

ACTO2

local public service television directory

**Volume 5 SCOTLAND'S PUBLIC
SERVICE SPECTRUM** One final paper
from the Forum held at the Scottish
Parliament on 14th February 2007

1 Points from Fiona Campbell
arising from (and inspired by) the
Digital Dividend Review Meeting
Fiona Campbell, Executive Officer
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Saor-Thoileach an Alba

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 4) 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 thirty second 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-\\$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/**

..... 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

Points from Fiona Campbell arising from (and inspired by) the Digital Dividend Review Meeting

Fiona Campbell, Executive Officer Voluntary Arts Scotland/Ealain Saor-Thoileach an Alba

The Digital Dividend Review has particular significance at this point in time in Scotland as we are currently considering legislation about access to and governmental support for cultural activity. This includes reference to citizens' cultural rights as enshrined in international treaties.

Television broadcasting is a form of cultural expression and one of the forms that most people have access to and contact with on a daily basis. It also has the major function of communicating with people and providing ways of informing and linking the community.

Voluntary arts and crafts practice is one of the major ways people choose to participate in cultural activity – with over half the adult population in the UK doing so – well over 2 million people in Scotland. In research undertaken for the Cultural Commission in Scotland, it was identified that the voluntary cultural sector offered over 100 opportunities per day for people to take part in the arts and crafts, and there are at least 263,400 volunteers giving their time to do so. These activities are available throughout the country and in rural areas, frequently the only regular form of cultural activity is provided by voluntary effort.

It is important that any broadcasting channel reflects the society it is part of. This includes the voluntary effort that goes into providing cultural activity as well as other important services and accessibility in our communities. In Scotland, the forthcoming legislation will be underpinning the importance of local cultural entitlements and community planning. Television would be able to play a significant role in supporting these developments – especially if the local authority broadcasting part of culture bill is passed. The societal value of ensuring that at least a portion of the spectrum to be made available is used for public services has the potential to be immense.

With a little work there would be no issue with the availability of content for any public aspect of broadcasting. Local news, information, events, examples of how people can get involved – there is already a wealth in any community to be explored. And for those communities that do not feel they are rich in such offerings, this could be the kind of incentive to work on creating such opportunities for young and old.

Tony Blair said himself that 'A nation that cares about art will not just be a better nation. In the early 21st century it will be a more successful one'. Instead of selling off the potential, this once in a generation opportunity has the potential to unlock such great creativity of the citizens of this country. Where have market-led principles got us so far anyway? Who is the market that the advocates of a complete sell off are talking about? And where would the funding come for non-commercial concerns to bid in an open auction?

Remember these market forces are the same that led to the scraping of the licence fee in New Zealand. The concern is that the arguments against preserving part of the newly available spectrum for public service broadcasting is predicated on the continuation of a licence fee in the UK! The New Zealand experience is that the public broadcaster is now competing against commercial operators to secure advertising and currently not doing too well. Plus the commercial operators are not

too concerned about the quality of their programming according to people who are expected to consume it.

Apparently there is no directive from the European Union to have to sell off the spectrum. We should also learn from the effects of other privatisation sell-offs such as school playgrounds or the rail tracks. Retaining some, if not all, the digital dividend spectrum for public service will be no bad thing.

Sale of books/DVDs 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.



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