

Audience Council for Northern Ireland

Submission to the Public Consultation On The BBC Trust's Draft On-Demand Syndication Policy

Council believes that third party syndication of on-demand content can add significant value to audiences. It agrees that it is in licence fee payers' best interests that content should be made as widely available as possible across multiple platforms. It points for instance to the value that could be added to the arts, media and heritage sectors among others. Council believes that the approach to third party syndication should be consumer-driven and reflect the market and consumption patterns across multiple platforms.

Council believes it is important that the syndication is achieved in a manner that does not limit benefits for licence fee payers. For instance, significant value can be added by making content available for manipulation by users, and Council believes that it is essential that this is enabled. Council is also mindful of the fast-changing pace of the marketplace and suggests that policy should at all times protect the public interest but avoid unnecessary delays.

Council underlines the importance of BBC content being available to audiences in ways that match their media consumption patterns. It is especially mindful of the specific needs of younger audiences in this regard.

Council welcomes the policy's emphasis on the Public Purposes and on non-discriminatory and non-exclusive access.

Council agrees that content must be available free of charge at the point of use. It is important that it is always clear to consumers that the content is free of charge. Furthermore, Council would be concerned if excessive or disproportionate distribution charges by third parties had a negative impact on the BBC's reputation.

Council suggests that it would be useful to understand the broader management policy and guidelines for syndication with respect to licence fee payers' interests.

Council is mindful of the fast pace of change in technology and media usage. It suggests that the policy should make clear the process for changes in policy.

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