

# Governors' review of services BBC World Service & Global News

## Overview

BBC World Service & Global News, which brings together BBC World Service radio, BBC World television, and the BBC's international-facing online news services, now reaches 185 million homes weekly. Independent surveys taken around the world in 2003 indicate that the BBC's reputation remains strong overall, consolidating its position as the world's most trusted source of information.



The ability to coordinate international news operations across radio, television and online paid dividends editorially, resulting in more coherent output with greater impact. An example was the series of interviews with world leaders on HIV/Aids, including Colin Powell and Kofi Annan, which were carried on all three media.



1	2	4
	3	

**1 BBC World Service**  
The news from Bush House in London

**2 BBC Hindi roadshow**  
Marketing the BBC World Service to listeners in rural India

**3 Covering conflict**  
Colombo Correspondent Frances Harrison in Sri Lanka

**4 BBC World Service Trust**  
Bashir Al-Zaidi interviewing for the *Calling Iraq* programme

## BBC World Service

Short-wave audiences of all international broadcasters are in long-term decline, and those of the BBC are no exception. BBC World Service lost an estimated 14 million short-wave listeners in the last year. That loss was only partially offset by a rise in FM listening, notably in Egypt and across Africa. But overall the global radio audience to BBC World Service fell slightly to 146 million weekly listeners (from 150 million the previous year). The decline has occurred where it has not been possible to obtain an FM presence for regulatory or financial reasons. Significant drops in audiences were noted in Western Europe, Saudi Arabia and the Ukraine. Efforts to overcome this and extend FM reach wherever possible are a priority for 2004/2005.

In Russia, difficulties in distribution combined with a declining appetite for international news led to a further decline in audiences. A strategy has been put in place to deal with this, and we expect it to be implemented speedily and effectively.

BBC World Service registered a creditable 1.8 million listeners in Iraq, in the BBC's first-ever survey there, and a reach of 60% in Kabul. BBC World Service's biggest audiences continue to be in Africa. In Ghana, the BBC is the country's leading station. In Tanzania, six out of ten people are regular listeners.

But audiences have also reached 4.7 million in the world's most developed media market – the United States. More than one in five opinion formers in New York and Washington listen each week, and one in four in Boston. In Britain too, the availability of BBC World Service on DAB Digital radio, Freeview digital television, digital satellite and cable has helped to push the audience up to a record 1.3 million people.

The increased availability of BBC World Service radio programmes on FM has helped to meet increasing competition from local and national stations. By the end of the year, BBC World Service output was being broadcast on FM in 139 capital cities.

Editorially, BBC World Service provided strong reporting and analysis of global events. In Iraq, BBC News correspondents were able to draw on the expertise of Arabic Service reporters stationed in key cities. The Arabic Service opened a production office in Baghdad and a major new production centre in Cairo. The month-long HIV/Aids season which was broadcast across all 43 language services in December 2003 was a notable editorial achievement.

Looking ahead, we have stressed the importance of BBC World Service securing a strong spending review settlement in 2004 in order to achieve sufficient investment to meet future FM targets and develop new media initiatives.

**139**  
capital cities receive  
BBC World Service on FM

**1.8**  
million people listen to  
BBC World Service in Iraq

For more broadcasting facts and figures, see pages 58 to 67 and 136 to 146

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## BBC World

BBC World, the BBC's commercially funded international news and information television channel, has seen continued improvement in its reputation and audience reach during the year.

The strengthening of its editorial reputation was driven by ambitious coverage of the Iraq war and its aftermath. During the year the channel anchored programmes on the conflict from Baghdad, Amman, Kuwait and Qatar, as well as London and Washington. Audience surveys indicate that viewers reacted positively. In Europe, for example, respondents saw BBC World as the most trusted international news channel during the Iraq war, while a survey of European opinion leaders saw BBC World described as more "authoritative" and "relevant" than its major competitors. At present, however, BBC World remains less trusted than CNN in some markets – reflecting CNN's wider audience impact.

The channel has increased its 24-hour distribution base by 10% during the year. The channel is now distributed to 112 million homes full-time (see graph). Including part-time distribution, BBC World is available in approximately 260 million households (255 million in 2002/2003). More than 1 million hotel rooms, 20 airlines and 21 cruise ships also carry the channel. From a number of studies conducted during the year it can be estimated that BBC World reaches 53 million individual global viewers weekly.

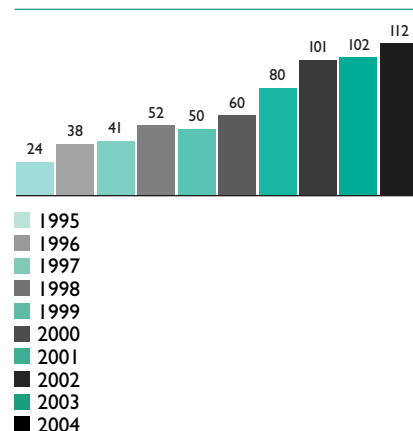
Despite the uncertain economic and political climate in 2003/2004, BBC World's business performance reflects strong underlying growth, but the continued weakness of the US dollar has reduced sterling revenues, resulting in a loss before interest and tax for the year of £16.5million.

We receive regular updates from management on progress towards 24-hour distribution in the US market and will continue to monitor the financial performance of the service.

**260**  
million homes have access  
to BBC World

**43**  
language services from  
BBC World Service

BBC World distribution to homes with 24-hour reception (millions)



Source: BBC World Distribution Department, various



1	2	4
	3	

**1 BBC Monitoring**  
Gathering news and comment from sources worldwide

**2 Moscow Bureau**  
Chief Sub Editors Yevgeni Konovalov and Yelena Daniliants at work in the new combined HQ

**4 Lyse Doucet**  
One of the news presenters on BBC World

**3 BBC news in Russian**  
BBC World Service offers news in 43 languages

## BBC international-facing online news sites

BBC World Service & Global News' online sites continue to show strong growth in audience usage. Monthly page impressions rose to 279 million in March 2004 (228 million in March 2003). This represents more than 16 million individual monthly users.

Traffic to all language sites grew significantly over the year; and nearly all have met or exceeded their targets. Page impressions to the Persian and Urdu interactive sites have gone up more than five times, and traffic to the Russian and Spanish interactive sites has more than doubled. However there are concerns about the impact of the Chinese news site following moves by the authorities in China to block access to it.

The division's interactive sites and programmes have demonstrated continued vigour; for example, hosting global debates with key figures including President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, the Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan and Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan.

New interactive sites were launched to give a voice to people in the Islamic world and promote dialogue between global communities who share a common language or concern. Issue-focused websites on the Aids debate, and on Islam and the West have achieved strong recognition. All the major language websites now host regular debate forums – for example an average of two a week in December 2003.

The websites also served as a place where people can express their opinions in times of crisis or on key news stories.

## BBC Monitoring

BBC Monitoring, based at Caversham, supplies news, information and comment gathered from the mass media around the world. It monitors more than 3,000 radio, television, press, internet and news agency sources, translating up to 100 languages, to provide an authoritative view of world events, 24 hours a day.

It provided key source material for stakeholders including the Foreign Office, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Defence and the BBC. It responded to the high demand for fast and accurate global media monitoring over the past year; of particular value as events unfolded in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East and the whole of the Islamic world. There is an increasing demand for insight on global themes such as terrorism and weapons proliferation.

BBC Monitoring achieved its best-ever satisfaction ratings from its stakeholders at home and abroad, as measured in its autumn 2003 customer survey. Alongside high ratings for usefulness, range and selection, there was a notable rise in ratings for timeliness and responsiveness.

The key challenge for BBC Monitoring is to offer an increasing range of products, including multimedia content, to customers in the UK and overseas. We are keen to ensure that the reputation of BBC Monitoring continues to build and that it secures a solid outcome in its funding review, and maintains high satisfaction ratings from stakeholders during 2004/2005.

**279**  
million page impressions to international news websites

**3,000+**  
foreign media outlets tracked by BBC Monitoring

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