

[GB] ATVOD Begins its Work

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As reported in IRIS 2010-5:1/27, the Association for Television On-Demand (ATVOD) was formally “designated” as the co-regulator for UK Video on Demand (VOD) services. This status came formally into effect on 20 September 2010. ATVOD was an industry trade association prior to the designation.

ATVOD has now published its Procedure for Complaints about Editorial Content on VOD Services. The document outlines the procedures ATVOD will normally follow in the handling of complaints concerning editorial content on video on demand (“VOD”) programme services (“VOD Services”). The Procedure also came into effect on 20 September 2010. The Procedure does not cover all video-on-demand services. According to the document, the key criteria are, to quote, as follows:

- that the principal purpose of the VOD service is the provision of programmes the form and content of which are comparable to the form and content of programmes normally included in television programme services;
- that access to the VOD service is on-demand;
- that there is a person who has editorial responsibility for the VOD service;
- that the VOD service is made available for use by members of the public;
- and that the service provider be based in the UK.

Editorial matters about which a complaint may be made comprise: harmful material likely to incite hatred; protection of under-18s from content likely to seriously impair their physical, mental or moral development; sponsorship; product placement; and information to be provided to users of VOD services.

ATVOD cannot consider complaints about the following: VOD services which are subject to any other jurisdiction throughout the world other than the UK; matters already being dealt with by the courts; internet access, telephone or television services that are not supplied on demand or are otherwise outside ATVOD’s remit; any decision by a service provider whether or not to supply any product or service and the terms under which any product or service is supplied; or hardware (such as the set-top box) or software supplied by a service provider to a user to enable use of a VOD service.

ATVOD may also decline to consider complaints which, in the opinion of ATVOD, are frivolous, vexatious or which have been made persistently in the past without reasonable grounds or that contain language that is unnecessarily offensive, obscene or profane; where insufficient information about the complaint is provided; which are made outside the time limits set out in these procedures; or if the complaint concerns matters that ATVOD considers would be more properly dealt with by the courts or another complaints procedure.

ATVOD, Procedure for Complaints about Editorial Content on VOD Services

<http://www.atvod.co.uk/downloads/ATVOD%20Complaints%20Process.pdf>

