

Dear Mr Gandy,

I wish to strongly register my objection to product placement in TV programming, particularly in relation to its effects on children. My 6 year old boy believes what he sees in the adverts. He recently advised me in Tesco's that I should buy Harpic rather than Toilet Duck because the adverts had said it was really good. We have to work hard to explain to him that advertisements are not 'true' but attempts by companies to get him to nag us to buy things. He will not be able to even make that leap if products are placed in bona fide TV programs which he respects. I know what has been said about children's programming but we know that most of the programmes popular with children are not classified as children's programmes (*WHICH* 2008) and what we restrict now will be less restricted later.

The advertisers would not pay for product placement if they did not know it works. They have the power to lobby very hard, and on a one to one basis with ministers and other decision makers, in a way that the public does not. Ministers (etc) will remember a face to face meeting with a lobbyist better than an email from me, even if both should be given equal weight. I believe that this places a very heavy onus on you and the government to pay close attention to what the public are saying in writing during this consultation. This argument relates to the centrality of the consumer in current Government policy and to transparency in decision making. I think you should also be very sceptical about what the industry lobbyists on this topic are saying to you since their sole motivation is profit, not the wellbeing of the public

The industry wants product placement because Tivo, Sky boxes, BT Vision etc now make it possible to watch programmes without watching ads. There is an insidious and devious way of getting around this new development. I want to know whether I am watching an ad or a program. I believe mixing the 2 is disingenuous, contrary to current well founded policy and disadvantageous to the population and to children in particular.

The dangers of placement of junk food in programmes and their possible consequences for obesity are an obvious example.

Yours sincerely,

David Finnegan