

## Channel 4 response to DCMS Consultation on Data Limits and Data Services on Radio Multiplexes.

19<sup>th</sup> May 2006

Channel 4 is a publicly-owned not-for-profit television broadcaster operating in the UK. It was established in 1982 as a publisher-broadcaster required to commission originated content from the independent production sector. Its main public service channel, Channel 4, is a free-to-air service funded entirely by advertising and sponsorship. It also operates a number of other services, including the digital television channels E4, FilmFour and More4; a pay-TV service FilmFour (which will be relaunched as a free-to-air channel this summer); and an expanding range of online services (at [channel4.com](http://channel4.com)), including the broadband service FourDocs.

Channel 4 is also a majority (51%) shareholder in Oneword Radio, a speech radio service providing serialisations of best-selling books read by the greatest actors, as well as drama, comedy, interviews with authors and reviews of the latest film releases. Oneword is available nationally from 6am to midnight everyday on the Digital One DAB digital radio multiplex, and 24 hours a day on Sky, Freeview, ntl cable and on the internet.

Channel 4 has announced its intention to bid for the second DAB national radio multiplex.

We welcome the proposal to allow TV services to be carried on DAB radio multiplexes without requiring such multiplexes to be reclassified as television multiplexes. It is vital to encourage innovation in multi-media content and receiver technology; such innovation should not be stifled by inadvertent legislative restrictions. The proposal is in line with Parliament's intention to ensure that the Communications Act 2003 was as 'future proof' as possible.

We further welcome the proposal to increase data limits on radio multiplexes to 30% which will act as a further spur to innovation. As audio compression techniques improve over the coming years, there may be merit in lowering the data limits even further, so long as Ofcom can preserve a minimum number of audio services on each multiplex. In order to protect the interests of listeners, and maintain a fair licensing process, the minimum number of services should be no fewer than the number of services proposed when the multiplex licence was awarded.