



Inquiry event for Northern Ireland

Transcript of the event for Future for Public Service Television Inquiry

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Margo Harkin (MH), Producer, Besom Productions

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Chaired by **Maire Messenger-Davies (MM)**, Professor Emerita, University of
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MM: My name is Maire Messenger-Davies, I am a director of research here at Ulster University. I'm also a lifelong television fan, notorious for having written a book called *Television is Good for Your Kids* and so I'm very pleased to be welcoming all of you and the speakers to this event which is about the future of public service television whatever that means and I hope that we will have a discussion about what we mean by public service and indeed what is television and there's a great deal of debate going on in the academy at the moment about what's television?

We have a very interesting panel here and after we've had a brief video introduction from Lord David Puttnam who is one of the initiators of this project which is a, kind of, roadshow going round the country and again Pat Loughrey will say a bit more about the overall project.

After we've had this video introduction from David Puttnam, who couldn't be here, so it's me instead, we will have opening statements from our speakers and I'll just tell you who they are.



We have Mike Wilson who is managing director of UTV television, perhaps you could wave at everybody.

We have Ian Kennedy who's formerly of Creating Skillset and has worked for the BBC and has interesting views on the BBC he tells me.

And Pat Loughrey who is warden of Goldsmiths Collect, University of London, a former head of nations and regions at the BBC and has been a visiting professor here at Ulster.

And we have Margot Harkin who is an independent producer and independent production of course as people know is a very very important part of the media landscape and particularly the television landscape and maybe particularly here in Northern Ireland and I hope we'll hear more about that.

And then Colm Murphy who's our head of school will also contribute to this opening session.

After our video we will have opening statements from each of our speakers and then the floor will be open for general discussion and I hope that people are ready to make points about the various topics that are going to be raised.

Just before we start I'd like to just add a little personal note. I just got back from the United States so not quite awake but as you all know I'm sure the television media landscape in the US is and always has been very very different from the landscape here and the idea of public service television is really not a goer there. There is PSB but it's tiny.

We have a very very different tradition here and I think one of the issues that will come up is is that tradition disappearing? Is it changing? Is it worth defending? But my experience there made me think there's such a thing as a public service viewer because living with my daughter and her husband they don't watch television in the way we do. I like to see the news at six. I like to have perhaps a soap at 7.30 and a drama later on and there's this series of punctuated moments in viewing in this country which we still do. I think something like 80 per cent of viewing is still live as broadcast and being there binging on Law and Order and downloading stuff from Netflix like Foyle's War I thought, yes, but when are we going to watch the news? When are we going to sit down and do something



that's actually happening now? That's not really happening and of course the commercials are relentless and pretty horrifying and again this is something that we've managed to escape here.

I think there's a real issue around styles of viewing and what audiences want to see from public service, however we define that. That's my little take on the subject having just come back from the US and I'm now going to ask Colm if he'll give us a video with Lord David Puttnam telling us something about...

DP

Hello, I'm David Puttnam, and I'm the chairman of the commission on the future of public service broadcasting. We've been working for about six months now on looking at different ways to reinterpret what the future of public service broadcasting might be, and indeed looking at the facts and figures that are supported at present. And in that context, Northern Ireland is something of an anomaly. You'll be taken through all the detail of this by my colleague, in fact the person who inspired the entire commission practically, Pat Loughrey, and I'm really sorry I can't be with you but I'm actually working in South East Asia while you're all meeting today.

It is as I said, an anomaly. It's an anomaly because Northern Ireland is the region within the nations that has fallen below 50 per cent of PSB viewing. It's the first time that's happened and that's a concern and there's got to be underlying reasons, and hopefully, those will begin to emerge this evening during discussion. On the other hand, it's also a the region of the country which used the iPlayer least, uses catch up least, uses on demand television the least. Part of the reason for this could be the take up of RTE and the fact that RTE is at different times. Literally 94 per cent of the total population at one time of another during any given week, tune in to watch it and that could obviously be a factor in all of this. But there's a lot to look into. It's the giant successes as well - Game of Thrones, developed in Northern Ireland, a Northern Ireland screen commissioning with an investment of I think around £12 million that generated what's estimated at £110 million into the economy of the region. That's phenomenal.

The real question now is, this infrastructure, the things we've been creating - can they be sustained and will they be part of the future of television, of film, and indeed part of the future, possibly, of public service television in Northern Ireland?



Lastly, the take-over of UTV by ITV – Is that going to change things? Is that going to create problems? Are you going to see the kind of disappearance of the brand? As indeed, I was a director on Anglian Television for twenty years. Anglian Television vanished once ITV as it were, gobbled it up. Will that happen to UTV? Will it lose its identity and will the loss of the identity affect the region generally? These are big, big questions.

You're in good hands. Pat will take you through them I know, and I hope you have a very, very stimulating session. And again, I'm sorry I can't be with you, but at least I know that what happens today will find its way into our commission's report and will influence it and hopefully might even affect the outcome of the government's consultation. Thank you very much for listening to me and over to Pat.

MM: Well, it's not over to Pat yet because I'm chairing instead of David Puttnam and how we're going to do this given that Pat's been given his queue is that we will actually start with pat and work round the group of speakers as they are arranged at the head of the table and as I said each of the speakers will say something about their views and experiences on this topic mainly picking up some of the things that David Puttnam said and again I hope people in the audience will do that too and then we'll open the discussion to the floor. Can we start with Pat Loughrey, thank you.

PL: Firstly the BBC charter is renewed on a regular basis and as a former director general said it usually covers some outbreak of old time religion when the BBC reengages with its core purposes and what inspired its foundation.

That to some extent is happening but there's more happening. This is an appraisal of not just the BBC and it's role and its charter renewal process which is well debated but I think I thought about the other forms of public service interventions where government determines through various advisory bodies and groups predominantly Ofcom at the moment that all privileged commercial operators as well as the BBC also are part of the complex web of public service. ITV, Channel 4 included within that.

We as a group in Goldsmiths, my colleague Doctor Vana Goblot is here as well - we were concerned that in the government led



consultation that... and the preoccupation with the BBC might be such that the wider notion, the wider social, cultural value of public service interventions might be lost, might be neglected, and that we badly need to ensure that the whole unique notion of public service media might be neglected and focus entirely on the clichéd argument about too many repeats over the BBC, that kind of stuff.

We were inspired by something that the living history people like me remember or have heard of the Pilkington enquiry in the sixties which was a similar civil society intervention to ensure that it wasn't just a government broadcaster cosy clique. That it was a wider level of engagement, and we owe Pilkington a great deal. There would be no ITV with a public service remit which profoundly challenged a very complacent sluggish and not very distinguished BBC of the fifties frankly. Where it not for the arrival of ITV the BBC would be profoundly a duller place.

Secondly we owe it BBC2 and the thinking that culminated in Channel 4. Those kind of big engagements genuinely do make a difference and it was formulated in a way very similar to this.

I pray that we have some impact a bit like that but, hey, that's a big dream, but it's not in the comfy corridors of Westminster, it is the creative industry, the academy as Marie said, and it's citizens being invited to think about...and you're right, what inspires us is, by a kind of serendipity, the United Kingdom has ended up with a remarkable thing, it is the best, I passionately believe, public service remit in the world. It produces the best radio, best media content, best television, not all of it perfect, god knows no-one's situation is entirely virtuous but it has more diverse, more depth than most comparable far richer media landscapes.

What was it that gave us that? What needs to be renewed and refreshed? What is it in the old time religion that is still irrelevant?

Sir Richard Eyre was a governor at the BBC in my time there and I remember something he said because he worked in the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre and then two terms as a governor at the BBC and he said that each one of those institutions bore the indelible DNA of the decade in which they were founded which I thought was a profound statement. That means the BBC is fighting fit for the 1920s. And boy you can see it in the National Theatre can't you, the, kind of, Olivier dispensation?



Charter review is about reasserting and trying to regain relevance in this age, not that age. Take those principles and refresh them, challenge them. And I believe that Northern Ireland, about which I care a great deal, has had a very decent engagement with ITV through UTV, with Channel 4 and I would believe wouldn't I, with the BBC. Not perfect but pretty darned extraordinary really.

From the Abbey players coming to be produced in Belfast by Denis Johnston in the thirties before they ever appeared on any public radio in the rest of Ireland through all of those extraordinary journalistic achievements through the horrors of the troubles, through the drama tradition that remains remarkable. For a relatively small population sector I think ITV and BBC and Channel 4 have in a clumsy way often but a pretty darn rich way served this place remarkably well. That's my view.

We need to ensure that that finds reinterpretation and relevance and engagement in a whole different media landscape.

The danger is that in this proliferation of content we lose sight of that which is distinctive, unique, and frankly, vulnerable. Arts programming, programming for minorities, drama, investigative current affairs. In the wealth of content and the proliferation on your multichannel world you won't find much of those genres.

You won't find depth in the texture of that and my favourite definition of public service broadcasting comes from a guy called Huw Wheldon who used to be at the BBC and he said it was to make the good popular and the popular good.

Beware of being pushed to the Himalayan heights. Before of being driven to the minority of the Radio 4 audience, losing touch with the real public and beware of vested interests that have very strong commercial reasons to diminish and reduce the remit of all public service for profit based reasons and I worry about that.

And then there is that precious thing about investigative journalism. Jeremy Paxman spent eight years in Belfast and at the end of it someone asked him what did he do when he was there? He said I made trouble. It's not a bad definition of current affairs.



Journalism is about comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. Society needs people with no vested interest, no commercial constraint, with time and resources to ask the questions that the audience would like to ask if they had the privilege. We need to ensure that that forth estate continues for the good of civil society.

MM: Thank you and we'll move onto Mike Wilson from UTV and the perspective from where you are.

MW: Thank you, Marie. Thank you to the enquiry. Thank you to Bill Smith. This is an important topic I think everybody round the table has a vested interest in and I can see that from the faces round the table a number of people have travelled up the road of stature to actually show how important this is to people.

Can you hear me at the back or do I need the microphone?

M: No, it's okay.

F: It's okay.

MW: Great. I think the enquiry is timely. We obviously know that the BBC is going through charter renewal. I'm not going to because of my background speak a great deal about the BBC today. I'm more interested in the commercial provision of public service broadcasting.

It is a little out of step with the history of the...globally of commercial TSB. I think most people are aware the Channel 5 licences were agreed in 2013 running from the start of this year, I think? No, sorry, start of last year to 2024. So, ITV, UTV, STV and Channel 5 are all now tied into licence commitments for the next ten years and UTV's is four hours of news a week, two hours of non-news content a week and I'd like to talk about that later.

I also think it's really important that when enquiries are setup we don't find a problem that needs to be investigated and I think actually somebody the other day described this as the second golden age of television that we're actually operating in and if you look newspapers usual invested interests are quite good at knocking broadcasters but if you were to open the papers three weeks ago, I think it was a Saturday, a number of the broadsheets covered the fact



that the following Sunday night there was one hour of television that was the most expensively produced hour of television across all PSB networks with the dramas that were produced. It was Indian Summer on Channel 4, Doctor Thorne on ITV and I think the Night Manager on BBC1. I think I might be wrong about the Night Manager.

Now I'm not in any way equating the amount of money spent as being quality PSB but actually I think it's a very good indication that the PSB broadcasters are committed to making content that the audience wants and also that PSB broadcasters are involving...so that content isn't just for the home audience but that money is being invested so it can be...that all of that content on all of those channels can also sell internationally and money is reinvested.

PSB model is changing and has changed and I think that's a progression. That evolution is something that we should take note of and just say, actually, it's not a problem that high quality drama is made in the UK, it's for the UK audience, but if it sells internationally is that necessarily a bad thing?

The debate about quality PSB is not a new one. I've been sat behind this desk at UTV for ten years and this is probably the twentieth, maybe even the thirtieth debate on the horrors of the PSB world and the challenges we face in that time.

PSB is still here. I don't think it's in any great threat today than it was ten years ago and I think actually a lot of - certainly the commercial organisations - have engaged with regulators, engaged with stakeholders, commercial partners and find ways to continue to produce high quality PSB.

Ten years ago the issues were things like digital switchover. The fact that every home has become a multichannel home. In this region the fact that the Northern Ireland would be switched on that allowed access, 100 per cent access to RTE's 1 and 2, to the Irish Language Service added to competition for commercial audiences but it also added to the canon of PSB content that was available and I think that's actually important and I'll come back to that a little bit later on.

The former management of ITV said it wasn't committed to PSB saying that they were going to pull out of regional news provision. That is gone. The regional news provision in ITV is now a strong



commitment, was committed to in the last licence renewal and so that threat has diminished and of course there's online and digital.

Instead of seeing those areas as taking over breakfast, as organisations we've now gone into those areas. We're trying to monetise those areas. Now clearly there are still challenges there. Television advertising commands a far greater revenue than online advertising but actually per eyeball the online viewer is far more valuable than the television audience. It's simply there's a huge difference in the number of people of people consuming on those two platforms.

Also today you've got the globalisation of our industry. In the past we used to talk about competition as being BBC Northern Ireland now it's Netflix, now it's Amazon Prime and they are well funded organisation making actually PSB content. Big high quality dramas are PSB content. They're just one area of it though. You're not yet seeing the Amazon Prime's or the Netflix moving to regional news and I hold my breath for that to happen.

There's regulation. I think there's a huge issue in the way we're regulated at the moment. Those platforms I've just mentioned have a completely different regulatory regime to the PSB broadcasters and I intend to talk about that a little bit later and then ten years ago EPG value was significant. If you had that 101, that 102, 103, slots in the EPG you were the first choice when you turned on the TV. Now with people watching via app, via mobile device, via smart television, prominence is nowhere near as dynamic for the PSB broadcasters as it used to be and that's something that really needs to be taken into account.

We've launched a channel recently in Ireland and on the Acorn platform they've got an intelligent EPG where the first platform that comes up, or the first channel that comes up, is the last platform you viewed. So, if you are always say a Comedy Central viewer which may be down in the thirties or forties you may never see RTE1, RTE3, TV3 or ETV Ireland on your EPG menu. They're all challenges that we have to face as businesses.

Now I was given eight minutes to talk and that was just my introduction. I could actually sit here for eight hours and I wouldn't touch the surface.



I just want to skim through a couple of things before I hand it across to Ian.

Television as an industry is not blameless in the challenges we face so EPSP. We used to talk about the digital guys as bad guys. People that made House of Cards as not actually being part of our industry and actually I think we need to in the eyes of the audience reinvent the way that we are viewed while none of the programme makers round the table at all go to the office every day and go I make content. We make news or we make current affairs or we make drama or we make programmes but actually we're all in the content making business whether you're Netflix, ETV, BBC Northern Ireland and the audience don't differentiate between seeing a linear service and an on-demand service and we need to say that our product is as strong and as relevant in the digital age as people do with Breaking Bad or Game of Thrones or content that is mainly viewed on-demand and there are three ways that television...or there are three parts of television business. There's the distribution side of things. It used to be one signal to one aerial transmitter. Now we need multiple ways of distributing. That costs us money. That's a challenge to PSB because one distribution and a platform as opposed to 20 far more expensive.

There's the production side of things. We've already discussed the way that high quality drama can sell internationally. Unfortunately there are no secondary buyers for UTV Live or BBC Newsnight. That has worn home and there's a real challenge in terms of the cost of making news...the multiple ways that we can monetise it and then you've got sales and subscription. It used to be in the commercial world that we used to look at selling air time. Now we've got to look at whether paid for platforms are the way forward and all of this has got to be part of the PSB debate.

In the past PSB was viewed as simply a free product. Now we've got to work out, actually, is there a price point for it and where the value is in that.

The audience don't see UTV Live any different than they see a digital product. They simply gather the contents in the way they ought to view it where they want to view it.

I'm not on Facebook but my wife is and often she'll sit on the sofa while I'm watching something on television and she'll tell me about a



news story in Northern Ireland and I'm going how do you know about that? And she went, oh, it's on your Facebook feed and she'll actually tell me about something before it's appeared on a terrestrial news bulletin. There's nothing wrong with that.

We though as an industry need to communicate that we don't just deliver the half hour news bulletin at tea time or at ten o'clock or 10:30 at night and I think that's really important. PSB is actually now wider than the linear television service.

I also think it's important that in Northern Ireland we... Lord Puttnam said there in terms of 50 per cent of the audience not watching PSB. I actually disagree with that. I think they're just watching different PSB and since the digital switchover because RTE is now universally available I think a large number of the audience are actually...there's community backgrounds choosing...there is an alternative of state broadcaster shall we say or national broadcaster. Some of the audience naturally migrate to Dublin as opposed to London for their homeward news and I thought it was quite interesting...I'm going to put the microphone down so this is going to crunch.

But last night on RTE there was a programme that was undoubtedly a PSB programme and it's actually on the front page of all of the regional papers. It's the interview with the girl in Peru. That was commissioned by RTE Dublin, made by a producer in Belfast and seen across the island of Ireland. I mean, that is high quality PSB but not probably measured in those figures.

I think you've got to be very careful about saying that PSB has dipped below 50 per cent because actually we're in a far more challenging market than any other part of the UK. We have a land...we're the only part of the UK that has a land border from another country. We're the only other part of the UK that can have English language services beamed in that the audience can see and I'm not saying that by the way to be critical. I'm saying that to say that actually I think we are super served by public service content.

If you sit down at tea time most of Northern Ireland at 5:30 has a choice of two news bulletins from across the border. At six o'clock there's RTE news or UTV Live plus the BBC network news and then at 6:30 there's the national news from ITV and then the local news from the BBC. If that's not super serving I don't know what is and also those audiences enjoy what we're doing.



I think when I first arrived in Northern Ireland the Belfast Telegraph sold about 65,000 copies. It's now down to about 35, 40,000 copies.

UTV Live last year was at seven year high in terms of news audience. So, the argument that says people are not watching live broadcast PSB is absolute rubbish. They are actually turning in and I see James is looking at national stats in his book over there.

MM: Glad we have Ofcom.

MW: James or Ofcom.

But also that's not to diminish what the BBC are doing. News lines audiences are very, very respectable. It's not that ETV is dominant. It's actually the audience wants high quality PSB. Between the two of us we're actually delivering a service that the audience wants and if you dig deeper, if you look across the nightly statistics for most watched programmes. The two statistics...these are the last points I'm going to make.

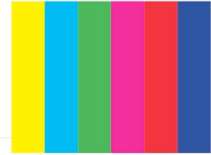
Two statistics that stand out, one is that in the top ten programmes across the whole of the UK regional news normally appears in that top ten. If you aggregate all of the regions it normally appears in that top ten. People are turning in for the news.

And the second point is certainly looking at UTV's figures and I look at them far more closely than the BBC's. Peter, you may do exactly the same, I'm not certain. It's often the most watched programme at any point during the night is UTV Live at six o'clock. We often out-rate Coronation Street. We often out-rate Emmerdale. We are the most watched single programme. Our regional news is the most watched single programme on the channel. I think that's quite an impressive statistic and something that's often completely lost in this debate.

MM: Thank you. And we'll move on now to Ian.

IK: Thank you.

I worked for the BBC for 18 years as a member of staff and another 18 as an independent producer and most recently working with them through the training organisation Creative Skillset.



My first proper encounter with a system of broadcasting which was clearly not in the tradition of the public service idea that's laid down here came about 35 years ago.

At the time I was working as a radio producer in Belfast still learning the ropes when I was offered the chance to take a secondment with the government of the United Arab Emirates based in Dubai. At the time a very much smaller different place then to the vast opulent over the top city state that it is today.

My brief was to help establish the regions first English language radio and television services and after we'd got the English channel up and running, and you have to remember this is 35 years ago, we were buying in programmes to show from British broadcasters and one of the programmes we bought was a series of Chipperfield's Circus from ITV.

In those days weird as it may seem now circus programmes were very popular on British television. Part of my job, which is weird when you think of it, was to watch each programme before transmission to make sure that there was nothing offensive to Islam that might be broadcast and basically this meant nothing of a sexually provocative nature. In the case of the circus no scantily clad trapeze artists.

When the troop of performing elephants came bounding in to the ring I didn't really foresee any problems but how wrong I was. A local editor came running into the edit suite randomly shouting you can't show that, you can't show that. Why not I asked, they're only elephants? He said, no, you can't show that. He said they're Jewish elephants.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing so after a lot of argument and I must admit complete failure on my part to understand what was going on we agreed to as they say refer the matter upwards to the station's managing director. We showed him the tape and he immediately said you can't show that those elephants are Jewish and we had to cut the elephants from the show.

What made the elephants Jewish? They were wearing a little headdress, each of the performing elephants, and in the middle was a six pointed star. If you took the time to count it but it was a six pointed star and the star of David and so the elephants had to go.



On a much more serious note and perhaps much more relevant to our deliberations this morning as we worked together to get television and radio and news services up and running in Dubai it soon became clear that we would not be allowed to report on the activities of the government or on any of the local politicians except in the terms which they dictated and it certainly would not involve in any shape, sense, or form the matter of holding them to account.

Now the rulers in Dubai felt very strongly that their broadcasting service was very much in the public interest. It's just that they also took the right, and they still do, to define what the public interest is. As indeed do many other governments all around the globe but for me the heart of public service broadcasting lies in the right and the ability of a broadcaster to, in that famous phrase, hold the power to account in an independent, impartial, honest manner free of vested address, as Pat just point out, and in Northern Ireland we see the immense value of that to our society as our public service broadcasters tackle issues as MLA's expenses, child abuse in our state and church institutions, questions around research companies which benefit a great deal from public money but which don't seem to produce an actual lot of research, politicians' unusual land deals, their extramarital affairs, ridiculous waiting lists in our hospitals. This list could go on and on too.

In the BBC's case this investigative rigour is what the licence fee guarantees and we can also be deeply proud, and as Michael has illustrated, our commercial channels have bought into the concept completely of holding power to account and have defended it as robustly as anyone in the BBC or should I say as robustly as the BBC should be fighting it's corner.

Because when we talk about the future of public service broadcasting I think we should be alive to those factors which post a threat to that future and I'm afraid I think it's always too easy to blame the politicians whatever party political view for creating the threats. Sometimes the threats lie closer to home.

I believe that the future of the BBC is obviously central in this country to the future of public service broadcasting and I'm very deeply proud to have worked for the BBC both as I say on the staff and as an independent producer but I believe now that we're seeing clear signs that the BBC is failing to fulfil its responsibilities.



And allow me to recount three relatively recent occurrences which should concern all of us in Northern Ireland and which I think illustrate my point.

Since 2010 when the coalition came into power government has concluded three deals shall we call them with BBC management. We're acquiring the BBC to pay out of the licence fee for the World Service, S4C the Welsh language channel and free licences for the over 75's.

Now I have to say I think there are perfectly reasonable arguments, which I personally don't subscribe to, to be made in the cases of the World Service and S4C that the BBC should or could pay at least in part but the free licence fee for the over 75's? As far as I am concerned that remains a social welfare issue for government. The BBC should have no part to play in this resolution.

Much more importantly is the overriding issue which lies behind these three deals. Who owns the BBC? Well, not the government, that's for sure.

A: We do.

IK: The licence fee payers own the BBC full stop. Therefore I do and I hope most of you do too.

Did anyone consult me about any of these deals? No. Did anyone consult any of you? No. Why not after all it's the licence fee which is being used to finance these deals and the cost runs into hundreds of millions of pounds. I think the over 75's deal alone is about 700 million, about, what, 20 per cent of the BBC's total licence fee income.

As a result we know that the corporation is making massive cuts across all its services and BBC Northern Ireland, your BBC, is in no way immune from those cuts.

Government didn't see the need to consult with the licence fee payers, cynically we can understand why, but BBC senior management didn't see the need to consult either and I find that much more disturbing because I believe management has failed to recognise the strength of its own negotiating position.



Despite the long-term and often hysterical efforts of the right wing press opinion poll after opinion poll shows that a great deal of people...the majority of people support and value the BBC and the concept of the licence fee. Despite all the spin to persuade us that such support is in steep decline but I think the latest research for the BBC Trust is quite clear the BBC remains a highly valued trusted organisation. It's independence from government is central to that trust and respect. Why was it then that BBC senior management decided to go along with these three deals, concluded in secret behind closed doors, only making licence fee payers aware of them through press releases after the ink had dried?

Don't they see that if anything threatens the independence of the BBC and therefore as I would argue the very future of public service broadcasting it's the willingness to do such deals without proper public consultation.

Look we must expect a politician of whatever colour who thinks he or she can force the most powerful broadcasting service in the world to bend to their will to keep coming back to the table again and again with demand after demand and at what point does that lead to the situation which I highlighted at the beginning in which a broadcaster is no longer able or is prevented from holding power to account.

BBC senior management in my view has conspired however unwittingly to create a climate in which licence fee payers, the people here in Northern Ireland who help guarantee its independence have been side-lined.

As Pat says our system of broadcasting is the envy of the world. If the future is one to be proud of, to be celebrated, to be nurtured, to be protected, if of all our public service broadcasters the BBC won't do so effectively then I ask you who will here.

MM: Thank you Ian.

Just on a point of information we have the BBC Northern Ireland here and I hope that after we finish our introductory remarks will respond to that and I'm sure that licence fee payers may have something to say as well.

And we're going to move on now to Margo Harkin.



MH: Is this working? Yes, because I would find it hard to do that as it is. I'll try with this.

I want to go with my paper as well because I'm not the seasoned speaker as all previously speakers are.

I'm approaching the day both as a consumer and as a practitioner and each of those roles I've often identified both as an insider and as an outsider and more often than I'd like as an outsider.

I became a film maker because I was one of quite a few people who were not happy with the representation of our lives and our cultural television in Northern Ireland and I'm talking back in the eighties here.

It was the emergence of Channel 4 television in 1982 that gave us the space and the opportunity to do something about it because it seemed impossible at that stage to get access to behind the camera at that time for people like me that is.

Channel 4 television launched during the first term of Margaret Thatcher's reign as prime minister. It was the year that the Falklands war happened which lasted 74 days and ended up with the deaths of over 900 people. 255 of them were British soldiers and the rest were people from Argentina or the Malvinas as the Argentinian people like to call them.

It was the year after the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland when Margaret Thatcher went head to head with ten IRA prisoners who starved themselves to death.

It seems extraordinary to me now that Channel 4 established itself in this climate of intense political strife.

When we set up in 1984 the miners' strike also happened and I'm sure there's many people here who remember that particular climate as well.

Channel 4 had no in-house production apart from its news team which remains exemplary to this day and its mission was to provide programming entirely produced by independent filmmakers and this included the creation of a new seed belt of talent that would have the right to learn and experiment.



Most significantly the channel had a government remit to provide for underrepresented voices on television and they were led at the time by the wonderful visionary Jeremy Isaacs who I'm sure many people remember as well.

This remit was to be addressed both in terms of the content of programming and in the means of production and as people who did not ordinarily see themselves on television or hear their voices on the radio or television would be given an opportunity to make programmes and have their experience represented on national television. It was quite revolutionary in broadcast terms.

Underrepresented groups were identified as black and Asian groups. I mean, they were actually given areas that should be addressed. People were invited from these areas. Women, who were very underrepresented at that time. Gay rights groups. Trade union, people who identified themselves as trade union, not just labour issues, and regional groups that later became known as the nations and regions which were very underrepresented in mainstream media and that was Scotland, Wales, and the North of England and Northern Ireland.

Some of these independent and film making constituencies already in existence such as Amber Films in Newcastle-upon-Tyne but under a special agreement between the ACTT union and Channel 4 called the Workshop Declaration there was a mushrooming of new independent film making groups all over Britain and it is apt for me at this time to make...of paying a special tribute to the great and much loved Alan Fountain. He was the first commissioning editor at independent film and television at Channel 4 who sadly died very recently.

He was responsible for the emergence of so many independent filmmakers and we remember him with deep affection as a person who nurtured and empowered others with great kindness and trust and as I was writing that I realised that that was not something that you could say too often about broadcasters.

In all the relationships that I've had with broadcasters, and I've had good and bad ones, Alan was exceptional in that he actually welcomed you. There was that certain welcome and wanted to hear what you had to say. He was a great listener.



He was the president of EAVE when he died and he touched the lives of thousands of European filmmakers in his lifetime.

Derry Film and Video was established in 1984 by three women, Anne Crilly, Trisha Ziff and myself, and our welcome to Channel 4 was as the worlds media was flocking to Northern Ireland to report the troubles yet there was no independent indigenous representation of our lives and we often did not recognise the portrayal of ourselves on television.

I mean, this is the period when people were...you'd go out and you'd watch the riots and you'd go home to watch it on television. If you're lucky you can remember this.

And for me the famous incident that was so badly misrepresented on television was the events of bloody Sunday in 1972 to which I was a witness and I witnessed people being murdered there and could not believe how the...General Jackson's message is his statement about what happened on bloody Sunday was sent to every embassy in the world and was definitely propagated by all the broadcasters at that time although there was some people who did challenge the version of the story that was made but actually that was probably fundamentally the moment that later inspired me to become a filmmaker.

Anyway being reviewed with great suspension by established filmmakers in Northern Ireland who had come through the BBC or ITV and they'd become independents and they viewed us as upstarts and troublemakers which we were. We viewed them as elite, arrogant, and middle class and they were all men. There were no women. I don't remember any women at that time.

Many years later I had the chance to work with one of our critics in Belfast and over a very civilised dinner in my house...I mean, I was forced to work though because somebody else I was working wanted to work with him but it had been a great time and it just broke down all the barriers and when we had consumed all the drink in the house, including a secret store of Poitín, he announced that we were known as the Tiocfaidh in Belfast but for anybody who doesn't know what that reference is it's referred to Tiocfaidh ár lá which...and that made me laugh so hard. I mean, it was just one great big, kind of, breaking of barriers between us that he actually said that to me and I laughed



very hard at that and not because it wasn't true, because we definitely had...we were feminists but we did definitely have a republican inclination but it was so reductionist and whenever people saw our work... what we were doing in fact was we were being very vocal critics of British government policy in Northern Ireland which was our democratic right and very correct that we should have the right to do that but more importantly we were critically interrogating our own history. We were...self-critical is built into our practice and our policy about what we wanted to do. I mean, everything up to this day that we held that as a very key principle that we were not actually trying to uphold some, kind of, you know, propaganda sick point of view, that we actually reserved the right to be self-critical.

And so my question then is, and I think it still pertains today because I know there are many groups who probably are in the same situation that we were back then, and my question is why did no-one else other than Channel 4 trust us to do this? And I know that's where learning exchange, and integration and progress in society truly happen and it's all been expressed in the world of creative imagination and interrogation of the subjects. Why is it stymied? Why was it stymied? Why does it still be stymied amongst certain groups?

And refuse the right to freedom of expression is to foster dissent and detachment from the prevailing systems of communication and governance.

To place people outside of society by forbidding the right to freedom of expression is to tell them they don't matter and they don't belong and how much does this pertain in many areas of Britain today? Who gets to tell the story? That's the key thing for me who gets to tell the story and it remains as relevant a question today as it was in 1984, particularly for Muslim, Hindu, and refugee populations and we know there's a great effort among other broadcasters to increase diversity and we've seen amazing changes in that way but I still don't think it's enough. I have a sister who lives over in Halifax and I drive through some of those northern villages and I just wonder what goes on behind doors over there because I'm not seeing it on television.

I suppose my question is why are we so...why do we have such a mis-diverse culture when it comes to documentary reviews commissioning in particular and why do so many people of all ages



no longer trust broadcasting, news in particular, and I have no academic or scientific evidence but lots of anecdotal evidence is suggesting it's because we view it as over-controlled and shaped in the interest of a particular set and values for establishment worries.

I am one of those people who actually gets most of my news from Facebook and why I actually watch [the news] so much when I know I'm going to get stuff, as Michael said, much more quickly than I'm going to get it on the television and certainly, you know, in the media and it's just a different way of looking at things and again in all sorts of formats. I get journalistic pieces, articles that are published, everything from The New York Times to The Washington Post, to the Chicago Tribune to every paper, Irish Times, all of them and people who are doing the same as me will know that most of them are doing podcasts and video posts and if I want I can go into a journalistic piece and then they'll post videos and I can dig down deeper if I want to which I've done this weekend. There was a good campaign of Bernie Sanders and I've seen some amazing stuff that's not been reported in the media.

My increasing realisation that television news is failing us and the most current example of this would be the Bernie Sanders phenomenon in the US presidential election primaries.

The election news is reported in a way that supports the wealthy corporate interests of the few and not the massive amount of people who are mobilising outsiders against those interests which is, kind of, what you were saying.

This underreporting is happening both in America and the UK. I want to predict here based on what I am witnessing and reading online that Bernie Sanders has a really good shot at being the next president of the United States unless something catastrophic happens in his current campaign momentum and this is going against the so called informed view that is reported in mainstream media but since I'm speaking about America it's also opportunity for me to state why I wholly believe in public service broadcasting and in the pressure nature of institutions like the BBC despite the squeamishness and embracing the outer edges of British life and this belief that only it can be best trusted to educate and inform and entertain us.



I remember the first time I watched television in Chicago. It was in the early eighties. And I was baffled by the proliferation of channels and the constant channel hopping of the people in my family who were totally separate. I had never ever witnessed anybody watching television like that and the quality of the shows was pretty dyer and the quality of the transmission was terrible, they didn't seem to care, you know, these, kind of, fuzzy lines. It was just awful. And the ads were just laughable.

I mean, people were actually stopping in the middle of programmes to do these heavy soapsuds ads. I mean, I just couldn't believe it. I thought we were so sophisticated by comparison and it wasn't a relaxing experience associated with family viewing at home. When we would actually sit down as a family to watch RSA or whatever it was just a brilliant memory of mine growing up is sitting down to watch the BBC and a friend in the Seattle area she had lived a long time here in Northern Ireland. She's retired back to America but she says she loves advertisement-free public service broadcaster because ads have taken over television in America to an unacceptable degree mostly selling pharmaceuticals, insurance and cars and you were saying exactly that.

She comments that it's no surprise that the presidential candidates are not being challenged in any meaningful way on healthcare or climate change and she believes it's because of the ads because she says she longs for what she perceives is the independence of ad free broadcasting because then you realise when you're watching television over there who really controls the media.

But on the other hand Channel 4 was a very natural home for This is England which was a stunning debut by Shane Meadows in 2010 and you wonder if BBC would have made that. It was as far from England and costume dramas as it could be...I've left out a whole paragraph here.

The BBC excels at the large costume drama such as War and Peace and Dickensian and the ambitious entertainment shows as The Great British Bake Off. High quality escapism is what the BBC is really brilliant at.

MM: Strictly.



MH: Yes, Strictly too, the family shows. Their family shows are just the best.

But Shane Meadows' This is England, has had its influence on the BBC and my mother and my sister and I were very recently to series two of Happy Valley featuring the brilliant Sarah Lancaster - again this emergence of women onto television is a transformation in my lifetime.

So, there's so much to congratulate broadcasters on and always room for change and improvement including the need to banish all feelings of being an outsider or missing from the reflection of what we see on our screens and the challenge would be about how to do that.

MM: Thank you, Margo, and finally Colm.

CM: Good afternoon everybody. Colm Murphy, head of school at the media, film and journalism here at Ulster University and welcome you all to this momentous afternoon.

I'm going to be very brief and just bring back in those poor unemployed elephants that you mentioned in the circus. No matter what religion they are I'm going to bring them back into the room here whatever that is that they key question here is that technology has moved on and that has moved the audience on and that half of the 16 to 24 year olds no longer watch television in the UK, in the traditional format. They might still be watching some PSB television but they're watching other things like Vice News and using Facebook, social media, Amazon Prime, Netflix. They've just moved on.

To them probably PSB is...they probably won't remember what it is. They probably...they haven't really any great concern for it and the question is how are you going to convince them that this is the next generation that they're going to have to pay a £140.50 a year to basically subsidise somebody else's entertainment which is the way they would look upon it and nobody has yet come up with a new model that when this new generation decides they're not going to pay the licence fee because they're not actually consuming PSB as they would see it how are you going to convince them that they should do so. That they should pay some, kind of, contribution towards this and all I hear is without protection of PSB and protection of the status quo which is what's there but technology has



moved on. It's like we're in a debate that has...technology has just gone ten years ahead of where it is and the companies who are basically getting the eyeballs are...they see the other side of the world, they're in Silicon Valley. They have huge amounts of data there, like we have it, and a lot of people want...about what people will want in the future that the broadcasters here don't have and I think we're getting lost in a debate that's redundant and I think we need to move on and realise that the whole basis has moved for broadcasting and come up with new models, not just to protect what's there but also to figure out a new way how service broadcasting can thrive in this new environment and yet I've seen...and I've done quite a lot of research and I've seen no model come up yet and nobody really anywhere whether it be in any of the organisations to really take this on board and come up with...and I think what's going to happen is the market will dictate and in time to come this debate will move on.

If you look five years back there were real complications for BBC and ITV and Sky, look at who the competition is today companies who were barely started then Facebook, Google, organisations like Amazon Prime, Netflix and Vice News.

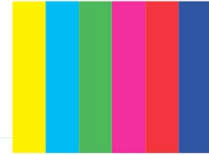
That's the real challenge and I think that's where the debate needs to be. So, thank you chair.

MM: Thank you. Well, that's provocative and technological determinism raises its head and it's a debate that's happened before actually as each new technology comes along then these issues are prominent but very important and I guess it's about funding as well.

Anyway I'm going to bring in Peter Johnston, yes, whose head of BBC Northern Ireland because a lot has been said about the BBC and I think you need a chance to answer back and then we'll open it to everybody.

Thank you.

PJ: Thank you very much. I'm happy to respond to a few of those points. Though I suppose my role in being here today is really to listen rather than to do any lengthy speeches or responses but just maybe picking up on the last point and connecting it to one of the first points about statistics in all of this. The 50 per cent, you know, viewing, or what Colm's just said as well.



A lot of this comes down to what you're measuring what it then tells you. So, quite often we mix and match lots of stuff where we're measuring for example the activity of young people on social media which is of course transplanting what they would have previously done possibly with a static phone or indeed face to face in talking to each other as much as actually to do with PSB content.

Therefore that does mean of course Colm was right. Our challenge with the younger generation has transformed now but equally the answer is not for somehow the BBC to seek to become some kind of social media platform per se.

Are there clever things that remind us as Pat says our public purpose is that we can do more effectively with digital? Well, of course there are and I think we've shown that with news online, the news app are still by any measure even in comparison to the silicon valley types we're the most successful of those kinds of services.

A little interesting example of what's possible that we're doing at that moment. We have a project at the moment called Voices 16 which is based around two TV documentaries which you'll see soon. One based on the rising and one based around the Somme and the documentaries are built on first hand testimony from participants with lots of different perspectives on those events but what we started doing at the start of the year is from some of those real characters we started tweeting as if they were allowed today a 100 years on from their actual diaries, from their letters, from their actual published content as a new way of trying to reach a very different audience because, you know, where Colm was right many of those eyeballs and those people that are on these social media platforms so how can the BBC get PSB content like that to them.

That's one of the challenges for us I think and there is no question. It's very...you look at the stats around the younger viewing patterns. I mean, it's very confusing often. They are still watching lots of linear outfits, lots of dramas, lots of stuff...a 16 year old Somme he's just watched just in job lots which amazes me, I have to say, lots of the BBC's archive comedy...well, when I say archive for him it's like ten years ago maybe at the most but he has used various platforms to consume all of that but he's still consuming that stuff. There are many different aspects to this and as my consent and as Pat would know the fragmentation of the bodies that's here has always been very strong.



RTE is part of that undoubtedly but it's not the only part of that at all. It's a relatively small proportion of some of it but we've always had a very fragmented competitive...people have chosen lots of different...

PL: What are RTE stats now, Peter?

PJ: Well, they would probably...we don't know for sure you see because of the way they do it but it's three or four per cent on average or something share I'd say...three or four per cent on average share I'd say, Michael?

MW: .. but I would say three or four per cent but it peaks so last night's last night's documentary was watched by half a million people in the south, I suspect it could have been 100,000 people watch it in the north.

PJ: Exactly. But what you need to is you look under the bonnet of the Ofcom search which is all in there as well. We still have the right to say that's by far the best news consumption and news consumption on any platform now including newspapers actually of anywhere.

People here use more news sources than anywhere else which is got to be a healthy thing as well. Under the bonnet as usual there are things that...I know from programming we still have an appetite for stuff that's relevant. It's partly I think what Margo's referring to in terms of the relevance of real life, seeing it depicted on the screen.

In the last financial year the most watched programme on BBC1, the entire financial year in Northern Ireland wasn't Strictly or any of those things you've mentioned it was actually a 90 minute feature documentary, Road, by Double Van Films and that was the most watched programme.

On the subject...I'm going to come to the biggest point probably for me ...one other thing to mention that was touched on as we went through there was about...it was referenced in Lord Puttnam's opening as well about the sector here which we shouldn't lose sight of in all of this and it is often quoted...now what we're actually...some of the figures that...because of the lag in the publication Ofcom's figures in this are now for 2014 essentially.



In 2016 now the BBC network production in Northern Ireland is above the target now, it's 3.2 per cent it'll be this year. We have five BBC network dramas at different stages of production as we speak. Two series of Line of Duty, Line of Duty started last week, filmed in Northern Ireland.

The Fall has just finished and we are currently filming a project called My Mother and Other Strangers set in 1940's Tyrone written by Barry Devlin which is a series for BBC1 Sunday night television. There's an amazing amount happening.

Also in the children's sector actually, the amount of children's production from Northern Ireland has doubled and you've seen Disney over here. As well as the BBC you'll see BBC BBC and all of that so there's a bigger sector on point there that we must...you know, we've got great success going on here by any standard. We want to play our part in that. We've a partnership and on our screen to do that.

Just coming to the final point, as well as me here today you also have Aiden McGinley who is the BBC's national trustee.

I completely understand the passion of Ian's point about the independence. He worked in the BBC in a much tougher time arguably than I have done, Pat likewise, and we understand only too well the importance of independence. How important it is in our core of what we do and it's been tested here many times over the years and we understand it very much.

Can I defend the way that ISB process happened? Of course I can't. I mean, the BBC management and the BBC trust made it clear that is no way that anyone wants to see this happening. You've made rightly and passionately the reasons why not. Many people have commented on the dilemma that the director general faced at that time. There are varying views on that. It's not for me to say but we do understand I would say the importance of that independence and you've seen us become a much bigger subject.

M: Should the chair of the trust have resigned?

PJ: Well, question for Aiden perhaps rather than me but, you know, it's an interesting...I'd be interested to hear people's...you know, my view is one thing, it's interesting to give the view of others and licence-fee



payers on that but just to say the point I can comment on the licence...you know, the independence point, absolutely...we see that incredibly and it's vital to our wellbeing and I certainly don't see Margo's point about it...I do agree...I think we've got better in recent years about why the portrayal of diversity no doubt, it's a constant journey because there are so many fragmenting aspects to life and opinions and experience and all of that is hard to capture and it's probably not our job to try and capture absolutely everything. It is good that other outlets provide these things but I recently attended some audience groups with younger audiences about their news consumption, just listened to their experience and there was a very interesting comment from one who said I get all my news from social media and then I go to the BBC news website to check if it's true.

F: I do that.

PJ: So, we do need to be careful on social media too. It has been proven to be somewhat askew at times so that is the other dilemma, many strengths it's got...

MH: So, is the BBC.

PJ: Well, yes, we can all get it wrong at times, there's no doubt...certainly part of the infrastructure you buy with the BBC is the, sort of, systems and the people on the ground to try and at least try to get things right but I get the point about the need for the diversity. Of course it's something we care very passionately about in BBC Northern Ireland in particular.

I think that's...you've heard as much.

MM: Thank you. Can I just make a very quick point. Talking of 16 to 24 year olds - they are the people we deal with, here. And there is a really important point to be made about media education and training. If we are not happy the way young people are consuming media, or finding out about the world, it's our kind of job to make sure that we are doing the better job. That's what we do - and we teach about the media. So I am giving a little plug to media studies, which is always rubbished as a sort of mickey mouse soft option subject which it is not and teaching young people about the media and how they work is absolutely essential in our society. I really believe this and we also train people to work in the media and again that's a really important function that I think we just need to, kind of, do a little hat tip to. We



haven't got a lot of time to talk about training but I think it's actually really important in terms of public service values as the classroom is where those values are established.

Okay, that's my little speech. I'm going to open it up now to the floor. Does anybody else want to make comments? Can you say who you are and where you're from?

AM: I am Aideen McGinley, BBC Trust. Going right back to what Peter here was saying... about the raid as it's been termed elsewhere trusts were very firm...I'm not obviously going to answer whether or not the chair...and I'll tell you...I mean, it was very very seriously taken, in fact the irony being that the chair was here in Belfast at the time it was all being done and Peter can attest to the volume of activity around that issue where there were literally was days been given for major decisions and management...what has been has been but that for me is a key, the trust made a very very strong standing and continue to to say this is not acceptable and going forward in the next ten years it's a very good example of independence and onward control who is going to carry that mantle in terms of governance and regulation? What is the best model? The audience, how are the audience actually going to be heard?

The current system where there is unitary board and indeed the composition of that unitary board and for us sake here in Northern Ireland how devolved regions and nations are represented and those voices are heard versus the piece then that Ofcom can take up but obviously there's huge issues for Ofcom in taking on that responsibility. What falls between stools? BBC can't self-police. Who is going to uphold standards that have been brought in such as public value tests, service licences, all of that that's emerged and then finally on Colm's point I really do think we are...when you think that the iPlayer didn't exist when the last charter was written, literally didn't exist, and how that has changed. I think we believe in more rapid pace development, it's about personalising our viewing, that's what young people are doing and what, you know, PC, et cetera are attempting along with other broadcasters.

I think the training and skills points a really vital one. The one thing that we've seen and a lot of the research in Ireland's coming back now to the BBC it's sometimes underpaid but it's a core for the broadcasting community in the UK and the whole bedrock of the creative industries which is increasingly as Peter reclined important



even for peripheral areas of Northern Ireland where the locals before would have been London. I mean, Salford didn't even have a presence at the last writing of the charter. You can show how you can devolve the benefits.

So, where does all that sit as the piece for me? There's a lot of good that has happened over the last ten years. I think we're in a better place but then we crash into the technological demands and a very different audience. We still have a commitment to linear television. We have an older viewers profile, we're all loving and we're all loyal to the BBC. I think everybody there hinted at how it was part of our DNA as we were brought up. What is that going to look like in ten years and that's the real challenge.

RH: I'm Rick Hill and I'm from Bangor. I'm a member of the Ofcom communications consumer panel and I'm also a board member of the independent press standards organisation and my question picks up on things Colm and Michael have both said.

Following the money, I used to be the chairman of Northern Ireland's screen. I can claim Game of Thrones and following the money at the minute, the Amazon, the Netflix, the amount of money that is going into big TV drama is just extraordinary and then you look at Ofcom's figures in their communication market report where the claims by viewers show in Northern Ireland in a year 22 per cent increase in the subscription to Netflix. A 39 per cent increase in the amount of on-demand viewing. Tag that onto the government commitment to provide ten megabits per second of broadband universal service across the UK, that'll be what 98, 99 per cent of homes, you have a very different set of opportunities for people who are licence fee payers or viewers or consumers, whatever word you want to put on it.

Ten years' time are we moving to a subscription model? Is there a price point, Michael? You're the one who said there was a price point so I'm intrigued to see where you think it's going in a world where we have a broadband USO.

John Whittingdale was asked in Cambridge about whether DDT television would be turned off. He said that conditions aren't right yet. Give us a broadband USO would the condition be right and we're looking at a very different world in a much faster timescale than previous.



KW: Ken Wood. I've talked in this institution for 37 years and came to Northern Ireland in 1968 when this place started. I'm an Englishman as you've noticed but with a lot of connections here.

Can I speak for those who are over 70? There is an aging population in the UK who do not use these platforms. We watch UTV Live at half past ten because we want a change from BBC which we watched at six o'clock. Therefore see that kind of choice within a different population, not the 16 to 24...

MM: Who will become 70.

KW: Yes. So, in one sense also to make the point that never forget the historical context.

Pat started with this and I remember Pat because I taught him in 1974 as the historian and his wife. And for 25 years I taught media history here at a point...and I'm taking Marie's point here, at a point when people and my colleagues also considered media to be mickey mouse. If it's still mickey mouse we're in real trouble because it is...I remember taping Channel 4 programmes which were being done...which were crucial in getting a television education started and if you really want to talk about television service then it's about as Marie said getting the younger generation on there of the issues which you're talking about now.

MM: Yes.

KW: The other thing that this Pilkington committee...Pilkington didn't write it, Richard Hoggart wrote it, the Richard Hoggart who then became a warden of Goldsmith College. Just a point. It's a great chance for Pat to actually become the Richard Hoggart of the next century... but it's also the fact that John Reith when he started in 1922 or 24 made up public service broadcasting as a way of trying to stop the commercial interests and I'm sure he even knew what public service broadcasting was. It was a mantra which was useful at the time as it still is to try to put into that context whatever you want to put into it, to try to keep those kinds of ideas without being Reithian ideas possible in the future. So, don't forget that particular point when you come down to it. Thanks very much.



MW: I'll respond but you might regret giving me the microphone because there are a few things there I want to pick up on.

I think it was something that you said that I think is fundamentally important is the teaching and training of media literacy and I think that a society that understands both public service broadcasting but perhaps more importantly what isn't public service broadcasting is hugely important and when you get multiple...I mean, I remember...I don't think I'm that old and I remember sitting down and watching the launch of Channel 4 when I had a choice of three television stations and the fourth one was terribly exciting.

Now TV stations come and go on a fairly regular basis. I also remember in school being taught that The Mirror was left wing, The Sun was broadly right wing and those sorts of things were quite important.

Now it's much more complex and it goes down to regulation. If you watch something on You Tube and it comes from ITV news chances are...and I don't want to use a Fox news phrase, but it's fair and balanced. If you watch something that comes from a non-PSB provider the chances are that there could well be an editorial leaning one way or the other.

Now I'm not saying that's right or wrong I'm just saying that is a reality and that needs to be understood in a world where there's diversification of content delivery.

In terms of young people or indeed older people it's why I spoke about the fact that broadcasting is now distribution and production and I'm one of those people that likes to talk about production because I think making things, the creative side of it, the investigative side of the news side of our business is great, unfortunately we're also in the distribution side of it but the unfortunate has pluses and minuses. The costs are huge, the opportunities are also huge and there's another thing that Colm said that I utterly think he's wrong about and one is things like the BBC iPlayer is a world leader in technology funded by the licence fee and I think we should be really proud of things like that.



On a much smaller scale made by UTV the UTV player for a very small PSB organisation is a perfectly functioning product that cost...what would the BBC iPlayer cost? Probably hundreds of millions?

M: Oh yes.

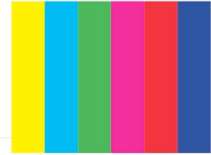
MW: Let's call it a hundred million. We made ours for 50,000. We didn't do bad and actually as a local PSB player we didn't call in help from ITV or STV, it was made ourselves. So, we are taking advantage within the parameters that we can do.

But my point is that I think all PSB's in their own way actually are taking advantage of technology and they are using their own business models so the ITV tv model is actually a mass market product. The BBC is range and breadth. Channel 4 is collecting big data. We're all doing things in a very different way that suits our model.

I will come onto price point because I think it's the most fascinating point of all but young people I think again...I mean, I was brought up in the northeast of England whenever I got into the car from school I turned on the commercial radio station. I never read a newspaper. Now when I go home first thing I do is tune the hire car radio to radio Newcastle.

People consume different contents at different stages in their lives and I don't think we should be afraid that younger people today are not necessarily consuming PSB and its being measured. I actually think that consumer PSB and it's not being measured...they're getting it through their Facebook. They're getting it through their Twitter. They're getting it through WhatsApp. I mean, if you look at Sky news which isn't a PSB but has public service values Sky news is on almost every social platform available and it is disseminating high quality content to a different audience than linear television and this was my point about the industry is often its own worst enemy.

We are content makers. If we stop discussing what we do as linear television and instead talk about the impact we are having on society I think it is far greater. The problem is my sales team and Peter's mentioned that often through government it's based on audience ratings as opposed to audience appreciation and actually I think the matrix of success of public service broadcasting have to be reassessed.



M: Sorry, did I catch an ad on UTV last night aimed at your advertisers...

MW: Yes, it's...

M: ...which said 87 per cent of people still watch UTV...

MW: Yes, and that was actually one of my other things is don't believe what you read in the papers about time shifting content. It's absolutely true 87 per cent of UTV is watched linear and then there's the spinoff of on-demand and social, et cetera, so we're probably reaching more people and more eyeballs than we did ten years ago, i.e. taking advantage of modern technology.

As for price point I'll make it very simple I think a £145.50 pence is a pretty good price point and the moment we start to undermine the licence fee we start to undermine the BBC and I think that's a real problem.

MM: Thank you. I think we're going to have to...

PL: Are you going to have time...it's just...I so profoundly agree with what's just been said, I've got to echo it. If you don't mind and I would love to hear other views if you don't mind because Margo...what Margo...the evidence you gave, Margo, is so interesting in many ways but your description of your use of Facebook.

Facebook is ultimately a delivery device.

MH: I know.

M: It's about the content. If you didn't have The Chicago Tribune or The New York Times what would intrigue you on Facebook? It's...

MH: I design it for myself anyways, yes.

M: Exactly. Exactly, and it's that...what we need to be so protective of and proud of is the content of production and to ensure that that content is produced in the right size with the right kind of versatility that can be used in ten different platforms, in a 100 different ways and consumed by different...for example I started in this game in the early eighties and everyone was right about the demographic we're still worrying about today. They were missing a demographic then



and some people think it's a grey curve, that consumption comes with degrees of greyness. That sounds awfully smug and it probably is but every generation of content makers have to adjust to retain relevance to users. They are a new and very demanding and far richer form of consumer because there's far more content for them to choose from and the local, that which is immediately relevant to their lives, and their view of the world around them, what they experience every day, if we cannot invent content that engages them based on that then we don't deserve public service standing or support but I have every confidence, all our predecessors did, I think that we can but it won't be easy and it won't happen if we don't engage in debates like this.

MM: Thank you very much. Anyone desperate to say something quickly and then we're going to have refreshments in the next room. Yes? John?

JB: I'm going to say something very quickly. My name is John Bach...

MM: Have the microphone.

JB: My name is John Bach and for about 45 years I've been chaplain of this university and I've also taught criminology as a part timer. I also have had a little dabbling in broadcasting as Mr Ian Kennedy may just recall. I just recalled it too.

I wanted to say that the definition of public service broadcasting is the key to this. What exactly is it? Where does it begin and where does it end? Do we for example regard that attractive lady who appears on North Korean television news telling us what's happening in that wonderful part of the world is that public service broadcasting or not?

Does public service broadcasting really mean doing something which is not dictated by commercial demand? Where does it begin and where does it end?

I worked in the United States for some years and I recall a really good programme which in order to survive had to put out a periodic appeal and people had to telephone with the credit card numbers and the trick there was that there was an appalling little melody called god bless America and the presenter of this appeal said, well,



we're going to play that again and again and then five times after that until we receive the money we require.

So, there were various at this time, because I'm just left with this thing where does public service begin and where does it end? I think that there is always got to be a place for reflection, for honesty, for holding powerful people to account, long may that tradition survive.

MM: Thank you very much and thank you to everyone and we do have to stop now. We do have to stop now. But we can continue the conversation in the next room where there are some refreshments. I think there are soup and sandwiches and coffee and tea.

Can I just have a round of applause for our team?

Thank you.

End of transcript