

BBC Charter Review Consultation
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BBC Charter Review: Submission from The Publishers Association

The Publishers Association is the representative body for the UK's book and journal publishers. We have 105 publishing companies as members, spanning the consumer, education and academic sectors. Collectively, British publishers generate revenues of £4.3bn a year, with 35% being derived from digital products and services, and 44% from export sales.

The PA does not have any views on the governance or funding of the BBC and therefore this submission focuses on the first two sections of the Charter Review consultation: the Mission and Purpose and Scale and Scope of the BBC. Not all of the questions in these sections are directly pertinent and so we have restricted our response to general comments about the positive role the BBC plays in the UK's cultural life, specifically with reference to its educational and entertainment missions.

Like the BBC, publishers have an historic role in educating, informing and entertaining and there are consequently a great many synergies between the role and activities performed by the BBC and our member companies. We believe that these three tenets should remain the underlying mission of the BBC.

Stimulating Creativity and Cultural Excellence

The BBC rightly plays a central part in the UK's cultural life and together with other sectors, like music and the arts, sits firmly in the nexus of our country's amazing creative talent. There is a powerful and highly-developed mutually beneficial relationship between the broadcaster, publishers and our authors.

Through radio or television, whether it be the dramatization of classic works, the development of series around fictional detectives, the bringing to the screen of children's titles, or documentaries on books and authors, publishers see a clear benefit from the BBC's engagement with Britain's literary output. In one narrow sense, this benefit is seen through sales. There is a direct correlation between the success of a book adaptation and the sales of the corresponding title for example. The ability to make these tie-ins explicit through redesigned jackets featuring actors helps to expand the readership beyond the traditional book-buying devotee. There is plenty of traffic in the opposite direction too, as BBC programmes give rise to spin-off

titles, whether they be around cookery, popular science or history. Thus the BBC is both the catalyst for and beneficiary of publishing success.

The BBC's radio coverage of books is perhaps the most significant and distinctive aspect of the support the organisation provides for writers here in the UK and throughout the world (via The World Service). From embedding books into the news agenda on R4's *Today* programme to the late night fiction serialisation on Book at Bedtime; from in-depth author interviews on *Front Row* to the more popular Bookclub discussions hosted by Simon Mayo on R2; from *Woman's Hour's* support of the Bailey's Women's Prize for fiction to *Poetry Please*, the BBC's airwaves are an important route to discovery for the nation's book buyers. It is through these and many other carefully researched and expertly curated programmes that consumers find out what to read next. In addition, the BBC website and its online services provide free access to great literary content, enriching the listening and viewing experience further.

In summary, the BBC is a vital partner for publishing in shaping the nation's relationship with books and reading and setting them at the heart of our cultural life. We value this partnership and share the mission with the BBC to support books, writers and the power of reading to sustain citizenship and stimulate creativity.

Promoting Education and Learning

The BBC also plays an important role in education, both generally through its broadcast output, and more formally through the BBC Learning platform. As with its contribution to cultural life, this ever-present service, promoting knowledge and learning, is immeasurably valuable. It fosters a national climate in which the pursuit of new skills and a broad education are seen as an aspirational and meaningful activities. More directly, the learning materials being developed, notably online, are a tangible complement to the formal learning resources students will encounter in schools.

Although in the past publishers have had cause for concern that the BBC was developing products and business lines which stood in direct competition with those of publishers, these tensions have abated in recent years and The PA and member companies enjoy a close and engaging relationship with BBC Learning. We believe at present the right balance is being struck between provision of learning resources and not replicating or undermining anything being done in the market. We would urge the Charter Review consultation to note this now well-functioning balance and that any policy directions flowing from the Review should guard against encouraging the BBC to venture into commercial territory with its educational resources. We hope that the Review process will lead to a continued emphasis on education within the BBC's mission and public purposes.

THE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

If you would like any further information about The Publishers Association's views and engagement with the BBC please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely



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