

From: Phil Williams  
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To: BBC Charter Review  
Subject: Views on the BBC

What I really value about the BBC is the impartiality and quality of its news coverage. The World Service and Radio 4 offer an excellent news service and have a good mix of high quality factual programs. I watch much less television now than even five years ago as a large proportion of it is "reality TV" and since I am not a voyeur it holds little interest, programmes I enjoy are Newsnight, documentaries, films and (non soap) drama and News 24, more of these please and less cheap TV.

I believe the BBC is a technology leader (at the fore front of digital TV, radio and web services). I am a frequent user of the BBC web services which are also of a very high quality and I often stream radio programs that I have missed and even use this facility when I travel on business around Europe, a useful addition to this service would be a facility to transfer programmes to an MP3 player to use whilst travelling. I have two digital TV's at home and use the service on 'good weather days' I just wish that someone would turn up the transmitter power so that we could get the complete service all of the time, or at least publish a timetable as to when the power will be increased ! Digital has brought the ability to add more channels and add variety such as sports, comedy and Asian radio stations, we should accelerate this development as its progress is quite slow at the moment, we need a plan to improve coverage and then publish it.

I used the Open University service when I was studying for my degree, does the BBC really do enough to support our Primary and Secondary schools ? I am not sure but I would have thought that a schools channel would be a valuable additional way to tap the BBC resources. Excellent work on the web based educational service (sosteacher).

I have no problem with the BBC being involved in commercial services with exception that I would not like either radio or TV commercials or sponsorship on the current TV channels and Radio stations. Additional channels could have different business models but I feel a core set of "non commercial" channels should remain with strong protection to prevent " commercial creep". Magazines, selling TV programs etc are fine, let us generate as much income as possible with the balance coming from the license fee, even an increased license fee. I am sure that Rupert Murdoch will not like this but we still have the best TV and radio in the world and one of the reasons for this is the independent income source.

I would like to see a change in the way the BBC is governed, I think the recent events concerning the report by Andrew Gilligan, Dr David Kelly and the dossiers showed that management at the BBC did not act impartially and by doing so degraded the BBC's News reputation. The system needs more checks and balances than we currently have but we must make sure that any modifications to the current system totally exclude any political control from the government. ie a governing body appointed by the government would be a disaster. Perhaps we could have some of the governing body elected by either internet, text or telephone voting by us the shareholders.

Phil Williams