

BBC Online

Part I: Key characteristics of the service

1. Remit

The remit of BBC Online is to promote the BBC's public purposes, by providing innovative and distinctive online content and distinctive propositions that reflect and extend the range of the BBC's broadcast services.

BBC Online should offer UK users greater choice and control over how they consume BBC content by providing a range of recent broadcast output on-demand.

BBC Online should enable the BBC to develop a deeper relationship with licence fee payers and strengthen the BBC's public accountability.

BBC Online should, at all times, balance the potential for creating public value against the risk of negative market impact.

2. Scope of the Licence

BBC Online should be continuously available and free at the point of use. It should aim to be accessible to all internet users.

It may comprise a wide range of propositions, including the following: text, images, graphics, clips or extracts from programmes, live streamed and on-demand long-form audio and video content broadcast by BBC television and radio services,¹ limited broadcast archive and some non-broadcast audio and video, interactive and downloadable applications and content.

3. Service budget

BBC Online has a service budget of £120 million in 2011/12.

Any planned or actual change in annual expenditure on the service of more than 10% in real value requires approval from the BBC Trust and may entail variation of this Service Licence. This parameter of change is set to allow variations in spending which arise from regular, cyclical factors such as spending on major sports events, a reasonable level of operational flexibility and changes in accounting policy. Allowing for these factors, the Trust may judge that planned or actual change in annual expenditure of less than 10% should require its approval if the implications of this are significant for the character of the service or its potential market impact.

The budgets stated in the five annexes to this Service Licence total £103 million for 2011/12. The remaining part of the total Service Licence budget is allocated to

¹ Approvals covering on-demand audio and video are included in the final conclusions document of the On Demand Public Value Test. This can be found on the BBC Trust website. The Service Licence for each BBC TV and radio service sets out how its broadcast content can be distributed online.

central editorial activities (e.g. the Homepage), technologies which operate across the service and overheads.

4. Overview of aims and objectives

BBC Online content should exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: high quality, original, challenging, innovative and engaging, and it should nurture UK talent. All parts of BBC Online should be distinctive, by meeting most or all of the values of creative and editorial ambition, high editorial standards, range and depth and being made for UK audiences.

BBC Online should reflect and extend the BBC's broadcast output, with content that informs, educates and entertains audiences while contributing to the promotion of the BBC's public purposes.

Comprehensive provision of impartial, accurate and independent news and analysis should be at the heart of BBC Online. It should offer news and other content for the nations and regions of the UK.

BBC Online should be the main platform for the BBC's formal learning provision for both children and adult learners. It should encourage internet adoption and digital media literacy through a range of offers.

BBC Online should enable on-demand access to some BBC television and radio programming. In addition to clips, it may provide limited amount of long-form audio and video content from the BBC's archives for formal and informal educational use, to set journalism and current affairs in context and to give audiences access to a sample of themed highlights from a range of BBC output.²

The service should be easy to use and accessible to all. It should ensure that the BBC's content is easy to search and navigate, enabling users to find quickly what they are looking for and to find other BBC content that is of value to them. It should also encourage users to broaden the range of their media consumption by offering links to external websites and other functions which allow users to navigate beyond BBC Online.

BBC Online may host user-generated content, particularly material which helps contribute to the promotion of the public purposes by encouraging active audience involvement, including participation in online discussion of important issues. It should also allow licence payers to feedback their views to the BBC on programmes, services and strategy and seek to engage in open dialogue with users whenever possible. It should not sell user data, nor pass on user data to a third party without users' explicit approval, unless obliged to under UK law.

The BBC's online content may be syndicated to other providers in line with the BBC's syndication policy. Content on BBC Online may be reversioned for specific Internet Protocol platforms and devices, such as mobile³.

² Any significant expansion of the scope of audio and video archive availability online requires the approval of the BBC Trust. Specific exceptions are permitted for Radio 3, Radio 4 and BBC Four to develop a permanent collection of on demand content.

³ BBC Red Button Service Licence covers output on digital television platforms

BBC Online should commission a minimum level of content and services from external suppliers. It should actively seek to form partnerships with external organisations, particularly where these can help to promote the BBC's public purposes more effectively.

Part II: Contribution to public value

5. Contribution to the promotion of the BBC's public purposes

5.1 Sustaining citizenship and civil society

BBC Online should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its users, primarily by providing comprehensive and constantly updated, accurate, impartial and independent news which aims to engage a broad audience in news and current affairs.

It should aim to encourage conversation and debate about news, current affairs and topical issues, both online and more broadly. It should offer specific resources which help to build users' understanding of the UK's political institutions and democratic processes.

BBC Online should offer a range of digital media literacy resources and initiatives which aim to enable audiences to access, understand and create different types of media. This may include support for new users and initiatives for specific groups of non-users and new users.

5.2 Promoting education and learning

BBC Online should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its users by offering something of educational value to people of all ages.

It should be the main platform for delivery of the BBC's formal learning output for children and adult learners and for parents and teachers. It should seek to use the on-demand and personalisable characteristics of the internet to offer learning tailored to users' needs.

It should also aim to stimulate informal learning across a range of subjects by extending the BBC's broadcast output for adults and children. Clear linking and navigation should encourage users to broaden their range of consumption of knowledge-building output. It should support the BBC's learning and social action initiatives and campaigns.

5.3 Reflecting the UK's nations, regions and communities

BBC Online should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its users by providing content for licence fee payers in the different nations and local communities across the UK. The core of the offering should be news, sports, weather and travel, alongside content in other areas which reflects the particular characteristics of each nation or locality and supports broader BBC initiatives and editorial offerings.

It should offer provision in Welsh, Gaelic, Irish and Ulster Scots and other languages used by licence fee payers where appropriate.

The BBC may build and support non-geographic communities of users where these clearly support the BBC's contribution to its public purposes.

5.4 Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK

BBC Online should make a very important contribution to this purpose amongst its users, by bringing the world to the UK via its broad and high quality coverage of international news and through other content which aims to enhance users' awareness and understanding of international issues, life and culture.

While BBC Online can be accessed outside the UK and so help to bring the UK to the world, it should be aimed at UK licence fee payers.

5.5 Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence

BBC Online should make an important contribution to this purpose amongst its users by offering a range of distinctive and innovative content and by supporting the BBC's broadcast output.

BBC Online should feature a range of cultural activities, including the arts and popular culture and sports, including coverage of minority sports. It should encourage participation in sporting and cultural activities, often by working in partnership with external organisations.

BBC Online should promote new forms of creativity and culture by innovating in the development of propositions specifically for the internet which exploit its unique characteristics. It should foster and nurture creative and technical talent and activity, including supporting innovation in the UK's new media sector and by commissioning content and services from external suppliers. It should lead collaborative communities of professional innovators and engaged amateurs. It should support creativity amongst its users, by encouraging them to generate and share their own content.

Conditions

BBC Online should:

- Commission at least 25% (by value) of eligible content and services from external suppliers
- Aim to double the volume of click-throughs to external sites from all parts of the service by 2013/14

5.6 Emerging communications

The BBC's sixth public purpose is defined in the Charter as "in promoting its other purposes, helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services and, in addition, taking a leading role in the switchover to digital television".

BBC Online should contribute to the promotion of this purpose in a variety of ways including making its output available across a wide range of IP-enabled platforms and devices.

It should support the growth of digital platforms, including online, digital television and DAB radio, by hosting campaigns and permanent resources which promote their benefits to licence fee payers.

It should work in partnership with external organisations to help to build public understanding and usage of new forms of content and distribution. All elements of BBC Online should play some part in working to this purpose.

6. Annexes and further parts to this Licence

6.1 Part III - description of main editorial areas of BBC Online

The third part of this licence contains a description of the scope of activities of each of the main editorial areas within BBC Online.

Due to linking and convergence between editorial areas, each area of BBC Online, as described in its annex, may draw on output from a number of different production sources. However, for clarity budgets have not been duplicated between annexes.

The description of iPlayer in the annex is designated as part of the key characteristics of BBC Online. Descriptions of other editorial areas are not designated as such and may be amended with the approval of the Trust but without automatic consideration by the Trust of the need for a Public Value Test.

6.2 Annex I - Performance assessment

The performance of BBC Online will be assessed by the Trust using the framework described in Annex I. BBC Online's compliance with any Conditions, as described in section 5, will also be measured on an annual basis and reported in the Annual Report and Accounts.

The BBC Trust will expect BBC Online to comply with the commitments described in this Service Licence. The BBC Trust will monitor compliance with these commitments retrospectively as part of its periodic service reviews and/or on an exceptional basis if there is evidence or allegation of non-compliance.

7. Operation of this licence by the BBC Trust

For details of how the BBC Trust operates this Service Licence, please see the Service Licence Operating Framework. This is available from www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust or upon request from the BBC Trust Unit.

PART III: Scope of activities and budgets for main parts of BBC Online

BBC Online – audio and music

Scope of activities

BBC Online's audio and music offer should promote the BBC's public purposes to a wide range of audiences, through the provision of innovative and distinctive online propositions across genres that reflect and extend the BBC's broadcast radio and music output (across both radio and television).

Each radio station should be supported by BBC Online in ways which reflect and extend broadcast programmes. BBC Online should also aggregate and complement content from across different BBC radio services, programmes and other sources, around themes such as musical genres or artists.

BBC Online should simulcast radio programming and offer radio programmes on-demand in line with the scope set out in part I of this licence and the Service Licences for each radio station.

Audio and music online should reflect the principles underlying the BBC's overall music policy through propositions which exploit the unique characteristics of the internet and by focussing on new, UK and live music in its offer of news, reviews and other information. It should cover a broad range of musical genres, both mainstream and niche.

Budget

The budget of BBC Online audio & music is £14 million in 2011/12.

BBC Online – knowledge and learning

Scope of activities

BBC Online should be the BBC's main platform for formal learning output. It should offer content that creates educational value for children, parents, teachers and adult learners across the UK.

The BBC's online formal learning resources should be developed in close collaboration with external partners, including curriculum bodies, academics and teachers.

BBC Online should provide formal learning resources aimed primarily at children. These may cover a broad range of subjects and skills and should include a proposition to support school children with revision and recap. There should also be resources to support parents and teachers, including those which make use of archive broadcast content. It should include formal learning output in support of each of the devolved nations' own educational curricula.

Formal learning for adults should focus primarily on essential skills, such as literacy and numeracy, languages and the encouragement of digital media and internet literacy.

BBC Online should provide innovative and distinctive online content in knowledge-building genres, through distinctive propositions that reflect and extend the range of the BBC's broadcast services. It should sometimes partner with external bodies in these areas.

It should offer a broad range of knowledge-building content, with a focus on specialist factual areas such as science, natural history and the arts, as well as some leisure interests (which should be strongly linked to broadcast output). BBC Online should reflect contemporary life and the different interests in each of the devolved nations.

Budget

The budget of BBC Online knowledge and learning is £22 million in 2011/12.

BBC Online – iPlayer & TV

Key characteristics

1. Remit

iPlayer & TV should aim to maintain the reach, consumption levels and value for money of the BBC's public service radio and television output, and should also increase the output's impact. It should do this by offering licence fee payers greater choice and control over how they consume BBC content and through distinctive propositions that reflect and extend the range of the BBC's broadcast services. It should aim to increase the audience to niche and specialist broadcast content. In so doing, it should help maintain the perceived relevance of the BBC to licence payers as their patterns of media consumption change.

2. Scope of this Licence

BBC iPlayer may simulcast the BBC's broadcast television and radio services over fixed and mobile internet protocol networks. It may also offer BBC broadcast television content on the internet for seven days after it has been broadcast (both streamed and for download), and give users 30 days after download during which they may first access the content. It may allow users retrospectively or prospectively via pre-booking to download multiple episodes of up to 15% of on-demand television content (known as 'series stacking'),⁴ for first access within 30 days of download. It may allow users to repeatedly consume downloaded content for up to seven days after first access. It may also allow users retrospectively or prospectively via pre-booking to stream multiple episodes of up to 15% of on-demand radio content, until a date no later than seven days after the last episode in the relevant series. This includes series where there is a break in scheduling between sub-sections of the series.

It may also offer broadcast radio content for download for an unlimited period of time after broadcast, although this must not include unabridged readings of published works nor full track commercial music nor classical music (even if recorded by the BBC), other than classical music in the form of incidental music, signature tunes or clips of up to two minutes' duration within speech-based programmes with a specifically musical theme. The service may offer a single podcast or download containing content outside these parameters as set out in the BBC Radio 3 service licence.

It is noted that iPlayer & TV may also be used to provide output already provided by BBC Online on 1 January 2007 which was not subject to the approval given by the

⁴ Details of the type of programmes which may be included in series stacking are given in the Service Licences for each television service.

BBC Trust in April 2007. The provisions of this Annex do not extend to that output⁵.

iPlayer & TV should promote the BBC's public purposes to a wide range of audiences by providing innovative and distinctive online content in entertainment genres, including drama and comedy, and through distinctive propositions that reflect and extend the range of the BBC's broadcast services.

iPlayer & TV should aim to nurture creativity and new creative talent in a variety of ways. It may explore ways of exploiting the unique characteristics of the internet to provide entertainment propositions originated specifically for the internet which help the BBC deliver its public purposes.

3. Budget

iPlayer & TV has a budget of £15 million in 2011/12.

4. Overview of aims and objectives

iPlayer & TV should enable licence fee payers to access BBC programming quickly, easily and in a high quality format and should reflect and extend the BBC's broadcast output while contributing to the promotion of the BBC's public purposes.. In doing so, it should aim to be regarded as a high quality BBC service by its users and so contribute to their approval of the BBC.

BBC iPlayer should aim to maintain the BBC's overall reach and consumption levels, as usage of the BBC's linear services is replaced over time by on-demand consumption. In doing so, it should contribute in the long term to the BBC's ambition to provide services that are of value to all licence fee payers. It should aim at least to maintain consumption of BBC content by younger adults (those aged 16-34).

BBC iPlayer's user interface and contextual offerings should aim to promote public service content, including that which is of niche interest, and help the BBC increase the reach and consumption of these programmes. It should seek to achieve this in a variety of ways including search, navigation and recommendation functions, the series stacking function and promotional activities.

The series stacking function should be focussed on series which have a distinct run, with a beginning and end and a narrative arc, or those with exceptionally high impact. It should cover a broad range of output.

It should aim to enable the BBC to maintain the value for money of its investment in content at a higher level than if programming was not offered on-demand.

Content should be offered free at the point of use with no advertising. BBC iPlayer should incorporate functions which ensure that children can be protected from unsuitable content. It should also provide adequate access for those with sensory, cognitive or physical impairments within a reasonable timescale.

⁵ Any specific on demand permissions beyond these general terms appear in the Service Licences for each television and radio service.

In fulfilling its other aims and objectives, iPlayer & TV should aim to contribute to the growth in the usage of rich media in broadband households. It should aim to make seven-day catch-up available on platforms in a manner consistent with the BBC's syndication policy.

BBC Online – Children's

Scope of activities

BBC Online should reflect and extend the BBC's broadcast offer for children with an emphasis on high quality, UK-originated content that encourages informal learning, creativity and safer use of the internet. In so doing it should also seek to promote media literacy. It should seek to deliver the BBC's public purposes to children in a variety of ways including offering some propositions originated specifically for the internet.

Provision for primary school-age children should be stimulating and trusted amongst users, and make a strong contribution to the delivery of the BBC's public purposes. Where appropriate it should seek to complement and link to formal learning provision for this age group. It should reflect both entertainment and knowledge-building genres, introduce children to news, and encourage them to participate and create.

Content for pre-school children should cover a range of public purposes and genres with a focus on the English early learning goals. Material for parents and carers should enable them to learn more about childcare and early learning.

BBC Online should allow children aged 6 - 12 to access content on-demand in a child-friendly environment and should present on-demand content for children under 6 as a shared experience operated by parents or carers.

BBC Online may also offer propositions aimed specifically at older children and teenagers, including entertainment and provision of advice on topics relevant to teens and young adults.

Budget

The budget of BBC Online Children's is £9 million in 2011/12.

BBC Online – News, Sport & Weather

Scope of activities

BBC Online should provide a comprehensive service of impartial, accurate and independent news and analysis covering UK and international news and news from the UK's nations and local areas. Key news events should be set in context and it should cover some specialist subject areas and provide guides to key issues of the day. Blogs and other approaches should be used to deepen users' insight into important news topics and show how BBC journalists work to cover these.

It should complement the BBC's broadcast news coverage across all subject areas, reflecting and extending the BBC's main news and current affairs programmes online. There should be news output aimed specifically at primary school-age children, hosted on the children's website.

BBC Online's news coverage in each of the devolved nations should include coverage of political institutions, reflect the different sports events and interests of each nation.

BBC Online may have sites for 53 local areas⁶ across the UK which in England are linked to BBC local radio services. These should cover news, weather and travel and may include some local interests, such as sport, heritage and events.

Nations and local sites should aim to work effectively with other providers of local information, sourcing or sharing content and providing clear links from each BBC site to other local media and information providers.

BBC Online should provide weather data and forecasts, enabling users to tailor the information by locality across the UK.

BBC Online should encourage active involvement of the audience by encouraging online discussion of important issues and enabling users to submit news-related text and video, while ensuring that this meets the BBC's high editorial standards.

In allowing users to personalise their consumption, it should aim to ensure that their agenda is not narrowed unnecessarily.

BBC Online's sports output should reflect and extend the breadth and depth of the BBC's broadcast sports coverage. It should offer sports journalism, event coverage, fixture results and a range of other information.

⁶ BBC Online offers local sites for: Beds, Herts & Bucks; Berkshire; Birmingham & Black Country; Bristol; Cambridgeshire; Cornwall; Coventry & Warwickshire; Cumbria; Derby; Devon; Dorset; Edinburgh & East of Scotland; Essex; Glasgow & West of Scotland; Gloucestershire; Guernsey; Hampshire & Isle of Wight; Hereford and Worcester; Highlands & Islands; Humberside; Isle of Man; Jersey; Kent; Lancashire; Leeds & Bradford; Leicester; Lincolnshire; Liverpool; London; Manchester; Mid Wales; Norfolk; North East Scotland; North East Wales; North West Wales; Northampton; Nottingham; Oxford; Sheffield & South Yorkshire; Shropshire; Somerset; South East Wales; South Scotland; South West Wales; Stoke & Staffordshire; Suffolk; Surrey; Sussex; Tayside & Central Scotland; Tees; Tyne & Wear; Wiltshire; York & North Yorkshire.

BBC Online should offer dedicated coverage of sport in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and at local level in some areas, reflecting the different sports events and interests across the UK.

As well as its coverage of major sports and events, the BBC's online sports output should cover minority interest sports which are less likely to have broadcast coverage or be covered by other providers.

Budget

The budget of BBC Online news, sport and weather is £43 million in 2011/12.

Annex I: Performance measurement framework

Introduction

The BBC Trust has the function of assessing the performance of the Executive Board in delivering the BBC's services and activities and holding the Executive Board to account for its performance.⁷ It will use the framework described below as the basis for its assessment of BBC Online.

The framework is based around the four drivers of public value: Reach, Quality, Impact and Value for money and it includes measurement of the five content characteristics, as described in the BBC Agreement⁸: high quality, challenging, original, innovative and engaging.

The Trust can amend this framework without this constituting formal variation to this Service Licence.

Performance measurement framework

Reach: BBC Online should contribute towards the maintenance of combined BBC weekly reach⁹ at over 90% by aiming to increase its own weekly reach.

BBC iPlayer should contribute towards the maintenance of combined BBC weekly reach at over 90% by aiming to build its own weekly reach. This will be measured by reference to:

- seven-day television catch-up – weekly reach amongst all TV households;
- simulcast television over the internet – weekly reach amongst all TV households;
- non-DRM audio downloads over the internet – weekly reach amongst all UK households;
- BBC iPlayer's reach amongst younger adults (those aged 16-34) should contribute to BBC's weekly reach being maintained;
- reach and consumption of niche, specialist programmes, relative to their reach and consumption on linear services.

Quality: audience approval of BBC Online and perceptions of it as *high quality, innovative and original and different*].

Impact: licence fee payer awareness of BBC Online and BBC iPlayer (overall and specific functions) and audience perceptions of BBC Online as *engaging and challenging*. Clickthroughs to external sites.

Value for money: BBC Online's cost per user reached.

⁷ Charter, article 24 (c)

⁸ Agreement, clause 14

⁹ For all BBC services