

Call for evidence and Consultation response form

Your response

Call for Evidence

Question	Your response
<p>We are seeking views and information on the role and impact of online intermediaries on the news consumption journey of UK consumers and the UK news media landscape.</p>	<p>No response</p>
<p>We are seeking views and information on whether the role and impact of online intermediaries gives rise to new media plurality concerns; and, if so, how the regulatory framework might be updated to mitigate such concerns.</p>	<p>As the consultation document says, online intermediaries play a significant role in filtering the distribution of news to consumers. Many of the independent news publishers that are regulated by IMPRESS (see response to market changes question below) report to us that their distribution channels have been disrupted by online intermediaries and this threatens their survival; they cite a) a struggle to gain organic growth or sustained traction compared to previous levels without any notification to indicate why by platforms; b) that the algorithms favour personal, meaningful (at times controversial) interaction – this is contrary to journalistic norms, and threatens the sustainability of news content.</p> <p>Independent news publishers are characterised by their diversity and plurality (see response to market changes below). If media plurality is to be protected, then the regulatory framework should include specific provisions to protect these publishers on account of the fact that they are well regulated and make a significant contribution to wider media plurality. The regulatory framework should ensure that intermediaries and larger (and often less plural) media organisations are NOT permitted to carve up the market between them at the expense of smaller,</p>

	<p>more plural independent publishers in a way that is anti-competitive and stifles innovation. Rather, platforms should be required to treat all news publishers fairly and transparently.</p>
<p>We are seeking views and information on how the algorithms used to recommend news content to UK consumers work in determining the prominence given to different news providers.</p>	<p>As is explained in the previous response, smaller, more plural, independent publishers report to us that changes to algorithms are disrupting their distribution channels. There is no transparency over how the algorithms work, and it is near impossible for smaller, well-regulated, independent publishers to engage meaningfully with big tech intermediaries over these issues.</p> <p>Similarly, there is no transparency for consumers as to why they are receiving or being recommended news by platform algorithms; platforms are not transparent as to why different news providers are given prominence or preferential treatment, and the public cannot evaluate the quality of news sources nor the consistency in application of a platform's preferential treatment from news provider to news provider.</p>
<p>We are seeking views and information on whether the role and impact of algorithms on the news consumption journey of UK consumers and the UK news media landscape.</p>	<p>No response</p>
<p>We are seeking views and information on whether the role and impact of algorithms gives rise to new media plurality concerns and if so, how the regulatory framework might be updated to mitigate such concerns.</p>	<p>If media plurality is to be protected, then the regulatory framework should include specific provisions to ensure that algorithms that determine how news is distributed are more transparent and support the role played by smaller, well-regulated, independent news publishers in contributing to a diverse media landscape. If the market is left to resolve this matter without intervention, then the risk is that it will result in a carve up between big tech and corporate media, at the expense of smaller, more plural independent publishers, akin to cartel behaviour. This will have a significant negative impact on media plurality.</p>
<p>We are seeking views and information on the role and impact of market change, outside the context of a merger, on the news consumption journey of UK consumers and the UK news media landscape.</p>	<p>No response</p>
<p>We are seeking views and information on whether the role and impact of market</p>	<p>As para 2.6 of the consultation document rightly points out, the growth of social media</p>

change, outside the context of a merger, gives rise to new media plurality concerns, and if so, how the regulatory framework might be updated to mitigate such concerns.

has also provided a platform to individuals to deliver news content directly to their followers, bypassing both traditional and online-only news sources. **What the report does not acknowledge, however, is the growth of the independent news publisher market and the increasing professionalisation and regulation of that market.** Since 2016, IMPRESS, the only press regulator to be approved as independent and effective in law (under the Royal Charter on self-regulation of the press), has brought 112 smaller independent news publishers, responsible for 190 news titles, into publicly accountable regulation. [Regulated Publications | IMPRESS.](#)

We have seen a 20% year-on-year increase since 2016 in the number of publishers signing up for Royal Charter approved regulation. To date, these titles collectively reach 17 million unique online visitors each month. They are characterised by their innovation, diversity, public accountability and close links to local geographical communities and specific communities of interest, many of which are underserved by corporately owned media (different political views, religious and ethnic viewpoints, focus on environmental issues, focus on hyper local issues). Many are also award-winning publications. In other words, they represent a significant market change that gives rise to new media plurality concerns. Unless this sector of the market is taken into account by OFCOM and its role in media plurality is fully understood, there is a high risk that media policy will unintentionally stunt its growth and create adverse market conditions which threaten its survival, leading to a significant impact on media plurality.

We are seeking views and information on whether there are other features of the UK news media landscape whose roles and impact on the news consumption journey of UK consumers and the UK news media landscape we should consider.

No response

We are seeking views and information on whether there are other features which give rise to new media plurality concerns and if so, how the regulatory framework might be updated to mitigate these concerns.

No response

Consultation

Question	Your response
We are seeking views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the national cross-media ownership rule should be retained in its current form.	No response
We are seeking views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the appointed news provider rule should be retained in its current form.	No response
We are seeking views on our proposed scope of the term “news creator” and in particular, whether the categories that we have identified as being important to be captured within this new definition are the right ones.	We agree with Ofcom’s proposal here.
We are seeking views on our proposed modifications to the existing public interest considerations specified in section 58 of the Enterprise Act 2002 to extend these considerations to “news creators”.	We agree with Ofcom’s proposal here.
We are seeking views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the restriction on advertising agencies holding any broadcasting licences should be removed.	No response
We are seeking views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the restriction on political bodies and local authorities holding all licences should be retained in their current form.	No response
We are seeking views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the restriction on the BBC, Channel 4 Corporation and S4C holding Channel 3 or Channel 5 licences should be retained in their current form.	No response
We are seeking views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the general disqualification on grounds of undue influence of political bodies and local authorities should be retained, but the general disqualification	No response

on grounds of undue influence of publicly-funded bodies should be removed.	
We are seeking views and supporting evidence on our recommendation that the restrictions on analogue community radio licences should be retained.	No response