[GB] Wide-Ranging Report into Media Literacy Published

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According to Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003, “It shall be the duty of OFCOM to take such steps, and to enter into such arrangements, as appear to them calculated (a) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public understanding of the nature and characteristics of material published by means of the electronic media; (b) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public awareness and understanding of the processes by which such material is selected, or made available, for publication by such means;...”

To that end, the Media Literacy Unit published the “most comprehensive audit of media literacy ever undertaken in the UK” in February 2006.

A total of 3,244 UK-wide respondents were interviewed and the audit “focuses on the four main digital platforms, with analogue TV and radio included where relevant.”

The report identifies a number of “key themes” (i.e. not “conclusions”), for example:

- Age is a significant indicator of the extent and types of media literacy;

- Knowledge of industry funding and regulation across platforms varies. A significant majority of respondents (over 75%) know how the television industry is funded and that it is regulated. Over half of UK adults know how radio is funded and that it is regulated. Two in five internet users know how search engine websites are funded, although this drops to one quarter of UK adults as a whole.

- Levels of concern about content vary across platforms, with little concern about mobile phone content...[A] sizeable minority of internet users are not confident about blocking viruses or email scams;

- Many people, especially the elderly, say they prefer to learn media skills from family and friends, or by themselves rather than in formal groups.

This report is just the first in a series. Later media literacy reports will focus on children; minority ethnic groups; older people; people with a disability; and those living in the “devolved nations” (Scotland and Wales) and the English regions.

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Communications Act 2003, Section 11: Duty to promote media literacy

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/30021--b.htm#11

Ofcom Media Literacy Audit - Report on adult media literacy

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/medialit_audit/

Ofcom Media Literacy Bulletins

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/bulletins

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