

ACTO7

local public service television directory

Papers from the UK LOCAL TV FORUM on The RURAL TV Question

**County TV • Eastern European and
Slovakian Local TV • Rural Media Co •
Enterprise, Infrastructure, Public Purpose
and Councils**

**Freedom of Information & DCMS •
Latest on Digital Terrestrial Television •
Committee on Culture, Media and Sport
says 'yes' to Local TV at switchover ... etc**

**2nd Volume of *Local Channel Atlas*
published - for area details see page 15**

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 16) 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 fifteenth edition of the **ACTO - local public service television directory**.

ACTO back issues can be downloaded from www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html

WEBSITES

For information:

on local and community TV in Europe: **www.obs.int/db/persky/eu.html**

on community TV channels worldwide: **www.openchannel.se/**

UK's Community Media Association: **www.commedia.org.uk/**

UK examples of local and community TV programmes:

www.showcase.commedia.org.uk/

website of NvTv Belfast's Local TV Channel: **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-53436683.htm

Ofcom - the UK's independent regulator and competition authority - site includes sections on codes, guidelines and consultations: **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/** shared with The Broadcasting Trust, website lists publications, provides background papers, illustrates local TV DVDs, 2.4 Ghz TV studies

Ofcom's spectrum dividend review consultation

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2005/11/nr_20051117

The UK LOCAL TV FORUM of the 22nd March offered insight into how digital switchover might aggravate rather than reduce the 'digital divide' between urban and rural communities. Commercial digital channels will use only 212 relays and transmitters and while these may reach 90% of the UK population they will not serve the more remote communities, communities that have neither cable or high-bandwidth broadband and where the local digital switch is too far away to support broadband IPTV. Local TV needs to be on the PSB multiplexes to achieve universal coverage and to reduce the digital divide between urban and rural in the delivery of Local TV services. (See also *The 2nd Pocket Local Channel Atlas* - based on a presentation at the Forum and published by School Press: details on page 15.)

The selection of papers include some presentations from the Forum and from the recent Borderline Festival in Hereford. They focus on RURAL TV the supporting networks and go some way towards characterising the demand from more remote communities to participate in Local TV.

This focus also coincides with planning the BORDERS LOCAL TV BRIEFING hosted by Dumfries & Galloway Council on the 24th April (for details email local.tv@virgin.net).

PETER WILLIAMS, County TV

I will be brief.

First: the technology is now available to create LOCAL TV (and I'll come to a definition of Local TV as I see it, in a moment).

Second: the decisions that will make LOCAL TV relatively easy to achieve, must be taken now, otherwise the moment will have passed. All that has to happen is for the regulator (Ofcom), the Government (DCMS and the DTI) and the industry to recognise the moment and then to co-operate with each other. That's all!

It was ITV's determination to plead poverty and give up its regional programmes that (unintentionally I believe) gave fresh impetus to Local TV. ITV's regional programming only partly fed the appetite of the viewers who watched them.

Take the Southern/TVS/Meridian region for instance. Viewers in Dorset had little in common with those in Kent, or Berkshire or Brighton. The interests they shared were often "national" rather than "local". In other words, though the vet or the police force or ambulance workers chosen as the subject of a series could be based in Southampton, Worthing or Canterbury, it was the **intrinsic interest** of their lives and jobs that predominantly appealed to the viewers, rather than where they lived and worked.

Local TV isn't like that. Local TV will be made in the knowledge that the people who watch it will understand the nuances and pressures within the local community, and will be absorbed by the "**localness**" of the issues and initiatives. It will also offer **huge opportunities** - a fresh canvas for talent, both as subjects and to programme-makers.

But why should County Councils wish to become involved? Their motivation is, broadly speaking, very simple. They see Local TV as an important contribution to the democratic process. Now that may seem a ponderous and worthy motive, but in all the conversations I have had it is sincerely held. Ask any council politician what worries him or her most and they will tell you that it is the decreasing number of UK citizens who bother to vote. **Apathy** is the true enemy, not the opposition.

The county councillors to whom I have spoken are less concerned by the reduction in the opportunities for sound-bites, than they are by the prospect of losing the air-time once devoted to the context and the situations within which they reach their decisions. For “politics” touches every aspect of our lives; programmes on the countryside, sport, the arts, business and music of all kinds speak eloquently of the community from which they spring. And, even more so if they are targeted at a precise and identifiable “local” audience.

Local TV can reflect the hopes and aspirations of local people, young and old, and in all socio-economic groups. And, as the debate rages over what is the definition of “local” – a street, a village, a city, a county? – the simple answer is: all of them. Any grouping which has the ambition and viability to create its own local station. If you look at the UK strategically, however, an answer of great simplicity presents itself. This nation is already divided into interest-groups which are, in the main, big enough to be viable financially. They are called **counties**. And the new rules permit county councils to launch their own Local TV.

Ofcom need to ensure that Local TV doesn't become dominated by a licence-fee-rich BBC or a nakedly commercial ITV. Ofcom must be reminded of its early attitude to public service broadcasting, when it put forward the idea of a dedicated but part-time public service broadcasting channel.

Three final thoughts. First, LOCAL TV, with or without county council involvement, won't work if no-one wants to watch it. The programme mix is vital, then – and, in a “County TV”, there must be room for all the categories of programming I have mentioned, as well as access to council meetings, “Ask the Mayor” and changes in the dates of your refuse collection.

Second, “County TV” should at least initially, be Broadband-based. I would argue for a daily schedule, with regular, **and independent** local news and weather, with video-on-demand, all cross-promoted by, but separate from, the county council's own existing website.

And, third – and this is a vision which has huge substance – there is no reason why there should not be a LOCAL TV public service broadcasting channel, giving each county its own hours of local programming by using the add-drop system – **provided the correct and far-sighted decisions are made now**. I believe there is an appetite for this among county councils in England and Wales – and perhaps Scotland as well. And, of course, the more counties or regions share this vision, the cheaper it will be for each county.

COST? Difficult to tell because there are many different models and many alternatives. In the end, it will come down to what the county council want to spend. From the outset, Ofcom set aside money for public service broadcasting. They could and should recommend a subsidy for LOCAL TV, if it fulfils a psb remit. As the spectrum is sold off to the highest bidder, this should be underscored and remembered so that LOCAL TV falls outside the reach of the family silver. After all, the cost of the “lost” ITV public service broadcast programmes is estimated at £70 million a year. Anyway, I reckon it will cost the first county to launch LOCAL TV about £1 million pounds a year. I wonder who that first, pioneer county will be.

So - as we programme-makers often say as we stare hopefully at a blank screen: Watch this space

EVA DEKANOVSKA Local Television in Europe

It's a pleasure to be here to meet you and share some of my observations on local television and perhaps to give you some new information on local broadcasting in Eastern Europe and especially in Slovakia.

The history of local broadcasting in Eastern Europe has a short tradition. It started with political changes in those countries in the years 1989/1990. With the release of political oppression, low creditability of the existing media and the necessity of expression of new ideas. Establishing new media was unavoidable.

Thus in early 90's many local television stations throughout Eastern Europe had been set up. Most of them perhaps 99 % worked for almost no money just with volunteers who were eager to bring forward the information around them. Most of these people were without any education in media. The technology they started with was very poor and mostly S-VHS. This is the case for former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and also in the country which is an exception in the terms of changing political background – Belarus.

It's a paradox that all of these stations were considered to be commercial to cover their expenses from advertising. Under the economic situation in those countries this seemed to be nonsense. The market was poor - local stations had to rely only on income from their local market since it was clear no big company or agency would invest funds into a station with such a low audience share. Thus most of them were looking for other sources to finance their stations. Some of them were successful in getting part of their funding from new municipalities, some from private sources, some from foreign foundations and some just survived and broadcast very rarely. Regardless of these facts a lot of new stations started to broadcast and gain popularity among their audiences.

The new political, economic, social and cultural conditions show that people are much more interested in what's going on around them rather than in problems of the global world. They feel the local station deals with their problems and in most of the cases it helps to solve them. The local television is accessible; its viewers have finally a platform to express themselves. It's a television where for the first time even the smallest advertisers have a chance of promotion. It's a place where they can learn what's going on in the close-by area. It's a television that is not influenced by any government. It's a television far from being perfect and it makes errors - but who doesn't?

These are my considerations as to why local televisions in Eastern Europe are so popular. Concerning legislation there are strict rules on setting up a television in the Czech and Slovak republics, Hungary, Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria.

Yugoslavia and Slovakia belong to the countries with the largest number of local televisions. While in Slovakia all stations have a licence (over 80) in Serbia and Montenegro (over 500 existing local stations) the draft law on broadcasting is under preparation.

The presence of local media in the media market is unavoidable. The role of local media is irreplaceable since through tackling local problems they help bring global solutions.

Local Television in Slovakia

The Public Purposes of 'Local TV'

- **To inform ourselves and others and to increase our understanding of the world through news, information and analysis of current events and ideas, with particular focus on issues relevant to our locality**
 - **To stimulate our interest in and knowledge of arts, science, history and other topics, particularly those relevant to our locality, through content that is accessible and encourage informal learning**
 - **To reflect and strengthen our cultural identity, particularly that based on shared local identities, through original programming at local level, on occasion bringing audiences together for shared experiences**
 - **To make us aware of different cultures and alternative viewpoints, through programmes that reflect the lives of other people and other communities, especially those within our local area**
 - **To support and enhance our access to local services, involvement in community affairs, participation in democratic processes and consumer advice and protection"**
- Digital Local, Ofcom, Jan 2006*

As some of you may know, I have been involved in community media since 1994. It was then that the private company MAC TV in Kosice came up with the idea of applying for the 27th channel for broadcasting in Kosice and the surrounding area – and I should point out that this happened after our tender for a second national channel was successful, but was then not approved by parliament.

In May 1996 a local television named TV NASHA started broadcasting a four-hour block of local information and interviews. We employed people with no media, journalistic or technical education. Among the professionals it got the image of an amateur television station, but one which became more and more popular with the public. It extended its broadcasting by including interactive music programmes and magazines, and increased its broadcasting time with a 4-hour repeat block. After no more than a year it became the third most popular TV station in Kosice and completely ousted the public television regional broadcasting from the market.

I have to admit that Slovakia has got a Council for Broadcasting and very strict regulations from the very beginning of the privatization of media.

At the end of 1996 there were more than 70 local licences in Slovakia, and the need emerged for better communication between them. At the same time they were searching for ways of developing the most effective broadcasting. The result of these efforts was a project, which led to TV GLOBAL being established in the year 2000. It was a licence for coded broadcasting via satellite. Twelve local televisions joined the project, simultaneously broadcasting the 21-hour Global schedule and then logging off for three one-hour intervals to broadcast their own local programmes. Now the broadcasting brought together the increasing popularity of local information and the commercial success of broadcasting by so-called "big" television. Exclusively local news consisting of contributions made by local television stations from even the most distant towns of Slovakia gained increasing approval and popularity.

TV Global gradually increased its coverage not only by connecting up other local televisions but also by acquiring more local frequencies. Just before the entry of its new investor, MAC TV got two important frequencies, one of them in Bratislava the capitol of Slovakia. With the new investor came not only a new name but also a

new television philosophy. At the present day, the only thing remaining from the original project is the effort to increase the regional aspect of the main local news.

The TV Global chapter meant a significant milestone in the history of local broadcasting. More than 30 television stations joined in the project, spreading and supplying the schedule on a commercial basis. Apart from the financial investment TV Global became in its own way "the world's biggest television school". It enabled dozens of amateur journalists from local television stations to cope practically with the art of news-reporting in an incredibly short period of time. The reward for this investment was unique and inimitable news, completely different from the kind in other television companies. It was very original, sincere and had a enormous informative value.

I'm sure you would like to know whether this was the end of TV NASHA history.

In December 20th, 2002 a new channel named Music Box was launched in Kosice, Slovakia. It is an uncoded, interactive music channel, broadcasting via satellite . At 6 o'clock it disconnects from music and for Kosice area we release via air a 1 hour local information block with one hour repetition every day. This year we shall celebrate the third anniversary of the renewed programme of TV NASHA.

The effort to greatly diverse the activities of the community medium and thus provide support for its activity and existence led to the initiation of other activities which were closely linked with these types of media. There are two associations of local televisions in Slovakia. All year around they organize workshops, training courses and other events to support the quality of local broadcasting.

The international festival of local television called "The Golden Beggar" has been organized every year in Kosice for the past 11 years by the City TV Foundation. The uniqueness of this festival rests in the interlinking of local experience and global reality. How striking the similarity is between the philosophy of the festival, which has really existed for 11 years now, and the philosophy of the EU regions! Apart from a unique survey of the production of European local televisions, it also offers workshops, lectures, presentations and latest information from the field of television technology.

In conclusion, briefly, the success of the local station TV NASHA lay more or less in the fact that it managed to find the "local view" on global themes. The sociologist Barry Wellman combined the expressions global and local into the word "glocal". Would you agree that this word precisely expresses the reality that surrounds us?!

NIC MILLINGTON, RURAL MEDIA COMPANY

We are working in partnership with the BBC on the West Midlands Local TV Pilot to ensure that Herefordshire communities have the opportunity to participate in this pilot. The pilot launched on 1st December 2005, and so far we have worked with over 70 individuals and representatives of community groups and local businesses.

The development of local television in the UK is moving ahead very rapidly in anticipation of the digital switch over from 2008. It potentially offers huge opportunities in terms of employment, service development, community re-generation, strengthening of culture and identity etc. Sparsely populated counties such as Herefordshire stand to gain even more in terms of being able to communicate more effectively both internally and with the wider world.

However, there is much to do in rural counties, where there is a very underdeveloped

media and communications infrastructure (few significant media agencies, limited F/HE training opportunities, slow broadband penetration etc.) to raise the level of understanding and awareness of the power of new digital content availability. In order to take full advantage of the new broadcast and communications environment that is emerging, key stakeholders and partnerships need to be identified and developed.

The Rural Media Company is spearheading the drive in Herefordshire to build dialogue, vision and networks across all sectors of the community with regard to Local TV. We held a public seminar on Tuesday 28 March at this year's Borderlines Film Festival at which a range of experts and community producers, together with the BBC contributed to a discussion about the future of Herefordshire Local TV. We had delegates from education and training sectors, local government, health, voluntary and community groups, local politicians, as well as arts and media practitioners.

Following the seminar we are undertaking research, in collaboration with a local college (MA Sustainable Development Advocacy), involving those who attended the seminar and others, which will lead to a report for key stakeholders aimed at furthering the interest and support for local television in Herefordshire and the sub region of the West Midlands (Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire). This report will be available from mid June 06.

Rural Media Press Release:

LOCAL TV IS MORE THAN BBC NEWS

The BBC's West Midlands local TV pilot is not the only way forward, concluded panelists at this week's Borderlines Film Festival forum in Hereford.

James Coghill, editor of BBC Hereford and Worcester's local TV service, explained that the experiment was still evolving, and revealed that his personal view is that the currently available broadband access route offered a better platform than the alternative satellite version.

"Our audience want and like news," claimed Coghill, but most of the delegates - drawn from all over the county - did not share this view.

Chair Nic Millington, chief executive of The Rural Media Company, was inundated with calls from the floor to promote a far greater variety of local TV material than the current daily use by the BBC of a single 90 second film from the two counties.

The broadcaster has sub-contracted the provision of community films from Herefordshire to The Rural Media Company, which has long experience of working with groups and individuals in the county. The charity is deploying media professionals to help amateur filmmakers produce two 90 second films for the service each week.

The Rural Media Company staged a well-attended forum within the annual Borderlines festival on Tuesday 28 March to examine and debate progress so far on the BBC pilot - which will vitally affect the future rollout of local TV throughout the nation.

BBC West Midlands is offering a news driven service for nine months - which some described as "local radio with pictures" - but many participants and grass roots filmmakers indicated that such a matrix is far too constricting.

Phil Shepherd, chair of the Community Media Association, pressed delegates to lobby their MPs to advance a variety of Local TV models through Ofcom. Roger Drury of Forest of Dean Radio - with Britain's first five-year community radio licence recently

under his belt - advocated a democratisation of the airwaves arguing that the BBC doesn't know best at grass roots levels. Nic Millington stressed that if the BBC is to lead on the rollout of local TV in the UK in the future, it will be critical that genuine partnerships are formed and maintained with independent and community media organisations.

The BBC pilot began screening in December 2005, available via the BBC website, or through the red button on satellite. Each day a one hour service is delivered, repeated hourly. This consists of six ten-minute sub-region or county segments. In parallel the news and feature stories can be accessed via the website, and feature stories are available in an accessible archive.

The big message from the conference floor was that community issues should not be determinedly packaged into 90 second self-contained films slipped into the end of a news bulletin.

Editorial notes:

1. The Rural Media Company works throughout the UK. We combine community and informal education, training and advocacy with the professional skills of the media industry. The results are effective, high-impact, high-quality media projects and educational materials at the cutting edge of current policy and debate. The Rural Media Company is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee (www.ruralmedia.co.uk).
2. The Rural Media Company receives support from the UK Film Council, Screen West Midlands, Herefordshire Council and many other funders, trusts, foundations and charities.

BRENDAN MURPHY: Enterprise & Infrastructure

The presumption is that Local TV is a city or regional medium where the population is counted in many hundreds of thousands and a fat and functioning infrastructure of cable or bandwidth etc is already in place, along with a broad and diverse commercial base.

Rural areas are bereft of these.

In the early 1980s, in a not atypical part of the 90+% of Scotland which is NOT urban, Highland Perthshire's 1000 square miles endured

- *little and sporadic TV reception,*
- *a limited and partial radio service choice (even of Radio Scotland) and*
- *contemptuous relegation of its interests and concerns to 6pt type in 'Round Up' sections by the urban-based daily and bi weekly press.*

It was holy writ at that time - at the IBA and beyond - that an independent radio service could only operate and survive with a minimum population footprint of 75,000. But for our 'community of lack' DIY was all that was then open to us - however daunting its achievement might have appeared. It was a long haul in a fiercely centralising climate and within a culture of municipalism.

No favours were made by the Radio Authority in putting the impossibilists' technical, programming and financial feasibility through its mincer. Heartland FM made history by securing its licence in 1991, in spite of its business plan taking full account of voluntarism, tin shaking, scone buttering and a very high voice to music ratio in its

schedule. People really *wanted* local voices on local issues - and would commit to getting them.

The station kicked off on air at weekends only. It now struggles (free of grant aid from the outset) to finance three part-time posts at £5k each, operating for an audience of some 7,500, supporting village level local endeavour, enterprise and culture.... and it's 24/7.

Now - for Local TV - with a sea change from centralisation towards subsidiarity, and the municipal level undergoing a culture shift from 'provider' to 'facilitator' mode, we therefore need to scrutinise *where we are, and what have we got*.

For the Scottish rurals there's no cable to speak of and a tenuous broadband distribution embracing population centres only. DTT presents the only engineering game 'out of town'. Thus the challenges are: '*how would it work for us where **we** come from*', and '*how can **we** make an input?*'

Those are the questions that I trust will be whispering in your inner ear during this forthcoming session

Public Purpose: Council Channels Intro

In his letter to the Local TV Forum held in this room on 23 March last year, Lord McIntosh wrote:

"A consultation paper ... will explore all aspects of local television".

So let's just check where things have got to on this over the past 12 months.

First off, had the DCMS produced a draft Order of Licence for people to respond to, then such consultation would have emerged in response to it; in its absence, an Ofcom Report for Stakeholders has reviewed some options and possibilities, though with narrow circulation this was not a *consultation*.

Lord McIntosh told us that the key issues would include,

- *What local television should be*

That Ofcom *Digital Local Report* identifies that Local TV should have 'Public Purpose' and this is virtually synonymous with the accepted remits and duties of Public Service Broadcasting

- *What is the likely level of demand from operators and from audiences*

On the Operators' front the Ofcom report's circulation was insufficient to embrace and inform **potential** operators and draw them out of the woodwork to gauge the latent interest;

On the viewers' front, Ofcom's three PSB reports over the last two years have identified buoyant demand for local information, news and discussion programming

- *how large or small an area should a local television services cover*

The Spectrum consultancy undertaken for Ofcom and the DCMS, in researching very large and very small scale services for Ofcom, reckoned that economic viability attaches to the former. Its analysis, however, was based upon fairly primitive, stand-alone operations' modelling. It was linear and it did not take much account of voluntarism, of local-to-local production, of output from communities of interest etc available for mutual sustaining purposes and costs' reduction.

- *should we have a local television services in all areas of the UK*

This is something of a second order question that comes after posing the question CAN we have it in all areas. With add/drop the answer to this is yes; so the 'should' question must be addressed by the uptake of this potential by local suppliers, and not by government dictat.

- *would some kinds of local television services be better delivered by other means - such as broadband*

Certainly, but arguably via TV and not to computer, as the local service - in news and debate particularly - has to be comparable with services from the larger, national broadcasting sources. These other means – cable and IPTV - should be available to localise even further those that have been initiated by DTT

- *What might be the options for funding local television services*

These include: top slicing the BBC licence; the Public Service Publisher Fund which translates as access to the £70m per annum lost by ITV shedding its regional PSB; premium rate dial-up services; advertising revenues; grant funding; training initiatives sources etc

- *should services be operated as community services or commercial services - or a mixture of both*

A mixture, but one which should involve besides those two municipal services, whose capability needs to be integrated also into the formula.

On this point it's worth noting two things:

First – that 'municipal' has a limited application north of the border until the legislative anomaly is addressed permitting local authorities here to hold TV broadcast licences as their counterparts in the rest of the UK are able to do; and

Second -that 'municipal' is a shorthand term in a Public Purpose world which sees health, police and other boards and bodies – as well as local authorities – operating in a sub-regional footprint. 'Municipal' does not mean *necessarily* that local authorities exercise **ownership** of local TV services but rather that they can champion, catalyse, promote or partner in such a scale of service at county, city or burgh level where one can be delivered that people recognise as *local*.

Lord Mcintosh's final poser was:

- *what might be in an Order for the licensing of local television services*

This possibility – and its curious absence one year on from its apparent drafting – can occupy us during the plenary session and post-Forum follow-up.

ANALOGUE SWITCH-OFF: a signal change in television

The following paragraphs are taken from the House of Commons, Culture Media and Sport Committee's *Analogue Switch-off: a signal change in television*, Report of Second Session 2005-06, published on the 29th March.

The Committee writes in Volume 1:-

Para 54

We welcome the development of local television and the potential it offers to provide a valuable community service. We would hope that the opportunity

offered by analogue switch-off will be seized to allow the establishment of local television services.

and in responding to Arqiva's comments made to the Committee on the delays due to Ofcom's Digital Dividend Review and its impact on future DTT services, the Committee writes:-

Para 58 (part)

We are concerned at suggestions that delay in reaching decisions may affect the economics of some potential applications and would therefore hope that this process can be carried out as expeditiously as possible to give certainty to all the industries affected and to give time to the transmission companies to carry out the necessary work as part of the switch-off programme.

For ILT's submission to the Committee see Ev 256 in Volume 2.

OFCOM REASSURES

Following a brief meeting with Steve Perkins at Ofcom, Steve wrote on 30th March:-

It would be inappropriate further to evaluate or compare DTT [Local TV] options ahead of the RRC [Regional Radio Conference] and DDR [Digital Dividend Review], but it is wrong to think that the add/drop proposal for local tv will be in any way disadvantaged by SIPSI redesign and switchover implementation being underway before DDR outcomes are known.

This is not the advice ACTO has received from the transmission engineers, nor does it reflect the cautious note from the House of Commons CMS Committee (above).

ACTO believes that the ongoing engineering for DTT switchover and the redesign of Service Data (SIPSI) will adversely impact on the realisation of Local DTT throughout the UK: that a decision on Local access to DTT is required before the conclusion of the Digital Dividend Review.

MEETING WITH DTI

The meeting with DTI's Jane Humphries and St. John Hoskyns on 30th March was set up to convey ACTO's concern that DTT engineering/design would overtake the feasible and cost effective introduction of Local TV. In addition we were able to indicate that:

- Local TV as a network of independent Local TV channels would benefit from the synergies of joint or network programming: hitherto Local TV has been envisaged by HMG as being more of a standalone, self sufficient scattering of channels, perhaps buying in programming from existing 'national' markets rather than developing their own mutual larger scale support
- Local TV in rural areas demands equality of opportunity with the more densely populated urban areas - otherwise Local TV will exacerbate the digital divide
- Local TV needs to reach the majority of local viewers in its licensed area at launch - to compete for commercials, to secure investment and to deliver public purpose - and to avoid the engineering and access problems that were encountered by the analogue RSL channels

5th March 2006

Dear James Purnell MP,

Following a recent meeting at ngwireless the add/drop solution seems to be the only Local TV option that can be accommodated into DTT.

Work on DTT engineering and design of the mux architecture will preclude Local TV unless it forms part of a national mux and the planned SIPSI redesign.

The Institute of Local Television has been advising DCMS since 1999 of the need to include Local TV in the national DTT plan. With ACTO from March 2005 we provided the add/drop solution with the local network channel to the DCMS and to Ofcom for the introduction of Local TV with DTT roll out,

This solution is highly efficient, is low-cost, is not wasteful of spectrum and is the only solution which offers universal reach - and moreover it is the only DTT solution that works.

It would seem that your Ministry's persistent and ongoing dithering on Local TV has taken us perilously close to the point at which Local TV cannot be included as a DTT option.

The outcome of further DCMS delay will be that Local DTT won't happen - national DTT engineering and design will soon preclude Local TV.

We ask once more for the meeting we originally requested last June to be held with either yourself or with the Secretary of State to discuss the recognition of Local TV as PSB and the publication of the Draft Order of Licence.

Meanwhile please forward the drafts prepared from December 2004 of the Draft Order of Licence, if necessary under the terms of the Freedom of Information rules.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

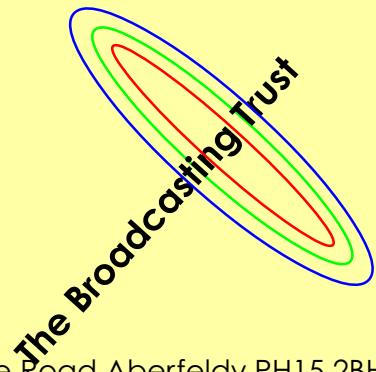
With regards,

Dave Rushton
Institute of Local Television

DCMS MISSES FoI DEADLINE

No acknowledgment has been received and as yet (by 4th April) no drafts of the Draft Order of Licence either. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has received a complaint to their FoI Office for ignoring Freedom of Information rules.

So what are the DCMS and their Minister trying to hide - fifteen months on from drafting the Draft Order, and with the Ofcom Report well and truly published - were the promises to 'keep Local TV informed' really made in good faith?



Tessa Jowell MP
Secretary of State
Department for Culture Media & Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH
25th March 2006

1 Taybridge Road Aberfeldy PH15 2BH
broadcasting.trust@virgin.net

Dear Ms Jowell,

DTT and Local TV Options

Through presentations made at the UK Local TV Forum on 22nd March the signatories to this letter have been convinced, and understand, that the future of Local TV on the digital terrestrial platform must be determined in the near future

In its Digital Local Report of January 2006 Ofcom suggests that decisions on spectrum use for Local TV should wait till after the Digital Dividend Review. The Local TV Forum was advised - in the presentation by Keith Hayler of The Digital Network and Principal Technologist at ngwireless - that two of these digital options were unworkable .

However, the remaining option - add/drop solution and local network channels - is feasible and requires implementation in the rewriting of the SI coding about to be undertaken for digital switchover. Ofcom and DCMS were advised last summer by the Institute of Local Television and subsequently by ACTO of the likelihood that add/drop was the only viable DTT option.

Furthermore, Iolo Jones, MD of Narrowstep, indicated that broadband currently reaches just 25% of rural households and that by 2008 this figure might be expected to rise to only 60%. This is clearly an unacceptably low level for a public service/public purpose Local TV network.

Broadband can further help localise Local TV, as and where it becomes available and offers IPTV at local scales. However, public service Local TV requires universal access at launch. To date Local TV in analogue has struggled - and in many cases collapsed - because of poor access to the home.

The add/drop solution with local network channels offers the least expensive, most efficient and only Local DTT solution - reaching 98.5% of the UK population. And unlike other Local DTT proposals made by Ofcom add/drop's use of spectrum is reversible enabling reallocation back into national channels.

We urge the Government and Ofcom to recognise that the add/drop solution with local network channels is the sole remaining DTT option.

Only this option for Local TV offers sufficient access to the home to enable commercial, municipal and community plans to be drawn up for the comprehensive introduction of services across the UK.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Murphy MBE
Trustee, The Broadcasting Trust, and
Jawad Siddiqui, CEO, MKTV; Gemma Mitchell; R J H Laurence, Video Production Services Ltd;
Jeremy Smith, Head of Production, The Community Channel - participants at the UK Local TV
Forum, Edinburgh, March 2006

The Broadcasting Trust is a guarantee company without a share capital no: 257818 and recognised as a Scottish charity no: SC012624. Registered offices at J & H Mitchell WS 51 Atholl Road Pitlochry Perthshire PH16 5BU

Local TV and digital switchover provide a major opportunity to redistribute the social and economic benefits of broadcasting across the UK in creating upwards of 240 local scale TV channels. These will provide employment closer to the centres of media and journalism training, local news where it is relevant and local programmes that address community needs and aspirations. Dave Rushton, Director, Institute of Local Television, at Television from the Nations and Regions: The Promised Land, the future of television outside London, January 2006.

LOCAL TELEVISION PUBLICATIONS from the Institute of Local Television

The Pocket LOCAL CHANNEL ATLAS (Scotland) ISBN: 1 899405 05 4. The 'add/drop solution' explained. The terrestrial Local TV option proposed by ACTO and described in Ofcom's Digital Local as "the most consistent and convenient solution and potentially offers the widest reach for Local TV of all the terrestrial options." Add/drop explained and applied to delivering Local TV throughout Scotland (2005), £9.00 inc p&p 40pgs.

The 2nd Pocket LOCAL CHANNEL ATLAS (Scottish Borders, Cumbria, Kent, Northern Ireland, North West) ISBN: 1 899405 06 2 £8.00 inc p&p 32 pgs.

ACTO - local public service television directories. Is the pdf directory circulated as an information resource and discussion forum on Local TV. FOC and distributed by email to over 800 readers. To 'subscribe' forward you email address. Papers from the first ten editions of ACTO have been compiled into LOCAL television REPORT.

LOCAL television REPORT - ACTO local public service television papers, ISBN: 1 899405 04 6, published by School Press/ACTO/Institute of Local Television, (December 2005), £13.50 inc p&p 144 pgs. Softback. CONTENTS | Preamble. ii Introduction. ONE Questions & Answers: Natalie White's: Questions on the Future of Local Television; Ofcom's: Assessing the Future of Local Television and Interactive Services: A Survey for Stakeholders. TWO European Background: Assessing Opportunities for Local TV Across Europe; THREE Case Histories: Triangle TV Auckland; Open Channels Germany; Open Channel Berlin; Teveline: Reality Show vs Real People; Channel Six Dundee plus Audience Research; 'e-tv' in Aberfeldy. FOUR Local Spectrum & Costs: The Add/drop Solution and Local Network Channel; How Big or Small is Local TV?; A Stab at Local TV Costs. FIVE Shifting Policies: Media Literacy, Local Licences and Local Government; God's Own Spectrum: Local TV and the Public Good; Regional Variations in Production Spend; Bigger Picture on the Smaller Screen; Valuing Local Public Service Television. SIX Nutshell: ACTO Checklist to Ofcom, April 2005.

LOCAL TELEVISION RENEWED: essays on local television 1994-2005 published by School Press for the Institute of Local Television, (August 2005). £13.50 inc p&p 112 pgs, Softback 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 underway 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 RENEWED is the fifth volume on local television to be published by the Institute of Local Television - published either with John Libbey, the Community Radio Association (CRA, now the Community Media Association) or on the ILT imprint: School Press.

LOCAL TELEVISION RENEWED: essays on local television 1994-2005, ISBN:1 899405 03 8,

Dave Rushton, published by School Press (2005) £13.50 inc p&p 112 pgs Softback CONTENTS Preamble; Introduction; Technical Background; Virtual Reality; Vicarious and Experiential TV News; A General Theory of Spectrum; Defining the Social Geography of Local News Identity; Assessing opportunities for local digital TV across Europe; Add/Drop and the Local Network Channel. APPENDICES: A Local Television Reader; Scottish Local TV Forum Report; Some pointers for filming local TV news and short documentaries

CITIZEN TELEVISION: a local dimension to Public Service Broadcasting, ISBN: 0 86196 433 0 edited by Dave Rushton, published by John Libbey & Institute of Local Television (1993) £19.50 inc p&p 232 pgs Hardback CONTENTS PART ONE - Research & Analysis: Citizens and the Local Choice. Edinburgh Television Study, Peter Kitchenman; Cable Company Franchise Commitments, Adrian Friedli; Highways Authority Experience of UK Cable Build, Inken Schindler; Local Authority Cable Briefing, Lyndsey Bowditch; Reading the ITC's Mapping Regional Views, Dave Rushton; Survey of Local Channels on UK Cable, 1992, Julie White; A Local Future on Cable?, Dave Rushton PART TWO - Commentary & Critique, Local Public Service Television. Making Local Work, Dave Rushton; Amendments to the ITC's Draft Invitation to Apply for Channel 5, Amanda Gibbs & Dave Rushton; Channel 5 and Local Television, Dave Rushton; 'Star Rating' Channel 5 Transmitters, Dave Rushton; The European Meeting of Local Television, Dave Rushton. APPENDICES, Section 7 Cable and Broadcasting Act, 1984; Local Channel Survey, 1989, Peter Kitchenman; Tables 9-14, 16, 19 & 21, Peter Kitchenman; Cable Growth, 1983-1992; Pilot Local C5 Survey Edinburgh, 1990, Lyndsey Bowditch; C3 Regional Populations and C5 Transmitter Populations

LOCAL TELEVISION REVIEWED: essays on local television 1982-1993, ISBN: 1 899405 003 Dave Rushton, published by John Libbey & Institute of Local Television (1994) £9.50 inc p&p 48 pgs Softback CONTENTS Introduction; Cable, Cable TV and Video; Work! Work!!; Cultural, Racial, Economic, Political, Social & Class Bias (etc) ... on TV; Swindon Viewpoint, Aberdeen Cable, Cable Authority and the Grapevine Channel; Origins of UK Cable; Cable, Channel 4 and Tape Distribution.

CREATING LOCAL TELEVISION: local and community television under the Restricted Services Licence, 1 899405 01 1 Dave Rushton, published by John Libbey, Institute of Local Television & CMA (1997) £10.50 inc p&p 78 pgs Softback CONTENTS PART ONE - Policy and Intervention. Policy and intervention; PART TWO - Preparing a TV RSL; Locating frequency channels for TV RSLs; Blueprint for a TV RSL; Organising a TV RSL; APPENDICES.

DON QUIXOTE'S ART & TELEVISION: seeing things in art and television, ISBN: 1 899405 02 X Dave Rushton with an introduction by Terry Atkinson, published by School Press (1998) £8.50 inc p&p 48 pgs Softback. CONTENTS Introduction, Terry Atkinson; Noisy Channel; Art & Artifice: or designs on the past; Open Channels and Media Literacy.

Orders or further enquiries can be addressed to **Institute of Local Television 13 Bellevue Place Edinburgh EH7 4BS** or by email to **local.tv@virgin.net**.



Sale of books and your voluntary subscriptions of £30.00 per year help keep ACTO afloat. To support send cheques made out to Institute of Local Television marked ACTO on the back.
With thanks.

To be removed from the **ACTO** electronic mailing list please advise **local.tv@virgin.net**