

From: Nick bagge
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To: BBC Charter Review
Subject: BBC Charter Review - My response

I'd like to make the following points about the BBC as the Government opens the debate ahead of charter renewal.

The BBC remains a respected institution around the world (I travel quite a bit, and am often asked about the BBC) and it's future, particularly in a multi-channel future is more important than ever.

It is vital that the BBC is properly funded to enable it to deliver a wholly independent, high quality television, radio and Internet service to EVERYONE in the UK. Generations ago radio was dominant, then television became the most important medium. Today radio is on the increase, and young people increasing use the Internet for their needs. The BBC must have a place at the heart of all of these outlets. It must also serve ALL races and ages. The licence fee is paid by all of us, and as such the BBC should serve all of us. Radio 1 and BBC 3 are clearly a key to reaching the young, who would otherwise be swamped with low-quality imports and have no quality service to compare it with. The Government would be doing the country a great disservice if it listened to the current Conservative party, which seems intent on selling Radios 1 & 2 and scrapping BBC 3 and News 24. More and more people are now choosing to watch the news when they want it, rather than relying on the fixed bulletins on the terrestrial channels. If the BBC were to abandon News 24, it would also lose its place in the nation as the most-trusted source of news. Likewise, the BBC must never become the home to solely highbrow programmes. It must serve all of the nation and be a rich mix of programming. Just as key sports and news events should always be free to air on the BBC, so it should provide a high level of comedy and entertainment programmes on radio and television.

The golden age of television may have vanished (with the advent of more channels), but that is no reason for the BBC to become a ghetto for the dwindling audiences which seek only one type of programme.

I expect the BBC to remain at the forefront of broadcasting in the UK, spreading its tentacles to more and more communities through local radio and television. I do not want it, however, tying itself up in obsessively politically-correct pronouncements. I want the money I give spent on programming, not on edicts and bureaucracy. Too much debating and doubling up means less money on programmes. Leave the BBC to serve the nation. The commercial rivals would love to tear the BBC apart, but only from the point of view of serving a narrow range of profitable viewers and listeners. To leave the BBC to serve the rest would be a travesty. The BBC should reach every single person in this country, by whatever means it has at its disposal.

I should point out I do not work for the BBC (I am a marketing assistant at a regional theatre), but if I sound like an advocate for the BBC it is because I have seen enough of public service broadcasting in Europe and the US to know that if the BBC is turned into these 'model' broadcasters, it will be the end of quality and popular television. We will be absorbed into the US style of programming and become a satellite service, replicating every format that the US has to offer.

Don't let it happen!

