

[GB] ITC Extends Masthead Programming to Terrestrial

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The Independent Television Commission (ITC) has - after long-running pressure - ruled to allow the use of masthead programming on UK terrestrial television channels. Presently, masthead programmes (programmes that feature the brand and editorial style of an existing publication) are only permitted on cable and satellite. The ITC announced also that it is to strengthen its rules to ensure that the further expansion of masthead programmes does not blur the distinction between editorial content and advertising. The changes to the Code of Programme Sponsorship (see IRIS 1997-4: 11) specify that programmes may not be a television version of current editions of the parent publication and that similarities in editorial content must be confined to the general subject matter. The rules also propose tighter restrictions on oral and visual references within the programme to the programme title, and a prohibition on references to the parent publication or articles within it. Subject to finalisation of these rules, masthead programmes will be allowed on all channels from 1 September 1998.

