[GB] New Taste and Decency Guidelines for BBC programme makers and the V-chip

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Views expressed at BBC Governors' Seminar on taste and decency will be incorporated into a revised version of the Corporation's guidelines for programme makers.

The Guidelines' section on taste and decency will see a strong emphasis placed on the importance of the watershed; that is the 9 o'clock boundary between programmes suitable for children to watch and those which are not. It will also reflect concerns about the use of bad language, and the portrayal of sex and violence. The concept of 'respect' as a key issue in determining where the boundaries should lie in issues of taste, sex and language will be emphasised. Producers will be encouraged to ask more detailed questions about the use of stereotypes in comedy, and there will be clearer guidance on the need for careful scheduling (on both radio and television) and signposting of difficult or challenging programmes in both promotional material and on-air-announcements. The new guidelines will be available to programme makers in the summer.

Meanwhile Mrs Bottomly, the National Heritage Secretary, has decided not to legislate for the introduction of the V-chip in the forthcoming Broadcasting Bill. After advice from Dr. Arthur Pober, a senior adviser to the US Government on the implementation of 'V-chip' technology, the Government has decided that the chip 'throws up a number of difficult practical questions'. Not least of these is that the chip would not be effective against programmes imported from Europe. Implementation of the technology would also place a strain on television manufacturers.

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