

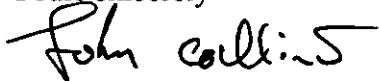
30 March 2004

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
LONDON
SW1Y 5DH

Dear Sir/Madam,

Here is my views and ideas about what can and should be done at the BBC I hope you enjoy.

Yours sincerely



John Collins

Q. What do you value most about the BBC?

A. Very little. It has changed from a public organisation whose main focus was to enlighten, inform, entertain and educate into an organisation obsessed with audience figures and making everything appeal to the young. (See example 1) It's arts coverage is mostly non-existent, where is Arena, Omnibus, Forty Minutes and why did the BBC get rid of The Late Show.

Public Access programmes (Video Diaries, Video Nation, Open Air, Bite Back) seem to have disappeared. The only contribution now is Points of View, Access on the internet is better but not everyone has it, I have seen several examples where you can only make your point via texting or e-mail.

It is obsessed with giving us more choice (I would rather have 2 channels and better quality programmes)

The thing I value is that they still occasionally make good programmes and when they do make them, they are engaging, interesting and informative(recent examples That I have enjoyed are Home with Antony Sher, A Very Peculiar Practice, The Guinea Pig Club, a documentary on J.G. Ballard, The Archers and Money Spinners) I also still think the BBC is reasonably well balanced in political terms.

Q. How should the BBC adapt to cope with changes in technology and culture?

A. I think it has already adapted well and made excellent use of The Internet and up and coming digital technology. But changes in culture less so The way the BBC should adapt in the cultural area is to remember the following "Less is more, I don't want more choice I just want nicer programmes they are obsessed with the young (See news cutting and example 1) there does not appear to be a broad range of programming and a lot has started to look the same.

Q. What do you think of the television, radio and online services the BBC provides?

A. It has made excellent use of the Internet and E-mail.

Q. Should the BBC run commercial services?

A. Yes they should continue to run commercial services but they need to broaden their range, for example they are always releasing the same DVD's/Videos such as The Vicar of Dibley, Only Fools, The League of Gentlemen, the latest costume drama from Andrew Davies and the latest modern drama, regardless of quality. On radio it's Dead Ringers, I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue or The News Quiz.

The BBC has the biggest archive of drama, plays, comedy, documentaries and news and current affairs programmes in the world and 90% never sees the light of day

either on television or in the shops. I would like to see more arts documentaries, plays, dramas and lesser known sit coms released on DVD/Video (**Please see example 2**) not the same endless round of Only fools, Dads Army league of Gentlemen and Dibley etc

In the BBC's favour they have released (particularly Doctor Who) some excellent DVD's with good extras but there are so few but they are getting there. To end this question I would like to propose the following idea. This could be done as well as continuing to release on a large scale.

There should be a service where all or the majority of the BBC's archive is available for public access (The BBC is a public corporation funded by the public therefore it's time the public had access) for example I have personally always wanted a copy of The Late Show dated 14 February 1990 and a copy of the play Separation starring David Suchet. But when I write to the BBC they tell me they only have licence to broadcast and not for video release, even though they made the programme (**Please see example 3**)

With a service called Public Access Services I could ring up, write, e mail or go in person specifying what I wanted, the date etc I would sign a contract agreeing to never broadcast, play in public, rent, use for research or sell or take any advantage in any way that I will only play it for my own private use. This service would create the following advantages.

1. I get a copies of The Late Show and Separation which I have always loved.
2. The BBC gets a payment of say 30-70 pounds per item into it's coffers
3. They only have to make a many copies as requested of items instead of making 20.000 and hoping they all sell
4. They get a contract signed by the buyer agreeing to their terms and conditions

Q. How should we pay for the BBC

A. The BBC is a public organisation funded by the public for the public. The trouble is during the last 10 years it has started to look and behave more like a private organisation and picked up some the arrogance to boot.

I think the licence fee should remain and is still the best option at the present time. But the BBC must be made more public, transparent, user friendly, have less of an arrogant and aloof feel to it. There are people in the BBC who have a them and us attitude, this attitude must be removed.

Q. How should the BBC be run?

A. There is not enough public involvement the Governors are still the great and the good usually with a high profile in their area. I suggest the following change (See Flowchart)

12 GOVERNORS

Each Governor would be a specialist in certain areas but would also head a non-specialist committee of ten people. Six would be ordinary members of the public and the other four would come from either broadcasting, media, publishing, business academic or legal fields. They would provide expert advice on those governors' specialist areas.

So with 120 committee members, who would meet 4 times a year 60% members of the public and 40% experts in various fields. The members must come from all over the country and could be organised on regional lines (See Flowchart)

They would have a brief to talk to their friends, family, colleagues and people in their communities and get their views. All these views would then be collected collated and discussed that committee would then decide on the most important points and they would go onto the Governors meeting.

By using this route we the public are more involved because if done properly it should be a 2 way process.

Work Colleague	Committee Member	Committee Meeting	Governors Meeting
Governors Meeting	Committee Meeting	Committee Member	Work Colleague

Q. How do we ensure the BBC is properly accountable to the public and parliament?

A. By using the above

OTHER POINTS

WRITERS AND WRITING

There are not enough opportunities for writers. Except if they want to write medical, police or soap scripts. There is no longer Play For Today or any regular sketch show that outsiders can contribute too like Russ Abbott, Naked Video or Not The Nine O Clock News. The BBC and Radio Times used to run a play writing competition many years ago why not bring it back)

There is also a lack of Satire, bring back Radio Fours Weekending this was a great public access programme because anyone could literally come in off the street and contribute and learn through trial and error and then success. There is no such programme now there have been attempts but nothing in my opinion has or will work as well as Weekending did.

CAMERA DIRECTION

Camera direction is rubbish, in to many programmes and particularly drama the camera does not stay on a single person for more than 2 seconds. It usually shows only the head and shoulders and then flashes to another person. Too much is fats and pacy regardless of subject. They are terrified that if they slow it down people will turn over.

1. I find this attitude arrogant, assuming and patronising
2. So what if a few people turn over. Audience figures have become the obsession at the BBC and they should not be. If someone switches channels because the pace of something is slower and the camera stays on something or someone longer than 6 seconds then that person is the one with the problem and is no loss.

AMERICANISMS

Examples:

Twenty Four Seven, Check it out and Bro

They are extremely irritating. We have our own culture and language let us use it.

EXAMPLE 1

The BBC wants to make Radio Four more appealing to the young. The only way you will make it more appealing to the young is to turn it into Radio One. Between the age of 14 and 20 I listened to Radio One I then gravitated to Radios Two and Four and that's how it should be.

The BBC is also obsessed with making Saturday Evening television appeal to people in the 14 -35 bracket I think Saturday evening television should be aimed at 0-16 and 35-100 most people I know in their 20's are out on Saturday evening.

EXAMPLE 2

Situation Comedy

Comrade Dad
Sorry
Joking Apart
Colins Sandwich
Lame Ducks
The New Statesman (Starring Windsor Davies)
Don't Forget To Write
Going Straight
Wyatt's Watchdogs
Come Back Mrs Noah

Drama

Dead Head
A Very Peculiar Practice
Hotel Du lac
Compact
Doomwatch
Tenko
Secret Army
Private Schulz
Survivors
Bergerac

Plays

Nona starring Les Dawson
The Fall Out Guy
Separation
Brimstone and Treacle
The Comedians

Childrens Television

Jackanory
The Magic Roundabout
Think Of a Number
Rentaghost
Dead Entry
Crackerjack
The Flumps
Paddington Bear

Example 3

I could record East Enders today because I was going out and watch it tomorrow but if I forgot and asked the BBC if I could borrow a copy they would say no. It does not make sense to me.

Regional Areas



ONE COMMITTEE REGION

ONE COMMITTEE MEMBER AREA

