

From

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To
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ANSWERS TO CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT - YOR BBC YOUR SAY

WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT THE BBC?

1. The National Radio Programmes
2. Its independence from political control and from the control of powerful individuals who use so much of the media to propagate their own views and further their own interests.

HOW SHOULD THE BBC ADAPT TO COPE WITH CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE?

1. The BBC should not "adapt to cope with" (revealing choice of words!). Rather it should seize the opportunities provided by technology to improve the quality and range of its programmes, not to follow cultural fads but to provide for everyone the experience of the best in all the arts and expression of ideas in politics, art, science, religion and philosophy, in all branches of knowledge, and the best in sports and entertainment.
2. It should never dumb down.
3. Nor should it act as an agent of Government to force technological change for non-broadcasting reasons (eg to free up wave bands for sale).

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TELEVISION RADIO AND ON LINE SERVICES THE BBC PROVIDES?

1. National radio programmes are undoubtedly far superior to commercial programmes
2. TV programmes have lately become too indistinguishable from commercial channels. The managers seem to have lost the confidence that quality will attract audiences

SHOULD THE BBC RUN COMMERCIAL SERVICES?

1. Of course it should.
2. Even the title shows how long it has been producing the Radio Times.
3. If it did not market DVDs what would happen to the rights to such programmes? Would they sit on a shelf available to no one? If they are to be marketed it is an advantage that the organisation responsible for bringing them to the public should do so. Then any revenue gained can be used for the public good; not for the profit of some private company.
4. Similarly sales of magazines reflecting interest created by the programmes of the BBC should be marketed to bring revenues to the BBC

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HOW SHOULD WE PAY FOR THE BBC.

1. It should continue to be funded mainly by licence fees supplemented by revenue from commercial activities.
2. Any alternative either reduces the revenue of the BBC and/or makes the programmes less attractive to the viewer/listener
3. The motivation of those who advocate some other method of funding is generally to weaken the BBC: either to gain commercial advantage and reduce competition or to make it more politically subservient.
4. It is sometimes claimed that the licence fee is unfair to those who never use BBC services. I believe it would be difficult to find a family none of whose members ever used BBC. It is noticeable that for events of National significance or even major sporting events where there is an alternative the BBC is the provider of choice.

IS THE BBC ORGANISED IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WAY?

1. Like any big organisation it could probably be improved. Generally I do not think it is bad.

HOW SHOULD THE BBC BE RUN? HOW SHOULD IT BE REGULATED?

1. I consider that the current method of management and regulation has worked well in the past and can continue to do so providing that people of quality are prepared to serve and that appointments are not made for political reasons. Until recently, when it caved in to the unfair and unbelievably biased report from Hutton, the BBC has shown the robust independence and lack of bias necessary in a Public Service Broadcaster.
2. Calls for change seem to have a political or commercial motivation. For different reasons those calling for change would like to see the BBC weakened and hamstrung.
3. Whatever management and regulatory systems are introduced the yardstick should be that they will do nothing to facilitate government control (whatever the political complexion of the government) and nothing to further the interests of such as Murdoch and other foreign media companies.

HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT THE BBC IS PROPERLY ACCOUNTABLE?

1. Parliament should have little power to interfere
2. I am not a great fan of focus groups and polls and so on. What is necessary is for the BBC to recover its spirit of public service and self confidence and be allowed to get on with making worthwhile quality programmes

OTHER

Look and listen to radio and television in other countries - eg Australia, US, Italy, - and then be very careful about change. Do nothing to give powerful individuals more opportunity to increase their influence.

