[GB] BBC Gets Licence for 24 Hour Cable News

IRIS 1998-1:1/25

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Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media And Sport has issued a licence to the BBC to broadcast its round-the-clock news channel BBC News 24. Although a licence was already granted to the BBC in July, the BBC withdrew its original application to broadcast a 24-hour news service, to protect itself from the threat of judicial review by BskyB. BSkyB had accused the BBC of predatory pricing because the corporation is to offer the service free to cable networks, in comparison with BskyB who sells its own 24-hour news service to the cable companies for about 50p per subscriber. The BBC's 24-hour news will also be broadcast overnight on BBC1 in the hours between the end of the night schedule, and the start of breakfast television. Financed from the licence fee, it is the first of several channels and services the BBC intends to offer on digital television networks next year. The corporation has also entered partnerships with private companies.

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