[GB] Government Consults on Product Placement

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The UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport is consulting on a change to advertising rules to permit product placement on television; it has stated that it "is currently minded to permit product placement on UK television, subject to safeguards". It is however concerned about potential health issues related to the promotion of particular types of product.

The current position is that product placement is prohibited by the requirements in the Ofcom Broadcasting Code that "no undue prominence may be given in any programme to a product or service" (rule 10.4) and that "product placement is prohibited" (rule 10.5). In consultation on the implementation of the AVMS Directive widely varying estimates had been made of the value of product placement for UK commercial broadcasters and the Government had concluded that no decisive evidence had been put forward that the economic benefit of product placement would outweigh the detrimental effects on the quality and standards of British television and viewers' trust in it. However, the point was also made that UK viewers already accept product placement in films shown on television and in non-UK programming, especially American programming. It was also argued that the "no undue prominence" rule could be retained to prevent the more overt and intrusive forms of product placement.

The Government is now seeking views on additional safeguards that might be needed beyond those in the AVMS Directive on the commercial advantages of permitting product placement, on the types of programmes in which product placement might be permitted and whether these should be defined more specifically than in the Directive. For example, should there be a specific prohibition of product placement in religious programmes, news programmes and consumer programmes? Should the prohibition cover not only children's programmes, but all programmes with a disproportionately high child audience? Other concerns include whether placement of alcohol, high fat foods and gambling should be prohibited and how the existence of product placement should be signaled to viewers.

The Department is seeking responses to the consultation by 8 January 2010.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 'Consultation on Product Placement on Television', November 2009

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http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultations/Consultation_productplacement.pdf

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