type of programming in the future.

On BBC One's commissioning site there is, however, no mention of international factual at all, which we find deeply worrying and reflective, again, of a lack of ambition on the part of the channel to engage audiences with the wider world outside News and Current Affairs output.

### BBC Three

IBT's current research, *Global Generation* which will be published in September 2010, finds that young people, for the most part, don't see themselves represented on television. They don't believe that television provides programming for them about the world they live in. BBC Three, however, is cited in the research as an exception to this rule, having proved highly successful at devising a range of formats for international stories and themes which enable younger viewers to make connections with the lives of people in other countries.

*Blood, Sweat and T-shirts, Last Man Standing and The World's Strictest Parents* are all series which have engaged a young adult audience with the wider world and had an impact which goes beyond the number of hours transmitted which is relatively small.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, we would like to commend BBC Three for its stand alone documentaries such as *Judith – going back to the Congo, Nel: from Camden to Kabul, Girls on the Frontline and Lindsay Lohan in India*. We would encourage BBC Three to continue commissioning

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<sup>6</sup>BBC Three output of original new international programming in 2007 totalled 25 hours out of a potential 3650 hours. *Screening the World, IBT 2008*

programmes such as these to engage a younger audience with the wider world, and hope that the expenditure savings which the strategy seeks to make will not impact on such programming which we believe provides clear evidence that innovation and risk taking are worthwhile when delivering the global purpose.

### BBC Four

A particular strength of BBC Four's output is its international documentary strand *Storyville* which has included many superb films including *Taxi to the Dark Side* and *The Children's Ward*. The channel has also been responsible for playing a leading role in a number of innovative partnerships including the *Why Democracy?* project.

BBC Four claims on the BBC commissioning site, to be 'the only mainstream channel to regularly tell international stories regularly such as the recent *Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children, Indian Hill Railways, Murder on the Lake* or *Syrian School*'. IBT hopes that this ambition to be the *only mainstream channel to regularly tell international stories* continues once the *Putting Quality First* strategy is in place and that *Storyville* will continue without any reduction in budget and will not be affected by the planned reduction in acquisitions (see comments below in the *Doing Few Things Better*).

We also hope that with BBC Four's new focus on *arts, music, culture and knowledge* that the channel's internationalism will not be diminished.

### Children

IBT supports the ambition expressed in *Putting Quality First* to '*refresh output on CBBC which aims to contribute to the BBC's global and citizenship purpose on *Blue Peter* and *Newsround**', but beyond these two key programmes we would also like to see more factual entertainment, documentaries as in the *Simply* series (*Simply Jungle, Simply Arctic* etc) and drama for children about the wider world outside the UK.

IBT's research *Screening the World* (2008) demonstrated clearly there is little content on UK television for children which tells them about the wider world, especially for those under 6 and over 12.<sup>7</sup> *Blue Peter* and *Newsround* are the exception to this rule and are highly praised in *Screening the World*. However, in that report it is suggested that more funding should be made available for both these programmes to market them and give them greater visibility in the schedule.

We disagree with the contention (page 29) that 'children are treated to the best from *outside the UK* by providers such as Disney and Nickelodeon'. These channels do provide many good programmes from North America, but virtually none from the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The BBC should seek to include more children's programmes

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<sup>7</sup> *Screening the World 2008*, Chapter 1

which tell children about the wider world from a UK perspective in order to fulfil the global purpose. Children have a right to watch programmes which reflect their own culture, language, literature and environment as well as these imported programmes.

The BBC needs to address the issue of children's provision if it is going to address the current market failure caused by ITV's reduction in output for children in the past three years. IBT welcomes the fact that extra funding will be available for children's output, but if the BBC is reprioritising nearly £600m a year (page 4) to higher quality content, it is very disappointing that only £10m of this (page 30) – less than 2% - is allocated to children's as one of the five areas of content priority. Children should be a priority for the BBC because there is market failure for UK produced content relevant to our children's lives in this sector of broadcasting.

It is IBT's belief that if children watch and listen to engaging content about the wider world throughout childhood and adolescence they will not only be interested in the wider world but they will retain the habit of using quality broadcasting into adult life. However, there must be appropriate quality programmes that will attract young people at each stage of their lives or they will turn to other media for information and entertainment.

IBT would like the *Putting Quality First* strategy to be explicit when it states *Helping children explore their world in a safe place*. Is this meant to mean the immediate world around them, or is it meant to include the wider world outside the UK?

We are delighted by the ambition to *excite their curiosity in the world around them* but, again, we would like this to be an explicit ambition to tell children about the world outside the UK as well as their immediate world.

We very much welcome Children's Controller, Joe Godwin's, comments (*Broadcast 22 April 2010*) *"I watched a fantastic programme on BBC4 the other week about the Mumbai railway system - just brilliant - and there was a section in that about kids who live on the platform of Indian railway stations polishing boots and selling trinkets. We can do so much more looking at the lives of children around the world,"*

*"We're here to make memorable, inspiring stuff that will entertain and excite children - and that can be anything under the sun. We haven't done as much as we could have."*

We hope that Joe Godwin will be supported fully by the Executive in achieving his ambition to deliver the global purpose which we feel has not been successfully realised in recent years, but we do believe that extra funding will be required for children's programming in order to achieve this.

### BBC Switch

IBT does not agree with the *Putting Quality First* decision to drop *Switch* and *Blast*, programming and content specifically aimed at children aged 12-16. This decision is explained by the fact that Channel 4, under the Digital Economy Act 2010, will be specialising in provision for this age group. Yet, as far as IBT is aware, the vast majority of Channel 4 education's content will be online and none of it is currently international. Additionally, there appears to be no immediate plan to provide children with extra content on television: as quoted in *Broadcast* 'Head of education Janey Walker has ruled out returning to a ringfenced fund for children's programming following the scrapping of a £10m fund for older children, introduced two years ago under C4's Next on 4 blueprint. The special fund which was intended to be made available is no longer planned.'<sup>8</sup>

Also, IBT does not agree with the other justification for dropping this content, namely that *Neither the BBC's current teen offers... is reaching its target audience effectively*. If this provision has failed to reach its target audience, the BBC needs to examine why its strategy has failed to engage the intended audience and then to address this failure.

It is essential that this age group is provided with programming which reflects the world which 12-16 year olds inhabit and engages them with their peers around the world, in order for them to be fully engaged in the world in which they live.

IBT believes that the BBC cannot disregard its responsibility to this hard to reach sector of the audience because it appears that there is likely to be little broadcast content for them despite the changes to Channel 4's remit. Even if Channel 4 does broadcast content for this age group at some point in the future, it is clear that creative competition is healthy and it is the BBC's duty to offer public service content for them which is genuinely distinctive from the kind of content the commercial sector might broadcast.

### Radio 4

IBT welcomes the ambition for *more major commissions and seasons containing ambitious, innovative and creatively stretching programming* such as *Life and Fate* due for scheduling in 2011.

### Guaranteeing Access to BBC Services

#### Archive

We welcome the ambition for the BBC to use its archive to its full potential, in unlocking the value of the content which has been paid for by the licence fee payer and should be available to them at no extra cost.

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<sup>8</sup> *Broadcast*, May 13, 2010, C4 plots flexible multiplatform strategy for kids

Currently the archive for international factual programming available via the BBC website is far too small – there is one programme each on Indonesia, Iraq, the Middle East and Denmark, two on the whole of Africa, 3 each on South Africa and South America and yet 6 on the USA which is consistently well covered at the expense of the rest of the world.

We would encourage the Executive to negotiate the rights to ensure that much more archive, about the wider world especially, is available to the public online, thus ensuring that current events are put in perspective and that this work, much of it of a very high quality, is made available to as wide an audience as possible.

IBT also believes that 7 day viewing window provided by the iPlayer is too short.

As quoted by the BBC Trust in 2007 ' *It noted that audiences tend to think that, since they have funded BBC content through the licence fee, they should have access to it for a reasonable length of time. It also pointed to evidence from its cable on-demand trial to suggest that four weeks is the minimum length window to capture 95 per cent of potential catch-up usage*<sup>9</sup>.

IBT urges the BBC Trust and Executive to reconsider the decision to extend the catch up window of 7 days to 30 days.

## Doing few things better

### Online

As stated above, IBT welcomes the ambition in *Putting Quality First* to find new and imaginative ways to promote broadcast content through propositions which maximise the public value of archive programming.

However, IBT believes the BBC needs to be more innovative in driving audiences towards its web offerings, using the web to drive new audiences to television shows and visa versa.

It is stated that the *Putting Quality First* online strategy *includes a full rationalisation of BBC Online*. IBT would have welcomed the opportunity to see more detail on this strategy in *Putting Quality First*. As presented, it is impossible to ascertain whether the strategy for online is coherent and fits well with the strategy outlined for the BBC's broadcast channels.

Having said that, IBT supports all efforts made by the BBC for its content to support its programming and provide a *window on the web* for audiences. Anecdotal evidence

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<sup>9</sup> BBC Trust Final Conclusions for the Public Value Test 2007

demonstrates that a simple mention of a topic in a programme can drive significant numbers of viewers to find out more on the web. This was the case, apparently, during an episode of *Dr Who* when Pompeii was mentioned. We understand that traffic to the BBC site following this episode to find out more about Pompeii was significant. This is just one example of how a mass audience can be engaged to find out more about the world around them via online sites from a single mention in a popular programme.

IBT welcomes the proposal to introduce more external links on BBC web pages and the ambition *to double 'click throughs' to external sites. Also, the ambition to transform the BBC's online content into a window on the web... partnering with external providers.* However, we question the criteria by which partners will be chosen and would like to see far more detail on this strategic partnering.

IBT welcomes the aim for BBC News Online to attract a wider audience *focusing its specialist analysis ... on a generalist, not specialist, audience.* As stated above, IBT believes accessible content in Current Affairs is essential both online and on broadcast platforms in order to engage a wider audience in News and Current Affairs. As stated above, IBT's research demonstrates that there is a significant sector of the public who are not engaged in News and Current affairs, especially content about the world outside the UK, and through innovative online content, this sector might be encouraged to watch more bulletins and become more interested in the wider world.

Additionally, IBT would like to stress the importance of accessibility for children to information about the wider world on the web which is not mentioned in *Putting Quality First*. In IBT's discussions with the Executive, it has been acknowledged in the past that this is one area which needed greater consideration and we hope that through the strategy review of online content that the issue of accessible children's online content about what is going on in the world can be addressed.

Related to this point, IBT believes that this is a real opportunity for the BBC to consider more strategically how to use online content to engage young people in current affairs. As mentioned above, IBT's current research demonstrates that young people do not feel a duty to engage with news and current affairs and feel actively disengaged by it. IBT would like to suggest that the BBC Trust establishes a Youth Audience Panel which could focus on such issues, especially those around news and current affairs.

## Setting new boundaries for the BBC

### Acquisitions

IBT does not dispute the proposal to reduce spending on acquisitions by 20% as long as this strategy does not mean fewer acquisitions for *Storyville*. We would welcome more

programming acquired from the 29 non-US countries referred to in *Putting Quality First* (page 56) because IBT sees this as a successful method of delivering the global purpose.

### Background: About IBT

IBT (International Broadcasting Trust) is an amalgamation of two sister organisations: the former Third World and Environment Broadcasting Project (3WE) and the former International Broadcasting Trust (IBT). The new IBT is a charity which seeks to promote high quality television and new media coverage of matters of international significance. In the past, 3WE has been active in this area and this submission fully reflects 3WE's long history of campaigning on these issues and arguing that international coverage on television is a necessary tool in informing us all, as global citizens.

IBT represents a coalition of international charities. Its members include: ActionAid, Amnesty International, British Red Cross, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Comic Relief, Concern Worldwide (UK), Friends of the Earth, Help the Aged, HelpAge International, Islamic Relief, Malaria Consortium, Merlin, MSF, ONE, Oxfam, Plan International UK, Practical Action, Progressio, Save the Children, Sightsavers International, Tearfund, TVE, UNICEF UK, VSO, WaterAid and World Vision.

IBT is a registered charity, number 326150.

The views in this submission reflect the concerns of IBT's member agencies regarding adequate common understanding of the world in which we live. These concerns are shared by millions of UK supporters of these organisations. IBT's members, being intimately and operationally concerned with the effects of 'globalisation' on communities and environments around the world, and with communicating across the world, welcome the advent of the global information society.

IBT's position, reflected in all our policy work since 1997, is that television coverage of the developing world should not just focus on images of suffering which is more often than not what is presented in news coverage. It is IBT's view that an international dimension should be an integral part of all programming.

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