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

IRIS 2016-1:1/14

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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 co-regulator 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/

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