

Almost half the entire UK population have therefore been effectively disenfranchised from influencing their own publicly funded broadcasting service.

In order to remedy this deficiency, the BBC must adopt a strict rule that a postal address and telephone number must always accompany e-mail contact details when these are given out in relation to any programme.

This egalitarian policy should also extend to maintaining analogue tv and radio transmission, that is, not forcibly imposing digital by terminating the analogue service.

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**Public Service broadcasting that clearly distinguishes itself from Commercial broadcasting.**

By breaking into the end of its own programmes with increased volume/sound compression, and flashing, irritatingly repetitive advertising promotional material for its own programmes, the BBC mimics the worst aspects of commercial tv like a chameleon striving for protective colouration.

It no longer tries to assist the vulnerable with personal advice on benefits claims or debt problems as it used to, merely pushing them along to other agencies.

It evades its responsibility to inform the consumer by transforming its programmes into dumbed-down 'infotainment' - new cars swerving recklessly around private airfields; the misery of the duped or dissatisfied customer exploited into a harsh comedy of errors with scant regard for resolution or recompense.

Some of the liveliest recent documentaries on terrestrial tv have appeared on Channel 5. If I wish to examine current affairs in depth I would be watching Channel 4 News. Meanwhile a BBC flagship programme like Panorama has been 'topically simplified' and stowed away on Sunday nights. These are the very areas in which public service broadcasting should excel.

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**Public Service broadcasting that informs and builds democracy and citizenship.**

Public advice and information videos/announcements from government

departments and agencies are inexplicably displayed on commercial channels but bizarrely not on public service broadcasting, so that for example, a warning for little children not to play with matches is screened at a commercial off-peak time - say 1 a.m. In the meantime, BBC window-dressing profligacy ensures no expense is spared so that any suitable gaps in air-time are stuffed with roof-top or wheelchair dancers, etc. instead.

Is there any other democracy in the world menaced by terrorism and routinely threatened by crime or other harm to its citizens in which this anomaly would be ignored, year after year?

The BBC absorbs or deflects licence-payers criticisms in the certain knowledge that it must always know best. Maintaining its reclusive 'Information' (complaints) service at a Belfast call-centre (where some staff have yet to learn of the world-famous 1927 BBC motto 'Nation shall speak peace unto nation' - or indeed, of this Charter Review) it keeps public criticism as far removed as possible from the programme makers.

As you can see from para 3 of the former Chairman's copy letter dated 30/9/02, the BBC regards publicising government consultations which are often conducted when planning or changing government policy as "compromising editorial independence", a line of reasoning that my Opposition Member of Parliament, Professor Webb (copy letter of 4/10/02) failed to agree with.

A typical example of this specific failing of BBC public service broadcasting can be given in the major national consultation *Managing Radioactive Waste Safely*. The former Environment Minister Mr Meacher refers to his department's considerable efforts to publicise this in para 3 of his copy letter of 17/10/02. It is my belief that the policy stance defined by the BBC Chairman resulted in only 330 responses being received for the whole UK. Again, of these responses only 40% came from individuals, but a number of foreign nuclear power companies made sure they had their say. Presumably they relied upon other information sources to alert and inform them rather than the BBC.

In my opinion, playing a part in such government consultations is a vital role in citizenship and improves the way our nation functions. The government's commendable attempts to frequently seek the public's opinion and detailed advice should be aided, not frustrated, by our national broadcasting service.

A further issue which affects us all is the decline in the number of citizens bothering to vote. Shunting informed coverage of parliament onto LW radio only or up an obscure DAB channel every

morning, typifies the BBC lack of concern for public service broadcasting and the falling percentage of voters.

Yours faithfully,



Edward Courtney

Enclosures:

Letters.

P Hurcombe, BBC Editorial & Investigation Team	13/7/01
G Davies, BBC Chairman.	30/9/02
S Webb, MP	4/10/02
M.Meacher, Minister for the Environment	17/10/02