

[GB] Regulator ends co-regulatory arrangements for video-on-demand

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Ofcom, the UK communications regulator, has decided to take the regulation of video-on-demand services in-house. These services were previously regulated by the Authority for Video on Demand (ATVOD), designated in 2010 as the coregulator to take the lead in regulating editorial content for these services (see IRIS 2010-5/27). ATVOD originated as a self-regulatory body but was restructured with the creation of a board, with a majority of members independent of the industry. Ofcom retained concurrent responsibility to act in addition to, or in place of, ATVOD.

The services include catch-up TV, on-demand services on TV, and the Internet. They have become increasingly popular with viewers, with the proportion of adult viewers who watch video-on-demand services having increased from 27% in 2010 to 57% in 2014; for younger viewers the figure is 70%.

Following a review, Ofcom has decided to act as sole regulator of these services. It considers that this will create operational efficiencies and will allow editorial content of video-on-demand to sit alongside Ofcom's existing regulation of broadcast content. Thus, the review concluded that, in the light of the increasing convergence of linear services and on-demand programme services, the Single Digital Market Review in the EU (see IRIS 2015-6/13) and the need for a comprehensive solution to the future of content regulation, Ofcom should take sole responsibility for regulation of editorial content from 1 January 2016. Advertising content on video-on-demand services will continue to be subject to a process of co-regulation involving the Advertising Standards Authority.

Ofcom, "Ofcom brings regulation of "video-on-demand" in house", Press Release, 14 October 2015

http://media.ofcom.org.uk/news/2015/1520333/

