



Future of Media in Ireland

Questions

Question 1. How should Government develop and support the concept and role of public service media and what should its role in relation to public service content in the wider media be?

a) How should Government develop and support the concept and role of public service

- Government should ensure that the findings of any public consultation are welcomed and incorporated into future development of PSM. They should take particular note of changing demographics and mediums and how they have the potential to drive an entirely new future for PSM if incorporated correctly. While a consolidated, cross-department approach should be adopted, government should not lose sight of the important learnings and nuances that each area or department will have when developing an overarching strategy.
- One common policy that encapsulates cross department strategies. This policy to have set KPIs and outcomes evaluated independently.
- Secondly, a communications campaign around a reformed approach to PSM would assist in ensuring the public are aware of the role of PSM, how it has changed and how it is beneficial in society – while becoming more relevant, adaptable, fast paced etc.

b) Media and what should its role in relation to public service content in the wider media be?

- Ongoing support of RTE and TG4 as independent public service broadcasters
- To uphold the right to freedom of expression and sharing of accurate, timely and impartial information. Ensure people can seek and receive information and ensure that the values of democracy, equality, diversity and political, social, and cultural cohesion and interaction are promoted.
- To create and promote a standard of journalism/public service broadcasting that sits above many privately owned journalistic outlets.



- Ensure balanced broadcasting and targets around gender equity and other equality targets being met (so for example in gender equity in sport ensuring that there is a 50/50 balance of male/female sporting presenters and 50/50 balance of male/female sporting content).
- RTE's and TG4 independence and resource support is crucial to the future of media in Ireland, we are fortunate to have a service which to a large degree is autonomous, but it requires state financial support to continue to improve quality and independence. If this is eroded, that would be an enormous blow for the future of the media in Ireland. Equally, the Irish Government must have a watchdog (regulation) to highlight untrue or misleading claims and labels or apologies must appear to recognise this (like Twitter have now). The Irish government should engage to regulate the large social media operators and media houses to publish fair news that does not promote hate, sectarianism, racism, prejudices or violence.
- Ireland's Public Service media must evolve quicker with slicker platforms, better Customer Relationship Management, On demand programming and a far better service for the Irish abroad. The government must insist on the building of great brand equity/loyalty, CRM, Engagement, a broader set of value-creating products for customers and this must all be created in a culture of innovation and celebrating the unique Irish culture we are lucky to possess.

c) What can be learned from the evolution of public service media over the last decade?

- That the model is under significant pressure from private commercial entities as well as increase in frequency's (i.e., cable, satellite) and platforms for distribution. To meet its obligations as a public service and meeting regulation rules has led a strain on financing.
- For Public Service Media to be able to retain large audiences and credibility, they need investment by the state but there should be zero tolerance

towards any political interference with public service media. There should also be a well publicised complaints department at public service operators which allows an easy-to-use to make complaints and a speedy response.

- Need to ensure balance on free to air broadcasting of content deemed to be of public value vs requirement for rights sales to balance the finances of a sport

d) What systems may be required to support and sustain public service content, e.g., high quality, independent journalism, in an increasingly competitive and consolidated market?

- As a nation, we must invest in our public service media, but this loses credibility when the salaries of some high-profile presenters are published, and the point is often made that RTE pays huge salaries to people who would not be attractive to higher paying platforms and therefore the public needs comfort that the presenters are performing a public service and not for extraordinary salaries. The license fee should be increased as should the subsidies, but the emphasis placed on high quality, independent journalism and programming.
- Given the changing dynamic of audiences and media in general, a forward-looking content development strategy must be developed that places less emphasis on high cost, 'star' names and more emphasis on audience reactive content. Any new content system should strongly consider a fast-paced, changing environment at its core.

e) How might public service media be more effective in promoting the Irish language, sport and culture?

The media is a powerful voice for and influence on sport. PSM can be more effective.

1. Broadening the list of designation of major events for broadcast, this will allow for niche sports to be given exposure to new audiences. Also, there are 3 prioritised sports in the National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027, Running/Swimming/Cycling none of these sports major national events are on the designated major events broadcast list but if we want to promote these sports to Irish Society as a sport and physical activity, they should get involved in they must be given exposure.

2. On-demand highlights and archives of previously or recently broadcast material for consumption, education and analysis. It has been noted that modern audiences consume less and less 'live' media, often opting for highlights, snippets, short reads and social media commentary. Having access to archives, as well as on-demand content free from heavily constrained 'rights issues' would be significant in ensuring message is heard across platforms and audiences.
3. Provision of multi-platform distribution of content to meet target audiences. Particularly important considering the growing trend in younger audiences of 'multi-screen viewing' where attention capture is more difficult than ever before.
4. National Sports Policy indicates particular gradients that are underrepresented in Irish Sport and that as an outcome of the policy that the variant in participation is drastically reduced. The gradients are people with disabilities, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, women and girls and ethnic minority groups. PSM can be more effective in addressing these gradients by creating and or showing content that features any individuals or teams from these gradients in programming.
5. Following on from the successful 20x20 campaign, ensure balanced broadcasting and targets around gender equity and other equality targets being met (so for example in gender equity in sport ensuring that there is a 50/50 balance of male/female sporting presenters and 50/50 balance of male/female sporting content).

f) How might public service media better respond to the needs and expectations of the public?

- Public Service Media should engage more with their customers through good CRM, offer better personalised services, invest in OTT, on-demand platforms and offer better services for the millions of Irish abroad.
- By becoming more accessible, across more platforms, in a more instant fashion PSM can appeal to an 'always on' audience with a high level of content consumption. There is a growing need for PSM to be front and center with accurate and informed content, however content is wasted if not delivered to a wide variety of audiences on multiple platforms.



g) What can we learn from other jurisdictions?

- The protection of the independence of our media is crucial. Mandatory TV Licenses for every household and an increase in the cost should be considered in line with ongoing cost optimising but better-quality more accessible and versatile programming

Question 2. How should public service media be financed sustainably?

a) What is the best model for future funding of public service media in Ireland? What approach best supports independent editorial oversight while achieving value for money and delivering on public service aims?

- The current model of license fee plus advertising, incentivise advertising through tax relief.
- Explore best practice in other EU countries on subscription models for PSM i.e., a hybrid model; maintain licence fee with a mixed offer, offering some services for free i.e., news, current affairs, culture, education, kids and designated sports events (funded by a reduced licence fee) and motivate consumers to purchase a higher-end production and/or additional content as an upgrade through consumer payment.
- Overseas paywall for streamed services (for diaspora)

<p>b) What opportunities exist to develop and implement business model and organisational changes within the public service broadcasters (RTÉ and TG4)?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further cost-optimisation, branching into wider services like business portal, educational portal etc.
<p>C) How might content commissioning, including by RTÉ, TG4 and the BAI Sound and Vision scheme, be adjusted/improved/reformed to better achieve public service aims?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be much better Customer Relationship Management, real-time customer engagement with the platforms, enable customers to feel they have a say in the commissioning. • By focusing on the mediums and channels of delivery and developing specific content for each and their audiences rather than adapting standard TV content for player, online etc. channels. • The future of consumption is online and PSM must refocus their efforts on pivoting to that rather than adapting existing commissioning/content elements to just simply 'fit' online. With specific reference to sport and physical activity, content aimed at time-poor audiences, who want short and sharp information about ongoing events, initiatives or activities would be beneficial.
<p>d) How should public funding or tax reliefs be apportioned to Public Service Content providers?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It must be state subsidised in line with ever improving quality and cost optimisation. However, Tax relief on advertising as an option could be explored.
<p>e) What does the shift in advertising revenues towards big tech firms mean for the</p>

future of print, online and broadcast media?

- It means the Public Service media must be better with its Customer Relationship Management, build stronger brand equity, connect & engage more with the customer, offer personalised services, have a culture of innovation, hire kids to offer their voice and listen to people on evolving trends while scouring the world to understand new innovations in media.
- This shift further echoes the need for PSM to have a strong, sensible and accurate online presence where content, news and media can be found by all audiences. The move towards big tech advertising shows the power of online media and the potential overshadowing of PSM unless it adapts to ensure it uses such avenues for content distribution.

f) What role is there for alternative funding models for Public Service Content providers voluntary, cooperative, crowdsourcing, subscription?

- Subscription services are now commonplace in the media landscape and may be a positive way for PSM to raise additional funds. A move to this would potentially place PSM in line with other major content producers in the public mindset. However, it should not be the only avenue explored as PSM is there to serve the public and should access to it should not be prohibitive because of cost or any other element.
- We would suggest exploring the option of a hybrid model, so maintain a license fee with a mixed offer, offering some services for free i.e., news, current affairs, culture, education, kids, and designated sports events (funded by a reduced license fee) and motivate consumers to purchase higher-end productions and/or additional content as an upgrade through consumer payment.
- We also believe tax incentives for those advertising on PSM be explored.

Question 3. How should media be governed and regulated?

a) What regulatory changes at EU or global level might impact on the governance of public service media in the period ahead?

- Warnings on misleading content (like on Twitter). Content that promotes racism, prejudices, hatred and violence must be taken down and a house of arbitration opened by the EU where contentious material taken down can be brought for discussion/final decision so it is certainly not easy to put up damaging material but if deemed fair by law, it must be given the opportunity to be published as freedom of speech must be protected.

b) What challenges are posed to a vibrant, independent public service media by increasing consolidation / declining plurality of ownership in the Irish market?

- The public service media in Ireland has a huge advantage so it must focus on what it has in its favour and build the blocks required to ensure that Ireland retains independent, high quality journalism, content & programming.

c) Are current legislative and regulatory controls for public service media adequate?

- Current controls appear adequate, however with the change to new forms of media and an increasing pressure to appeal to many audiences through many forms of media, the controls may need to adapt at pace to ensure all avenues are protected and controlled in the future.
- Living in other parts of the world do remind Irish people of the adequate laws we have which absolutely must be protected, we believe the public service media in Ireland can be better, more efficient & innovative but crucially the laws we have must be protected.

