

IBT strategy 2009-12



This strategy was approved by the IBT AGM on Wednesday October 1, 2008. It will commence on January 1 2009 and be reviewed on January 1 2010.

Context

Credit crunch

The credit crunch and downturn in the economy is likely to have a significant impact on broadcasters who will all be looking for ways of cutting back on programme budgets. We will need to be flexible in response to this but to make the argument about the importance, at this time in particular, of audiences being well informed about global issues.

Broadcasting is changing at a rapid pace. It's important for us to keep reviewing these changes as they may affect our priorities and strategy. There are some key trends worth noting:

Convergence

'Convergence' describes the changing nature of electronic devices, whereby they are becoming increasingly interchangeable so that multiple products come together to form one product with the advantages of all of them. For example mobile phones can incorporate digital cameras, mp3 players, camcorders, voice recorders etc. It means that television can be viewed on the move, and on a range of devices not just television sets.

Digital switchover

In 2012 the analogue network will be switched off and all viewers will have access to digital tv and dozens of channels. However, all future projections indicate that the 5 terrestrial channels will still dominate tv viewing for many years to come and that the highest audience channels are likely to be mixed genre rather than niche.

Public service broadcasting

Ofcom's remit is to strengthen public service broadcasting in the run up to switchover, but it has yet to come up with concrete proposals. It therefore remains unclear as to whether Five and ITV1 will remain PSBs and how significant Channel 4's PSB role will be. The Government is committed to plurality in the provision of PSB but is reluctant to provide any additional funding.

The future of the BBC

The BBC will continue to be the major public service broadcaster with its new Charter running until the end of 2016. However, it's likely that the BBC will be reduced in size and the future of the licence fee will be reviewed half way through the current Charter, in 2011. It's possible that Channel 4 or other PSBs will receive some of the licence fee income as a result of what's been called 'top slicing.'

Television news

Television news remains the main source of information about the wider world for most UK citizens – including young people. BBC News is working hard to maintain its audience reach and whilst some news programmes are likely to become less internationalist, others see their USP as their internationalism (for example *Channel 4 News* and *Newsnight*). Online news is likely to become more important as a source of news for UK citizens.

PSB content online

Ofcom would like to take measures to strengthen the role of PSB content online but it's unclear what form these measures will take. Public service broadcasters are likely to use online as a way of enhancing their PSB role.

Time shifted viewing

Increasing numbers of viewers are downloading tv programmes and watching them on their PCs but the traditional tv schedule remains important for most viewers who value the shared experience which the schedule offers.

The future of children's television

This is a key genre which is threatened by the increasing competitiveness of television and new measures are likely to be taken by the Government to enable UK producers to continue to make children's programmes. It's unclear what form these measures would take but their goal will be to enable at least one other broadcaster – apart from the BBC – to commission children's programmes.

The internet

The changing nature of the internet, the development of 2.0 and the growth of interactivity may impact more widely on the activities of IBT's membership and the whole development sector. We will need to keep a watching brief on this.

Whilst the following strategy will run from 2009-12, in view of the changing broadcasting context, we will need to ensure that we regularly review our strategic goals and that we are able to adapt them in response to the changing communications environment.

Overall Strategy

IBT will continue to prioritise the following four key areas of work but with newly defined goals for each:

- **Lobbying**
- **Research**
- **Dialogue with broadcasters**
- **Dialogue with regulators**

We will also focus more explicitly on:

- **Building a wider coalition in support of public service broadcasting**
- **Ensuring greater engagement by our membership in a range of IBT activities**
- **Securing IBT's funding base**

We will continue to ensure that all our activities focus not just on broadcasting but on online too.

IBT's mission

To use broadcasting to further awareness and understanding of people's lives in the developing world and the issues which affect them.

IBT's vision

That UK broadcasters should produce a range of imaginative, inspiring and innovative high quality programmes and online content, across all genres, which enable a mass audience to learn about and engage with the developing world and its people, so that we can all become *active* global citizens.

Lobbying

One of IBT's strengths in recent years has been our effectiveness in lobbying Government, Parliament, regulators and broadcasters. Given the changing media landscape, the likelihood of a new Communications Act, a Government decision regarding the future funding of Channel 4, a new licence fee settlement, proposals from Ofcom to strengthen public service content online, the BBC Trust's review of its major TV channels and a host of other issues which will need to be resolved nationally, lobbying will remain a key area of work for IBT from 2009-12.

Specific overall goals and priorities:

1. Articulate a clear vision of what public service broadcasting should look like in the digital age and how international content should be reflected within that vision.
2. Articulate a vision of how online public service content can evolve so that it is more effectively focused on enabling and promoting *active* global citizenship.
3. Ensure that UK made children's programming survives and thrives, and maintains a significant level of international content.

BBC

1. Secure the BBC's future funding through a new licence fee settlement.
2. Oppose 'top slicing' of the licence fee.
3. Ensure that the BBC fulfils its commitment 'to bring the world to the UK' with ambition, imagination and integrity.
4. Ensure that the BBC brings international content to all television audiences not just those on minority channels.
5. Encourage the BBC to enhance its international content online to enable and promote active global citizenship.
6. Ensure that the BBC uses news programmes to present richer and more diverse portraits of people around the world and that such programmes avoid simply focusing on the negative.
7. Ensure that the BBC uses drama and comedy as a way of engaging wider audiences with the developing world.

8. Ensure that the BBC maintains a peak time international current affairs strand such as *This World*.
9. Ensure that the BBC maintains a peak time international documentary strand such as *Storyville*.
10. Ensure that international current affairs is adequately covered by the BBC in a peak time current affairs strand such as *Panorama*.

Channel 4

1. Secure Channel 4's funding base so that it continues to be a not for profit commercial public service broadcaster.
2. Work in partnership with the Channel to ensure that it continues to cover the wider world in an original and distinctive way through *Channel 4 News* and a range of other programmes including *Dispatches*, *Unreported World* and *True Stories*.
3. Encourage Channel 4 to seek to represent a wider range of voices across its output.
4. Encourage the Channel to seek to engage younger audiences with what's happening around the world both through television and online content.

Other public service broadcasters

1. Argue the case for ITV and FIVE to maintain a public service role.
2. Ensure that ITV News continues to have a significant proportion of international content and that ITV's regional news network is able to maintain as strong a service as possible.

Children's

1. Ensure that the BBC continues to commission a range of UK made children's programmes which reflect the wider world and are explicitly aimed at young audiences.
2. Ensure that there is plurality in the provision of public service broadcast content aimed at children and young people, either by increasing the supply from an existing psb (ie Channel 4 or ITV or FIVE) or by creating new opportunities for UK made producers suppliers.
3. Encourage all public service broadcasters to focus their online content aimed at children on enabling and promoting active global citizenship.

Research

1. Develop our qualitative research so that it creates a better understanding of how audiences are engaged by broadcast and online content about the developing world – and establishes that there is a genuine public demand for such content.
2. Publish research on a regular basis which examines the record of public service broadcasters, promotes transparency and accountability of broadcasters and commissioners, and enables a wider public debate and understanding about the nature of broadcast coverage of the wider world.
3. Ensure that our long term quantitative study continues to have a significant impact and publish new research in 2010.

4. Collaborate with regulators and broadcasters to share research on our key areas of interest and to promote awareness about the research findings to IBT's membership.
5. Ensure that our partnership with the CBA-DFID Broadcast Media scheme under the banner of 'the Reflecting the Real World Research group' continues to be a strong and effective collaboration.
6. Look for opportunities to work with European partners on future research projects.

Dialogue with broadcasters

1. Support the Real World Brainstorms and ensure that they continue to have a significant impact on BBC output, and to offer opportunities for IBT's members to interact with broadcasters.
2. Work in partnership with Channel 4 to ensure that its new remit has the maximum impact on television, online and amongst UK citizens.
3. Look for further opportunities for dialogue with all broadcasters.
4. Work with broadcasters and independent producers to encourage the development of innovative programme proposals and seasons, and to ensure that IBT's members have up to date information on broadcasters' strategies for international content.
5. Organise briefings by key commissioners and provide opportunities for IBT members to come together to discuss programme proposals which could be pitched to broadcasters.

Dialogue with regulators

1. Maintain regular contact with the two principal regulators, Ofcom and the BBC Trust.
2. Encourage the regulators to focus on the international content of public service broadcasters.
3. Work with the regulators to promote greater transparency and accountability.
4. Collaborate with the regulators to share research and develop joint research projects, where appropriate.

Building a wider coalition in support of psb

1. Work with IBT's membership to build wider public support for our vision of public service broadcasting.
2. Build on established partnerships, particularly with DFID and DCMS, to maximise the effectiveness of our lobbying work.
3. Establish a range of new partnerships with other organisations with common goals to create a wider coalition in support of psb.

Ensuring greater engagement by our membership in a range of IBT activities

1. Explore new ways of working with our membership so that they are more actively involved in our work and in our campaigning.
2. Encourage IBT's members to inform their supporters about the issues on which we are campaigning.

Securing IBT's funding base

1. Establish funding agreements with our member agencies and clear, contractual relationships to help secure IBT's funding base.
 2. Recruit new members who are able to contribute financially to IBT's core costs.
 3. Review IBT's core costs and look for ways of reducing these costs.
 4. Create a two tier membership so that paying members enjoy greater benefits than non-paying members.
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