

# ACTO

local public service television directory

## **ACTO CHECKLIST - THE RESPONSE TO LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE TV BROADCASTING IN THE NATIONS AND REGIONS**

### **DIARY for 2006**

- TELEVISION FROM THE NATIONS AND REGIONS CONFERENCE, January 2006
- LOCAL TV FORUM, March 2006
- 12th INTERNATIONAL LOCAL TV BROADCASTERS FESTIVAL, July 2006

**'LOCAL TV BOOK' and *new*  
LOCAL television REPORT**

**ACTO** is an advisory committee of local television organisations working alongside the Institute of Local Television. **ACTO**'s initial objective is to share information supporting the introduction of local digital terrestrial television as an independent form of local public service broadcasting.

**ACTO** was established in 2003 by local television members of the Community Media Association to focus on the introduction of local digital terrestrial television services - or 'local DTT'.

Through the Institute of Local Television **ACTO** is represented on **Open Channels for Europe!** the organisation representing European local and open channels in exchanging information on European practice and in negotiation with the European parliament on small-scale TV provision.

Personal and institutional affiliation to **ACTO** is by a small annual subscription (see page 10) entitling subscribers to copies of Institute of Local Television research and reports as well as to **ACTO** directories. Subscribers also receive early announcement of local TV conferences, forums, workshops and are offered networking and support with submissions to regulators and government as well as encouragement with local-tv related activities.

**ACTO - local public service television directory** - encourages local lines of research and documentation and promotes publications which support a wide public engagement with small-scale local TV.

This is the tenth edition of the **ACTO - local public service television directory**.

**ACTO** back issues can be downloaded from [www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html](http://www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html)

## WEBSITES

### For information:

on local and community TV in Europe: [www.obs.int/db/persky/eu.html](http://www.obs.int/db/persky/eu.html)

on community TV channels worldwide: [www.openchannel.se/](http://www.openchannel.se/)

UK's Community Media Association: [www.commedia.org.uk/](http://www.commedia.org.uk/)

UK examples of local and community TV programmes:

[www.showcase.commedia.org.uk/](http://www.showcase.commedia.org.uk/)

website of NvTv Belfast's Local TV Channel: [www.nvttv.co.uk](http://www.nvttv.co.uk)

Public Voice is the leading voluntary sector coalition campaigning for citizens' interests in communications policy and regulation:

[www.politics.co.uk/campaignsite/public-voice-\\$3436683.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/campaignsite/public-voice-$3436683.htm)

Ofcom - the UK's independent regulator and competition authority - site includes sections on codes, guidelines and consultations: [www.ofcom.org.uk/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/)

..... provides an extensive catalogue of consultations and reports - for background to local TV look out the public service broadcasting consultations Phase 1-3 and you can join the Ofcom email list for updates on future consultations and publications

inter-ACT!#5 media activism in South Korea. You can subscribe to this regular

English language newsletter at <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/inter-act>

Institute of Local Television [www.localtvonline.com/](http://www.localtvonline.com/) ... shared with The Broadcasting Trust, website lists publications, provides background papers, illustrates local TV DVDs, 2.4 Ghz TV studies ....

Ofcom's new spectrum dividend review consultation

[http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2005/11/nr\\_20051117](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2005/11/nr_20051117)

## **ACTO 10**

**Ofcom will shortly publish its report on Local TV. The communications regulator assures all concerned that their report will be empirically based and consider the needs of 'new' and 'existing stakeholders' while responding to the demands of citizen-consumers for Local TV.**

**Yet we are cautious. No one employed on the Ofcom study has worked in the local TV sector - and Ofcom's outside consultants and engineers have all been contracted to the study without advertisement or competition.**

**Digital spectrum was actually committed to Local TV by the Ofcom Board in October 2004 to start local digital pilot services - fourteen months later there has been no explanation why operators for these channels weren't sought and why these channels haven't gone on-air.**

**The Ofcom report is needed to provide a cost effective, spectrum efficient and universal Local TV plan with an indication of transmission costs for local digital television channels and the reach and scale of Local TV services appropriate for each Licence area.**

**Without these long-sought after elements the public consultation on Local TV from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in January will have nothing around which to stimulate interest.**

**To be interested in Local TV and to conceive and envisage a Local TV channel in any area the transmission plan, cost and proposed scale of local Licenced areas are all prerequisites. Without these, Ofcom will risk condemning the DCMS consultation to the scrapheap of unhelpful studies.**

**Local Digital Terrestrial Television is the only platform which requires a new Licence - and exploring the scope of the Draft Order of Licence is the main purpose behind the DCMS consultation next year, a consultation which has been held back from April 2005 in order for Ofcom to contribute its report on finance, sustainability and a local frequency plan.**

**So if there is no engineering plan, no budget or proposal on local scale in Ofcom's report the DCMS consultation will beat a hollow, empty drum.**

**Recently Ofcom has warned ACTO that it is not 'planning Local TV for all' - which contradicts envisaging Local TV as a 'public service' in its Public Service Broadcasting Reviews as well as working in the best interests of *all* citizen-consumers. Just which citizen-consumers does Ofcom intend to leave out of Local public service television?**

**Let's hope we've been misinformed ..... meanwhile, the following ACTO paper offers some idea of what is envisaged by (some) of those involved in getting Local TV started in the UK - those who do have some experience of working in Local TV or who have a strong commitment to do so.**

## **ACTO CHECKLIST – A RESPONSE TO LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE TELEVISION BROADCASTING IN THE NATIONS AND REGIONS as submitted to Ofcom’s PHASE III PSB REVIEW in April 2005**

*[This is the 10th ‘year-end’ edition of **ACTO** and an opportunity to take stock and consider suggestions to amend the **ACTO** submission to Ofcom’s PHASE III Consultation on Public Service Broadcasting - made back in April 2005. What would **you** change?*

*The **ACTO CHECKLIST** grew out of discussions and numerous public meetings, a Scottish Local TV Forum and umpteen presentations and consultation-responses during the course of the Ofcom Public Service Broadcasting Reviews of 2004 and 2005. **ACTO**’s thoughts were informed by the experience of those running Restricted Services Licence (RSL) local television from 1998 and by those who’d studied and researched, piloted or tested Local TV in the UK (and sometimes abroad) since 1989.*

*In April **ACTO** was still a small steering committee advising the Institute of Local Television on Local TV policy and proposals. Since the Summer and largely through the circulation of the **local public service television directory - ACTO** has kept closely in touch with its early contacts as well as Scottish Forum delegates but has tried to expand the opportunity for ‘new stakeholders’ to contribute to shaping Local TV in the UK. The coming months will see whether Local TV will develop as envisaged as a third tier of public service broadcasting rolling out with digital switchover. Ofcom has warned - ‘don’t be surprised if you don’t get what you want’. Plus ca change?*

*So it will be interesting to compare and contrast Ofcom’s proposals in their forthcoming Report with the ground-up requirements put forward below by those who work in Local TV and among communities wanting local channels, who want access to Local channels on TV and to take local public broadcasting responsibility across the UK.]*

### **A LOCAL PSB (Public Service Broadcasting) NETWORK FOR THE NATIONS AND REGIONS**

- **ACTO** understands that local TV channels can be inserted using add/drop boxes into DTT bandwidth. This solution for local TV should be planned with the roll out of DTT and as part of the presentation to the Regional Radio Conference in 2006 (see *Local TV Network* submitted to Ofcom and available from the Institute of Local Television [local.tv@virgin.net](mailto:local.tv@virgin.net))
- local TV is the new public service television broadcaster that will replace ITV’s regional service as ITV drops its PSB commitments across the nations and regions – the quid pro quo is that local TV is given access to bandwidth on the channel 3 mux which was provided to channel 3/ITV in view of its PSB responsibilities – including regional PSB commitments
- a universal network of local TV stations could potentially use each of the UK’s 1152 transmitter sites to transmit a signal to identified communities, using the transmitters and relays in smaller configurations than regional TV to encircle defined communities modelled as closely as possible on local authority boundaries
- local TV channels combine highly local news and other community and locally made programming with ‘imported’ and ‘shared’ programmes. Shared programming can be made for few or several local TV channels to suit communities of interest in each locality. Combined they could provide a ‘nation-TV’ break-out to cover parliament and assembly, national or major festivals, other broadly shared events not represented by ITV and the UK-wide channels

- to help achieve local DTT's objective a must carry rule for cable and broadband TV redistribution should apply for local public service television broadcasting
- in the nations MORI has established (for Phase III) that demand for local TV news is as strong in the isolated and smaller communities as it is in the cities
- but MORI's research also suggests that 'local area' is not synonymous with 'regional ITV area', that viewers require news from their immediate area and (insome cases) from nearby towns or cities as well as from areas where there is a strong association (NB. The Institute of Local Television's response to Phase III, was titled *Speed Reading 'Programming in the Nations'* and *Mapping the social geography of local news identity* - to be found respectively in the forthcoming *LOCAL television REPORT* and *Local Television Renewed*)
- each local PSB channel would be independently owned

### **CHARACTER OF LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE TELEVISION BROADCASTING**

- local news, information, debate and participation is the core of local television – generating a sense of pride and ownership in each local TV channel
- news includes cultural, social, documentary and current affairs, local entertainment information as well as hard news – but engagement with civic affairs, support for debate and intervention has a positive emphasis
- viewer participation and community involvement in all aspects of the service are seen as important contributors to local TV's distinctive and individual character in each area
- local TV can deliver on media literacy, industrial and professional training, encourage audio visual production and co-productions with neighbouring stations for export throughout the network of local channels
- local TV has three elements: a) a local news, information and participatory service, surrounded by; b) shared community or common interest programming and (for smaller channels if not for all); c) a sustaining network or networks which adds quality and value to the viewer's engagement with the local channel
- the sustaining network for local TV might be a non-profit company under the direction of the local TV channels it helps support. The model network suggested for each nation could in turn interact with or be part of a UK-wide or even a European-wide network or clearing-house. There's clearly scope for several sustaining networks to evolve from initiatives already being built up in support of local TV
- the sustaining networks' video clips or programme contribution would be locally scheduled to retain the strong sense of local control, of programmes being imported through local choice rather than being imposed - music videos have been put forward as a model in discussions in Scotland because these offer positive and flexible features which can be locally identified, described in more detail in the submission titled *Local TV Network* in papers forwarded by the Institute of Local Television from the Scottish Local TV Forum
- local TV is a channel that the viewers feel attracted to and with which they can closely identify, to which they are encouraged to respond and participate in – and this feature is most important

## ECONOMICS

- based on a local TV estimate for Spain, local TV would create 10-15,000 jobs across the UK
- Spain and France each propose 1000+ local DTT channels. An assessment has yet to be made for the UK, but the three-element local TV channel proposed by ACTO would encourage local TV for any area requiring a local news service. As a guide, in Scotland there are some 60 local newspapers. The Scottish Local TV Forum found interest from local authorities and community producers from the Western Isles, Dumfries and Galloway, Angus and Orkney. Smaller and sparsely populated communities should not be disadvantaged by their requirement for more transmitters and relays. The transmitter network costs needs resolving as part of the universal approach
- the cost of the add/drop box solution – at £30-40,000 per transmitter site – is estimated at £46m across the UK
- local TV is local public service television broadcasting – whether commercially, community or publicly owned – and should be able to access the Public Service Publisher (PSP) fund certainly for its core PSB provisions
- the PSP provides a possible means to help establish, coordinate and support local TV- but the application and bidding models proposed to date by Ofcom are for a single PSP which is difficult to reconcile with two or more distinctive PSP roles proposed in Phase III
- local TV needs to achieve as much reach as possible within its locally identified area – to attract advertisers in competition with radio and newspapers and to satisfy local authority requirements as well as stimulate local engagement
- at the Scottish Local TV Forum the advertising industry suggested that local TV should primarily be seen as local, attracting local advertising. Shared programming would ensure sponsorship for targeted programmes and a network contribution would interest brand and high street advertisers. It was felt important to engage with the advertising agencies with at least parts of a service they could recognise. Local TV will need to be adept in achieving local, regional and national advertising by focusing on local areas and communities of interest
- local authorities are a possible major new stakeholder in local TV – core funding for each local service (in the order of £0.50-1.00 per household per year) would involve redirecting 25-30% of the local authority advertising spend into local TV - rather than finding new money
- one Scottish local authority currently spends £30k per year on a weekly 15 minute local TV news programme, but much of this funding also contributes to income from video productions, web images, making DVDs, video training and providing access to equipment. In this local authority it is believed that there is great untapped potential for involving education in production and out-reach programming when the service becomes widely accessible across the borough
- regular programming on local arts, literature and cinema is not an expensive element and documentaries can be swapped and traded with other channels (see Institute of Local Television's response to Ofcom's Phase III titled e-tv ..... together with the DVDs forwarded to Ofcom of programmes from Edinburgh Television, Channel Six Dundee and e-tv in Aberfeldy including *Artists'* and *Writers'*

*Stories and Cityscape* - a DVD sampler will be available with copies of **LOCAL television REPORT** and 'etv...' is available to download from [www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html](http://www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html) ).

- without daily news the running costs for local TV were £30k per month for Edinburgh Television and £15-20k per month for Channel Six Dundee – a daily news service would be the most costly element of a local TV channel
- local TV has been exchanging programming with local European channels since 1994 (for example, through the Open Channels for Europe! network) and can help explore international links of interest to the communities in its area – to date this has included on air festivals and celebrations of local music, animation and student video production
- joint financing, sponsorship and grants are available for programmes made locally especially those with an 'export' dimension – *Art in Scotland* (made for local TV in Edinburgh and Dundee) taken by the Artschannel (UK satellite) and shown in Berlin and Belfast (on local TV networks) and also distributed to art libraries and through galleries on DVD by The Broadcasting Trust
- local TV is a powerful motor for local confidence building, for economic development in the arts, for local publicity, to encourage tourism, providing the means for greater self-representation in the wider media. Local TV is the most significant development in public service television broadcasting since the introduction of Channel 4 almost twenty five years ago
- local television will reinvent and reinvigorate public service television broadcasting – adding a positive twist to what has recently become an overly defensive and protective PSB

## **CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE LOCAL PSB SERVICE**

- local TV has demonstrated (not least, in Belfast) that it can provide alternative and innovative programming which reflects and enriches the diversity of the local community, promoting equality and social inclusion, fostering mutual understanding and cross community initiatives. This being a highly cost effective form of intervention, which can help, develop new ways of expressing local identity and confidence. It also has the capacity to mark political and social change in the local community through activity based initiatives
- local television has demonstrated its potential to be accessed by community/ cultural organisations as a tool for enriching the lives of volunteers. It can be an outstanding example of dedicated volunteerism and a model for community relations/development organisations. Volunteering can be seen as central to local television's social responsibility efforts, helping make communities better places to live and work, through community capacity building, community relations and media literacy
- local television has a proven capability of working with a wide range of organisations - victims groups, bereavement groups, women's groups, youth groups, community development groups, media groups, voluntary organisations, peace and reconciliation groups, children's groups, disability groups, interface projects, church (and other worship centred) groups, local government, ethnic minority groups, arts and cultural groups

- MPs who supported EDM1316 during the passage of the Communications Act recognised the important contribution community media can bring to social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal, citizens' participation, local democracy and lifelong learning. Local television to be proactive in encouraging access, participation, ownership and authorship in programme production in marginalised communities and communities of interest
- provision of free training workshops in television production for residents in local constituencies to become production volunteers, access to production equipment to produce programmes and development of standards of practice and support on an inclusive basis for groups and individuals seeking to access local television production
- local television can build upon programming policies which actively oppose and attempt to break down prejudice on the basis of race, sex, nationality, religion, disability, ethnic background, age or sexual preference.

ACTO is the industry advisory committee of the Institute of Local Television

## **TELEVISION FROM THE NATIONS AND REGIONS CONFERENCE 2006**

**11TH JANUARY 2006 THE LOWRY, SALFORD QUAYS**

**Chaired by Steve Hewlett, Writer and Broadcast Consultant**

### ***The Promised Land: The future of television outside London***

This year the Conference will focus on the future of network television production outside the M25 and new opportunities for the Nations and Regions. It will look at policy and practice. It's a great chance to make contacts, to question and to learn more. Apart from the main sessions there are breakout sessions where experts share their special knowledge.

The 2006 Conference will follow the publication of Ofcom's Television Production Sector Review, which focuses on how and where television is made, examining the future of the independent and out of London quotas. It will be an opportunity to find out how the Government and the major broadcasters will respond, and to have your say. The conference also look at the alternatives to London Centric Commissioning - Local TV, Commissioning and how to crack it, New Markets from New Technology, and the role of the Indies and Super Indies in the regions. And finally Paul Abbott, the creator of Shameless and Clocking Off, takes a sideways look at the day's events.

**KEYNOTE SPEECH** James Purnell, MP Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism gives his vision of the future of television outside London.

**FAIR SHARES FOR ALL** How will the major channels react to Ofcom? Find out from the people in charge of the nations and regions from the BBC, ITV and Channel 4.

**THE FUTURE IS HERE: THE FUTURE IS LOCAL** Local television is taking off. The BBC and ITV are joining in. Can it fill the gap left by the retreat from regional TV? How good is it? How viable? See it for yourself and question the new station-masters.

**THE RISE OF THE SUPER-INDIES** What they can offer the regions. Super-Indies with mas-

sive clout and resources are gobbling up companies in the regions. Is this a massive new opportunity? Meet some of the people who run these new big beasts.

## **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

*Commissioning and how to crack it* – your chance to ask how to get noticed

*The Hit Machine* – Make that idea into a hit with help from the Head of Entertainment Development ITV

*New Technology, New Markets* – why pitch to the major channels when you could stream direct to the internet, the mobile or...meet the pioneers and see their equipment.

## **Confirmed speakers so far:**

James Purnell MP, Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism

Tim Suter, Ofcom, with responsibility for Content and Standards

Pat Loughrey, Director, Nations and Regions BBC

Stuart Cosgrove, Director of Nations and Regions Channel 4

Clare Thompson, Head of Entertainment Development, ITV

Jana Bennett, Director of Television, BBC

Janey Walker, Managing Editor Commissioning, Channel 4

Steve Morrison Chief Executive, All 3 Media

Henry Normal, Baby Cow, Manchester

Andy Griffie, Controller, English Regions BBC

Dave Rushton, Director, Institute of Local Television

Mark Dodson, Chief Executive, Channel M

Kevin Gooding, ITV, Director of Product Development

Marilyn Hyndman, Coordinator, NvTv

Clive Jones, Chief Executive, Regions and News ITV

Chris Shaw, Senior Programme Controller, Channel 5

Paul Abbott, Creator of Shameless and Clocking Off

There will also be a pre-conference event on the evening of the 10th January.

For further information or to register see our website at **www.salford.tv** or contact us by e-mail: **r.heritage@salford.ac.uk** **l.nandy@salford.ac.uk** or telephone the Conference Office: 0161 295 2667 Delegate fees are: £150 corporate, £50 freelance and £20 student.

## **LOCAL TV FORUM 2006 (preliminary announcement)**

**Friday 17th March and Saturday 18th March**

**European local tv and citizenship conference including with screenings**

10.30 **Local Digital Television for the UK**

The DCMS Consultation on Local TV

tbc

11.00 Q&A

11.15 **Local Television in Europe**

**Community Television**

Pieter de Wit, OLON, Netherlands

**Open Channels: Active Citizenship & Freedom of Expression**

Jurgen Linke, Offener Kanal, Germany

### **City Television & Sustaining Services**

Eva Dekanovska, TV Nasa, Slovakia

### **Municipal and Rural Television**

Comba Compoy (tbc), University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

### **The Migrant Experience in Sweden**

Johannes Moubis, Open Channel Gothenburg, Sweden

- 12.30 Q&A  
1.00 Lunch  
2.00 **Local DTT**  
crown castle/argiva  
**Local Broadband on TV**  
BT/Homechoice  
3.0 Q&A  
3.15 Break  
3.30 **Workshops**  
**Commercial**  
**Municipal**  
**Community**  
4.30 Q&A - feedback  
4.45 **Licence Proposals & Consultation**  
discussion/panel - DCMS  
5.10 **The Public Service Publisher or top-sliced Licence Fee**  
discussion/panel - Ofcom  
5.30 **Q&A Plenary - where next?**  
6.00 Finish

## **OPEN CHANNELS FOR EUROPE**

- 7.30-8.30 **Local Television: Identity and Democracy**  
Introduction, Ed Baumeister, City TV Foundation, France  
Four Short Films  
**(Saturday 18th March provisional)**  
10.00am Coffee/tea new delegates register  
10.30 **Citizen Activism & European Citizenship**  
Introduction: (tbc) & Jurgen Linke, Germany  
Four Short Films  
11.30 **Workshops – Exchanging Citizen TV**  
**Three workshops**  
*chaired by Peter de Wit, Jurgen Linke and Eva Dekanovska.*  
12.30 **Q&A Plenary - where next?**  
1.00 Finish

This is a provisional programme. For further details contact Tana Macphee at [local.tv@virgin.net](mailto:local.tv@virgin.net)

## BOOKS, REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

**LOCAL TELEVISION RENEWED: essays on local television 1994-2005** published by School Press for the Institute of Local Television, August 2005. 112 pages, available in pdf format at £7.00 or as a softback book at £13.50 inc p&p

**LOCAL TELEVISION RENEWED** provides a vigorous critique of the political impact of public service broadcasting since 1990 and argues for two hundred plus independent local, community and municipal television channels in line with developments under way across Europe. **LOCAL TELEVISION RENEWED** outlines how these proposals for local TV channels can be introduced as part of digital switchover from 2008 and expanded via broadband.

**LOCAL television REPORT: ACTO - local public service television papers** ISBN: 1899405 046, £13.50 inc p&p UK (£16.50 inc p&p international) 148 pages A5.

**LOCAL television REPORT** is the softback collection of papers from the 2005 editions of ACTO plus some extra studies. **LtR** provides a useful catch-up and all-round Local TV perspective of **ACTO - local public service television directory**.

The first fifty orders will receive a **FREE DVD** of Local TV programmes from the UK and Europe (subtitled).

Personal cheques for **LOCAL television REPORT** and/or **Local Television Renewed** should be made payable to 'Institute of Local Television' and sent to Institute of Local Television 13 Bellevue Place Edinburgh EH7 4BS Official orders and further enquiries can be sent to the address above or emailed to [local.tv@virgin.net](mailto:local.tv@virgin.net).

## BECOME A SUBSCRIBER

YOU CAN BECOME AN INSTITUTE OF LOCAL TELEVISION SUBSCRIBER, RECEIVE ACTO - the local public service television directory - and other publications for £30.00 per year (or free if you can make the case!)

### AND FINALLY .....

request a copy of the local TV logo - will be sent to you as a small jpg file and pdf file to cut and paste into newsletters, letters, emails and publicity .....



To contribute to ACTO - offering further reasons for local TV in your area, examples of local TV activity, expressions of interest in local TV, forums, research, events etc - email to [local.tv@virgin.net](mailto:local.tv@virgin.net)

To be removed from the **ACTO** electronic mailing list please advise [local.tv@virgin.net](mailto:local.tv@virgin.net)