

Digital Britain Interim Report: responses from individuals

Broadband

Broadband Infrastructure, Take-up and Universal Connectivity

You state a need to tackle issue of why the 40% of people who can get broadband but choose not to take it. I do not believe this issue can be successfully resolved while Ecrime is rife and the UK government are doing little to resolve the situation.

It is widely accepted that most Ecrime goes unreported, yet 12% of the UK population have reported been victims of Ecrime. The internet is now the location of choice for many criminals and fraudsters, there are no boundaries within the internet, few effective international laws, minimal protection to end users and consequently little deterrent to criminals. Moreover, despite the plethora of avoidable data breaches my perception is that Government action is limited to reaffirming responsibility for protecting data (equates to rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic).

My perception, that there is no real intent to invest to fight Ecrime, is based on a number of observations including:

- Information Sharing and Collaborative Working is required for Transformational Government and Information Assurance is a vital aspect of these new ways of working. Although this message is strongly endorsed by the Government, there is to be no new money made available to address the issues, budgets are being cut and Green IT is also placing additional demands on pre-existing IT funds. So it appears Government is expecting something for nothing or for Departments to produce another miracle.
- The Ocean programme, the forerunner for future joined up government networks, has focussed on cost reduction and not addressed Ecrime or Information Assurance within the requirement
- The PSN programme, which will establish the standards for public networks, appears to be paying little heed of methods of combating Ecrime and/or delivering Information Assurance
- Even the willingness of Government Ministers and Agencies to engage with industry, to understand the threats and encourage industry cooperation in addressing the challenges, has led to little tangible progress and is beginning to appear to be simply a route for free consultancy
- The former National Hi-Tech Crime Unit was absorbed by the newly created Serious Organized Crime Agency an organisation with a much

broader remit than Ecrime. The SOCA focus is as the name suggests primarily on serious crime and many Ecrimes are not considered serious until the value of the crime has become substantial

- Due to domain complexity and language issues the average police constable is poorly placed to capture an Ecrime incident and this first step is critical to gaining prosecutions
- The public has low expectations when it comes to the police solving Ecrimes

In summary, to realise the full benefits of a digital Britain at the lowest cost the system has to replace current systems not run in parallel. To replace current systems all users need to use the new system and for this to happen they need to be confident that the system is safe. If the Government continues to base requirements on lowest cost infrastructure they will not be able to provide adequate safeguards for the data. Designing for security is far more cost effective than trying to secure the design. **Therefore the Government should be considering the totality of costs and risks when determining future networks and I include the excessive cost of policing an insecure system within the Total Cost of Ownership.**

The views represented here are my own but I suspect they are also held by many other people.

I welcome Lord Carter's report on Digital Britain. It is a step in the right direction but the 2Mbs minimum requirement is insufficient. Faster download speeds are already needed right now; and the issue of upload speed, installation/equipment cost, ongoing service charges, and capacity limits have not been addressed.

In practice the 2Mbs requirement can be met through companies using Satlynx (<http://www.satlynx.com/>) to provide broadband satellite services (for example Avonline: http://www.avonlinebroadband.co.uk/satellite_internet_services/pricing.html). All you need is £1250 to install and £370 per calendar month (if these costs are based on Euros the monthly charge is more likely to be £450 at the moment).

To remove the speed/capacity/cost bias against rural locations I would like to see a requirement that all mainland properties within the UK should have access to the same broadband services in terms of speed, capacity and cost regardless of location.

At the moment private households and businesses in rural locations are penalized in terms of cost and level of service.

I co-run an internet cum community cafe (which has charitable status and is entirely run by volunteers) in a village ... where we do have broadband but only at 0.5mb speeds, but in some parts of the village none at all.

We also provide computing courses taking people in small groups through basic IT skills and then offering a range of more advanced / skill specific courses including digital photography, web design and digitising music. Many of our beginners are retired and often quite elderly - we have taught 80+ year olds - who want to stay in touch with their families by email and feel left out.

We are supporting local people needing IT skills as part of the Pathways to Work programme (for people on incapacity / employment and support allowance benefits) where they need to acquire new skills or brushing up old skills to get back into the workplace. We are also working with the local housing association on providing subsidised courses for tenants on benefits to help them during the credit crunch.

We also set up and run a village website and electronic noticeboard

I wanted to communicate that your 2MBit/s universal access level would be laughable if it were not so serious for our eventual competitive capability in the 21st century.

When countries such as South Korea are aiming for 1GBit/s you realise that the desire for the infrastructure that will drive the innovative new companies over the next 100 years is not alive and well in Britain.

Please be brave, think of our citizen's 50 years from now, let them look back on solid investments we made with pride not despair.

A lot of what in this report is old news I feel, its a matter of someone putting it all into place.

I work in IT and have a good knowledge of broadband and associated technologies.

I have found myself I know a large number of people who are internet users but don't have internet at home at all, one reason for this is they use it at work, quite a few friends, and colleagues I know pay bills and shop on line at there lunch break and don't have internet at home as often its not required or they can't afford the £10 or £15 a month for it as its not used that often or a essential thing to have.

The main thing is the cost per month and another worry is often the fact that they will have no clue at all how to connect a router up and install the required software, I have seen this a number of times and it has often put people off or they have ended up cancel it or pay for someone like myself to come and set it up for them.

Digital TV and radio networks

Further to the publication of the Digital Britain Interim Report, please would you consider the following matters as part of the consultation process, referring them as appropriate.

My observations refer specifically to the Freeview TV service and the DAB radio service.

The keys issues as I see them are as follows:-

1. I receive my analogue television signals from the Maesteg relay transmitter, by Wenvoe main transmitter. Whilst I understand that Maesteg will carry the Freeview service once upgraded to digital, it will not carry the full range of channels which the main transmitter in Wenvoe would be broadcasting. Key questions are:-
 - a. Is it technologically possible to upgrade Maesteg relay transmitter so to provide the same level of service as with Wenvoe? If so, what is the timescale for undertaking the necessary upgrade?
 - b. If the relay transmitter does provide a reduced number of channels, what is the decision process which will determine which channels will be carried by it, and which channels would be excluded? Would the local community have a say on this, and how?
2. FM Stereo reception in very poor where I live, and there is no DAB reception whatsoever at present. The paper states that FM services will

be gradually withdrawn once DAB reception reaches a higher proportion of the UK population. Key questions are:-

- a. When will a multiplex be provided to cover my area?
- b. What safeguards would be put in place to improve radio reception in the South Wales valley communities in general with the onset of DAB as a replacement for FM?

I've listened to the part of report that interests me & would like to make a few suggestions.

Just to give you a bit of background on my situation.

- I couldn't get BB at first due to length of line & quality of line (bit like "knotted string" as old & lots of repairs over life). I did however get BB when ADS2 came in.
- I now have a ADSL Max connection (i.e. up to 8Meg) but because of my distance just under 5 Km from exchange the most I can ever get is 0.9Meg.
- You talk of Fibre to Cabinet, which in towns is fine. Alas my village & another near by village don't have a cabinet, the one we share is outside my village on the other side of a main road. I understand two big cables come from exchange but then only one goes under road to my village. The cabinet is some 2.86 Km from Sheringham Exchange. My property is just under 2Km from the cabinet, along the old wire with many joins. I feel that this will mean that my service will probably improve & may just meet the USO (Universal Service Ob) of 2 Meg but won't be a good service.
- My village is basically a ribbon development with branches & at village sign the trunk splits two ways. I live up one of the splits. I would suggest if we can only have FtoC (due to mess World is in) that places like my village should have a new cabinet so that longest distance from cabinet to any property is not greater than 1 Km, possible in West Beckham by putting new cabinet near village sign which is a cable junction. Obviously this wouldn't be affordable in more remote places were only a couple of houses up a branch but with quite a few villages it would be reasonable solution / cost.
- BT I understand are near saturation of cable use in West Beckham as BB need a complete pair of cables while two phones can share a pair. If more people wanted BB in West Beckham it mayn't be possible. I saw a case on local TV that this has happened in one location in E Anglia. BT will need to spend money & they might as spend it with future in mind.

You talk about the USO of 2 Meg. A question I've never been able to get an answer to but you probably know a person who can answer it. The answer has a bearing on the USO.

QUESTION.

Take two customers. Both with the same ISP. Both on the same ADSL Max (i.e. up to 8 Meg) service. Naturally both on same exchange & going down the same out put pipe to ISP.

When the internet ISP gets busy the service (Meg bits) customers get lowers.

If one customer is near exchange & max service level they get (at non busy times) is say 7 Meg & other customer is like me (nearly 5 Km away) is say getting 0.9 Meg (at non busy times).

As the internet service slows what happens?

Do both customers suffer same % drop in speed i.e. if 50% one gets 3.5 & other gets 0.45.(If one has poor connection one is always a "runt of litter" customer)

Or does the "7 Meg" customers service level drop to 0.9 Meg, then we both get same lower service level & then if situation gets worse we both drop further.

If first situation applies while a person near Exchange will always get a USO level the other one at other than quite times is unlikely to get the USO. **You need to well define the conditions under which a USO must be meet.**

I hope my comment / suggestions help & may be taken in to account.

Content and IP issues

My particular interest is in the area of content. I find excessive emphasis in the interim report on the physical infrastructure, the ability of the broadcast media to provide content, entertainment and services. These are merely replacing current delivery vehicles, whereas the web has the ability to deliver new modes of information.

As a professional researcher, the transitory nature of on-line content and the concomitant reduction in delivery through more permanent media means that information required quickly becomes unavailable. It also means that the form of presentation in smaller "chunks" increases the workload considerably to seek all the information required to understand any subject – excessive time has to be spent checking the next small piece of information. Search engines quickly become of less use if matching search terms are not embedded in successive "chunks" leaving gaps. There is also considerable replication of

the same information without editorial intervention which amplifies inaccuracies and dilutes the knowledge base.

I would like to see less emphasis on current reporting and an increase in the delivery of knowledge and understanding which is what will enable users to leverage the information and contribute to the economy. One would hope that eventually, certain on-line publishers will build their reputation on the quality of information rather than the current emphasis on quantity, although I am not hopeful in the light of the way things have gone so far with the emphasis being on stimulating page traffic and opportunities to see ad placements.

In addition, as an historian, I am concerned that information delivered on-line is not captured, in the way that published material is deposited with the British Library, and can be lost forever. I am currently Chairman of the newly-formed British National Yachting Archive and we have a large task to digitise past material in order to increase access and availability to this important social movement without adding to the backlog if we don't also collect history in the making. We can expect fewer people to write up their experiences in a print media if they have already told it in their blog in a multi-media format. This already occurs to some extent and we are having to embark on a programme of collecting oral histories to fill significant gaps. None of these retrospective approaches will ever contain the level of detail that current reporting can attain so there are real benefits as long as they are treated as primary sources and not lost. There are no adequate mechanisms for this at present.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the "Digital Britain" report.

I am especially concerned about the economic assumptions made in section 3.1. I completely agree that the UK content creation sector has many strengths and advantages that should be nurtured. However the report fails to clearly distinguish between activities that *create value*, namely actual creation of content, and those which *transfer revenue*, such as royalty collection.

The UK games and TV production industries are successful because they create value in new products, and these products benefit "UK PLC" by sales overseas. Contrast this with the TV Licence fee, necessary in the current funding model, but which does not directly generate income for UK PLC.

However, rather than creating significant incentives for value creation, the report's recommendations concentrate on revenue collection. This will be to the detriment of content creators, due to the expensive requirements for legal clearance on any possible use of copyrighted material. So not only does this

penalise the illegal file sharers mentioned in the report, but it also penalises the content creators themselves. And for no gain to UK PLC - in fact a strongly enforced royalty regime is likely to result in transfer of funds outside the country, the majority going to US content creators.

Action 11 starts to look towards a solution, but is still fixated on prevention of illegal use, rather than legalising activities and allowing revenue to be made which can flow towards content creators. A "compulsory licence" scheme would help, assuming the licence fees were set proportionately. Statistical sampling of watermarked material would offer a way of measuring who should be rewarded; in this way, people who successfully redistribute material could be encouraged, rather than penalised. Even better, a copyright regime that facilitated re-working of material without requiring lengthy legal agreements would promote content creation, not only by large businesses, but also individual citizens. Those few who were successful in gaining popularity would be able to reap their just rewards. Those not so successful might not meet the minimum level to cover the cost of sending a royalty cheque.

So photos, videos, music, books published on the internet would be able to attract a certain proportion of the revenue being raised, likely to be through advertising, or possibly subscription services. By allowing re-use, and potential rewards to the creators, a swathe of restrictions would be removed, truly an encouragement to content creators. Whilst most individuals would be unlikely to gain wide distribution of their work, the few highly successful "blockbusters" would be able to get rewarded for that success, and in turn that would encourage others.

This scheme could also apply to other areas of creation. In particular to software development - for example the UK is strong in open source software development, and the associated skills are beneficial to the country. By including software in the collection scheme, an additional revenue stream would be formed to reward those developers, and help them produce further works.

I believe any such scheme to "promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts" (to quote the US Constitution) would create significant benefits for the country. And simplified fair schemes for revenue collection would assist in this.

As a researcher in the DRM area for over a decade, I am expressing my interest as a concerned citizen of the Internet and a scientist in this field. In this capacity I would be glad to be involved in your initiative and to contribute to the discussion if you think this can contribute even modestly to answering the question of what information society we want to live in and leave behind us for future generations.

Unfortunately, this area has been the subject of raging debates opposing two diametrically opposed sides. Namely, proponents of total locked down security VS advocates of the "free culture" basically arguing everything should be open and free.

Recent legal initiatives such as in France with the "three strikes and your out" laws are making their way into society basically forcing ISPs to spy on Internet traffic in order to blacklist users from the Internet on the third offense. See a blog post here :

<http://liftlab.com/think/morin/2008/11/07/the-three-strikes-and-youre-out-law-wrong-assumptions-lead-to-bad-solutions-and-generate-obnoxious-laws/>

More recently, Apple engaged in removing DRM from its iTunes catalog with iTunes Plus, but this is not totally innocent and PII info still remains within the unprotected file. On a similar note, the recent release of the new Apple MacBook Pro revealed a change with its new Display port incorporating HDCP protection requiring external display devices to also be HDCP compliant in order to render "premium content" on them. The problem here is that most users having legitimately acquired such content and who want to play them on say an Apple Cinema Display will be denied this possibility because the external display is a "legacy" model not HDCP compliant. This is insane and in many situations will force the legit consumer to resort to pirating the same content he already bought in order to benefit from his right to play the content onto his big screen.

Our society needs to take a step back and rethink DRM thoroughly and in a more creative way. User experience is key in the media and entertainment industry. Interoperability problem represent a major problem. Media Majors and their associations (RIAA, MPAA, etc.) are reluctant to consider alternative models.

Today, DRM doesn't curb those that it should. Its a burden on the side of the often legit consumer prevented from enjoying age old acquired rights such as fair use rights, home copy rights, etc.

Building on Ed. Feltens' Copyright Balance Principle ["DRM and Public Policy", in Communications of the ACM, V. 48, No. 7, July 2005, p. 112], I have worked in my research on a model and a framework allowing to accommodate such requirements as fair use based on managing Exceptions in DRM environments. The model relies on reversing the assumption of "distrust" of users, allowing them to claim an exception license (short lived for example) provided they are willing to reveal a credential that may be used for further abuse detection by the rights holders. Such a model offers a rather elegant alternative to the current DRM lock down / restriction situation while still maintaining a much needed level of "persistent protection" and governed usage of content.

Finally, this same model appears to have very interesting properties in the Enterprise DRM sector too. Recent figures are increasingly showing employees circumvent security policies on a daily basis to do their jobs. There is a great potential for alternative approaches in the area of DRM and Managed Content.

In order to stress the paradigm shift and its required mindset change, I have captured these issues under the term of "Green Security".

So, is there room for Green DRM ? Can DRM become an enabler for a positive sum game for all interested actors in the ecosystem ? What's the future of DRM and what are the societal implications of recent legislative activities in this context ? These are all issues I think we need to think about in new ways including technologists, scientists in addition to the usual stakeholders. We can no longer afford to be taken hostage of one side or an other of the industry. It is our duty to raise these questions in the perspective of a Sustainable Information Society for the generations to come. This is a unique opportunity to rethink a few things in this fascinating area. Personally, if I can contribute in my area of expertise in DRM I'd be glad to do so.

I am not sure that some aspects of the debate are fully considered. This is not surprising as the more one looks at the sector the larger it grows and more effects are revealed to the observer.

I would have very little to say about the allocation of the radio spectrum for broadcasters but I am very keen that obstacles to entry in digital sector are kept to a sensible minimum.

I gave a talk to a digital media class at the Tipperary Institute in Clonmel, Ireland last Tuesday. I am not sure how much they learned from me but I learned an awful lot from them.

The biggest takeaway was the realization that these students (most of them) see the digital world in an entirely different way from myself and others of my generation. They don't expect to go into a large scale industry where they will have a job for life. They fully expect to work for startups that may or may not succeed.

It is not as though they are all entrepreneurs that have a high tolerance for risk. On the contrary they see constant change as the new stability.

An effect on myself from just an afternoon in their company is that just like Stephen Fry and many others I now 'get' social media sites, twitter in particular. Whereas before I regarded them as trivial. The thinking of these students which is reflected right across the world will have as profound an effect on our futures as any technical innovation.

One suggestion I would make is to poll these students. I realize that the next report is due for 19th March, but that is an eon away in digital terms. There is no need for expensive focus groups. Just put a shout out for input on twitter, facebook, myspace, bebo etc. and see what sort of replies you receive.

Someone will have to make sense of it but I suspect that there will some easily identifiable themes that can be collated and incorporated in the final report.

The only mention of "open standards" in the interim report relate to broadcast media. I find this disappointing as government and local government documents I make use of at work are often in proprietary Word format, this imposes a cost to the citizen in order to engage with the government, and also imposes a cost to the tax payer to pay for the proprietary software to create these formats.

Where copyright is mentioned it is often with regard to the "traditional media" in a digital format, ie audio, video etc. No mention is made of the copyright and database rights of "new media" producers, including simple individual web page producers. Are their interests less important? As a creator of several web-sites, I am disappointed that all focus is on protecting the traditional media producers and not the man in the street. With the recent use of deep packet inspection by BT as a trial of their webwise system in conjunction with Phorm, massive amounts of copyright infringement potentially took place, possibly on a scale to rival those infringements made by peer-to-peer filesharers, and potentially as a criminal rather than civil offence, as the reason for the infringement was commercial (selling targeted advertising).

Digital Britain is another "new world" and the pioneers have blazed their trails. A "digital civil war" could well await anyone wishing to change the rules at this stage.

I read the interim report with interest, but was very surprised that there was absolutely no mention of the future impact of cloud computing and hosted IT solutions, which are the future of IT for SMEs – the most important sector of the economy.

I am a major shareholder in a company that is leading the field and global players such as Microsoft are basing the future of their software solutions on 'cloud' computing. See:

Companies increasingly do not need to spend material amounts on infrastructure, maintenance and upgrades as IT is provided on demand by way of monthly payments. Companies such as mine and Microsoft provide

the 'Software and Services' (also commonly know as 'Software-as-a-Service') in the cloud at specialist data centres. We also provide support as part of the package.

At present companies can outsource almost the complete Microsoft desktop suite of products, email, shared servers, intranet, CRM, disaster recovery, phone systems and unified communications solutions that bring this all together. A common factor that has limited the explosive growth seen in continental Europe is the availability of high quality broadband between the company and the software and services in the 'cloud'.

This new paradigm is changing the face of business computing and massively reducing costs. The UK is behind the curve, partly due to the legacy connectivity. As a result UK business is at risk of becoming less competitive given the historical material cost of high quality IT.

I've been interested in the announcement of the digital Britain interim report, and wanted to offer some thoughts on the content of it. I don't know whether you are particularly looking for feedback from individuals as opposed to organisations, but for what it is worth, here are some initial thoughts:

1) I am greatly concerned by the assessment of investment being carried out by groups such as Virgin Media and BT regarding network upgrade. I am concerned that much of this investment has been planned during the economic period of growth that we have been experiencing. Given that we are headed for what some commentators are concerned could be a 'super slump' and which almost all agree will be a recession with a lengthy recovery period, is this realistic? We are already lagging behind a number of countries, and as we have seen already, changes in the digital landscape do not take long to take root, and we could quite easily see us dropping further in the competitive world of high speed connectivity.

2) The discussion of digital content seems to be contradictory. You talk about not wanting to preserve stale business models, and then go on to suggest a levy to give to the music and film industry. The music and film industry have sat still and seem to expect to be able to maintain their vast profits, whilst not working out new distribution models. To aid this, you now want to introduce a levy on broadband users to support the maintenance of an increasingly outmoded industry structure. If we subsidise them, they will be even slower. If we incentivise them by making digital access easier and more ubiquitous, they might finally work out how to change their models. And frankly if they don't they should be allowed to die. That's the cost of innovation.

Music and film will remain in demand, people want to be entertained. If people are being charged a tax to support the creation of digital content, there is no way they are going to want to then also pay for content, they'll assume that they have legitimised the use of 'illegal' downloads of the content. A terrible idea to say the least. One of the joys of the spread of the internet is a reduction in barriers to entry for artists to get their material out to their audience without having to give x% of their value to distributors. The value may be less, but it now has a much better chance of going to the actual creators, rather than the middle men that have built up an oligopoly of media management and creation.

I strongly disagree that we need to support the industries, they are still making vast profits and should be looking at using their vast funds to find a different way of working. Furthermore, it seems a lot of the arguments regarding copyright and illegal download are based on severely inflated numbers about lost revenue. Just because people download content that they don't pay for, this doesn't mean that they would have paid for it had the free option not been available. i.e. 200 downloads does not equate to 200 lost sales.

Also, There have been several studies to suggest that people who download content illegally also purchase more content, perhaps driving content revenue. Perhaps the link of respect between consumers and producers is not so broken as thought *when the content is worth money being asked for*.

http://www.internetevolution.com/author.asp?section_id=717&doc_id=170903&

3) I strongly object to monitoring of our online behaviour and yet another mechanism being introduced for this to be carried out. One of the reasons for a lack of trust between government and its people is that it is clear that there is no trust from the government. It seems to want to watch our every move and dictate our every whim. The idea of ISPs cooperating to help support the inflated claims of an industry in a state of flux is nauseating at best. As I have laid out above, the markets will sort out what happens to the media businesses, and there is no need for ISPs and the like to be monitoring our behaviour in this way. Put asides our rights to privacy etc, and think about the issues of what this says to any industry. We are saying "you don't have to innovate to do well in our growing digital economy, you can just expect everything to be handed to you on a plate."

This is not competition, this is not growth. This is stagnation and corporate bullying. If we strive to embrace the digital world, and at the same time cling to the analog way of doing things, we will be laughed out of the digital economy and left floating in a sea of bitrot.

(sorry, got a bit carried away there).

4) The bandwidth recommendations that you have set out are not nearly enough to remain competitive. 2Mb/s is utterly dreadful, and the digital divide between rural and urban areas is a grave mistake for this country. There are

already many social barriers that exist between cities and country. An increasing digital divide makes for even bigger barriers and widens the cultural gulf. It will decrease social mobility as people are restricted from moving out of cities for fear of losing connection. It reinforces a second class citizenry that lacks the access to digital services it certainly needs. In fact when you consider the reduced physical services further flung locales suffer from, they in fact need the greater connectivity more than we do. For example, high quality webcams would potentially enable remote health checks and support to people that otherwise may need to travel for miles. Or increased video calls. Or even people wanting to take high tech business away from the city and into areas that have lower costs, creating greater value for the digital economy.

We need to be far more ambitious, and I think to set a target of bandwidth so far below the levels that other countries already enjoy is a short sighted in the extreme. Let's stop spending money on industries that need change, and invest in an infrastructure that has the potential to spawn a 1000 different industries, all of which can change and individually fail, without collapsing an entire economy.

Firstly I have to complement the government for looking at digital communications - both one-way and two-way - and its related technology.

Digital technology will be the backbone of Britain's industrial revival and is absolutely necessary for the pan-global economic recovery.

But there are some omissions that I feel I must comment on.

DAB radios should be fitted to all vehicles, including; motor-bikes, commercial vehicles, HGVs and construction vehicles. Not just cars as has been reported.

If possible the law about a lot of people listening to one DAB radio should be changed so that they don't pay Performing Rights. A lot of offices have a radio and the whole office will listen to the radio, apparently they need a Performing Rights licence, even though the radio station has paid the performing rights licence to play and broadcast the music.

The target to have broadband throughout the country is at least a decade out of date, the whole country should have had broadband over ten years ago. We should be looking at providing a fibre-optic connection throughout the whole country within the next five years. And I would suggest starting with the users who don't have any broadband yet.

The reason for this is simple, firstly they should be recompensed for having to suffer a sub-standard service for so many years. And secondly, because it would be so easy to install. The fibre-optic cable could be easily ploughed or mole-drained into the verge using a vehicle with a simple attachment, provided the fibre-optic is encased with a suitable outer sheath. Thirdly, there are very few services running along rural lanes and roads etc, so there is less chance of having problems. Furthermore, there are some villages that already have a fibre-optic feed, but there is no connection to properties, for example; South Killingholme, Ulceby & Barrow-upon-Humber all of which are in North Lincolnshire.

But my greatest concern must be for the fact that you haven't mentioned SPAM.

Recently a Minister spoke about controlling the sites that children visit, but what about the pornography that comes through children's E-mail via SPAM? There is a lot of concern about drug taking, but nobody seems to bother about the fake and dubious drugs that are advertised via SPAM. How many business E-mails are being lost because of SPAM blockers? How much extra capacity, band-width, would we enjoy if SPAM were removed from the Internet? How greater speed increase will we see if SPAM were completely destroyed?

Naturally, the companies that sell SPAM blocking software have a vested interest in not stopping SPAM at source. But there are ways of identifying hijacked computers that have been infected and the notify the often innocent owners that they need to do something about the Anti-Virus and FireWall protection otherwise they'd be considered as aiding and abetting the Spammers.

But the government will need to work with the E.U. and all other global leaders.

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 - b. What safeguards would be put in place to improve radio reception in the South Wales valley communities in general with the onset of DAB as a replacement for FM?

have read the report, and provide the following comment:

I think that Britain needs a general drive toward 'efficiency', in its effectiveness context. For example, and not to do with advertising media per se, **homeworking (which by the way is not mentioned directly in the report)** means that people don't waste time commuting, clog roads, overfill trains, get stressed (so 'ill') and waste fuel travelling to work. Family life will improve (crime benefit?), companies will save money through the need for smaller offices, essential transport speeds will improve etc etc etc. And all that hinges on people at home having better access and higher speeds from the net (or 'grid' as it will become). Its also predicated on bosses getting their minds round the outdated 'If I cant see them they wont work' or 'We need to work together because otherwise communication and team spirit will fail' nonsense. It links to the need for better digital and general education (which is mentioned in the report, and is a focus by the Conservative party) so that in the future we have smarter people, with better skills, to make the UK the world's nation of choice for all services. The government needs to stimulate the economy, and spending money on traditional infrastructure might put cash out there, but how much better if its spent wisely on things that will provide us with a long term benefit applying a meaningful integrated strategy. Better roads might marginal help productivity, but transforming the UK into the best, most efficient services supplier is a far better long term solution. Maybe that way we'll stave off long

term financial demise... Here's a letter that I have sent to MediaWeek for your interest.

Dear Editor

Stephen Carter's Digital Britain project is pivotal to our future. Britain is under siege. We have little left of the manufacturing industry that Britain founded. The digital age means that our relatively new lifeblood – services industries (particularly Financial, but Media and others) could move to another part of the globe at the stroke of a mouse. We have an increasing population that our infrastructure can't support, and we can no longer afford to improve – and it's going to get worse.

'Technology is an enabler' said Nick Brien, CEO of Interpublic's 'Mediabrand' at the Festival of Media last year. Our children need to become the world's best at applying digital technology to deliver efficient, effective services so that its Britain that benefits most from the digital age.

Efficiency has become a euphemism for redundancies, but it doesn't need to be – it can mean more productivity for a given resource. We need to increase our output and fight the predicted dwindling of UKplc, using digital technology to increase our market share of non-manufacturing markets.

The media industry needs to participate in this, using digital technology to improve efficiency too. The level of technology in our industry could be described as third world. Buyers are still using faxes to place orders for online media, and most media traders have to enter their transactions umpteen times. Computers can do the time consuming physical trades creating more time for people to do the things they do best – understanding brands and creatively planning media campaigns. Perhaps the Digital Britain project's scope should be broadened to include supporting our service industries, including media trading, to use digital technology to create a future for our children.

I was pleased to see that the report highlighted the importance of content , however I was disappointed that the combined expertise of those involved in the report could not provide any visionary statements about the future development of content.

In 1999, I developed a format for an internet based programme which, knowing that the technology could not deliver it at the time, I simplified for TV.

I pitched it to Channel 4 and because it was about the internet, it was reviewed by their commissioner for children's programmes despite being an adult oriented human interest programme. They just didn't get it.

Two years ago, I demonstrated to the head of Radio Scotland how using current IT technology, the listen again radio programmes could be enhanced for the internet. He was interested but felt that it went beyond the political remit of the BBC.

Around the same time, I discussed with one of the heads of Radio One how I felt that the organisational structure of the BBC was preventing innovation in the use of web sites relating to shows. Again, he was unable to grasp the idea that the internet could be used by artists without the need for technicians. The idea that the technology could be used by non-technical people was at the heart of the Radio One revolution in 1967 when presenters were allowed to cue up discs on turntables.

More recently I have been trying to influence the music industry in Scotland through my involvement with the Cross Party Group for Scotland's Contemporary Music Industry at the Scottish Parliament. I believe that because the recorded music industry has lost control of its main product to the IT industry, instead of taking protectionist action, it should be investing in R&D of new value added products that the public would want to spend money to buy. So far I have not been able to persuade the musicians that they could be at the forefront of a global revolution.

What I believe is missing from the report is any sense that broadband could in fact be an entirely new medium that could "educate, inform and entertain" . It is not TV, Cinema, Radio or a Jukebox. It is a new medium that deserves a new organisation that draws on our cultural history that we all share from the uniqueness of the BBC in the last fifty years.

I am an IT Consultant and a Director of a music publishing company.