

Scottish TV content on the rise

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND: The level of expenditure on television content produced in Scotland increased again in 2009, Ofcom's annual *Communications Market Report* has revealed. Scotland now accounts for 3.6% of all networked programme spend by the four public service broadcasters across the UK, up from 2.5% in 2008.



This represents a 38% increase since 2006, and a rise in spend from £50 million to £65 million (about R612 million to R725 million). It also marks the third year in which the volume of networked production has risen in Scotland.

In 2009, Scotland was also the only UK nation to see spending on programmes produced specifically for its viewers rise. In the past year, BBC and STV spent a combined total of £50 million (about R557 million) on English-language TV programmes for viewers in Scotland - a small increase of just under 1% but in contrast in Wales and Northern Ireland there were reductions in spend of 16% and 11% respectively year on year.

Spend on programmes for Scotland represented 19% of total spending on nations and regions programming, up from 16% in 2008.

Eager for news

The average Scot watches TV for 4.2 hours per day, higher than the UK average of 3.8 hours per person per day and higher than in any other UK nation.

Scots are more likely than people living elsewhere in the UK to watch television as their main source of local news (64% compared to the UK average of 49%), and watch more local evening news (22 hours per year) than the UK average (17.9 hours per year). STV's evening bulletin attracts a 24% audience share and is more popular than the average of other bulletins on the ITV network, which have a UK-wide audience share of 19%.

Investment in news across the UK fell by 13% (£24 million - about R267 million) to £171 million (about R1.9 billion) in 2009, with spend on current affairs programming declining by 11% (£3 million - about R33 million) to £23 million (about R256 million). However in Scotland, spending on current affairs experienced a 17% (£1 million - about R11.14 million) increase to £4 million (about R44.5 million) in the year, while investment in news was also up, by 5% year on year to £15 million (about R167 million).

Despite television viewing figures remaining high in Scotland, in 2009 the public service broadcasting channels

experienced a bigger decline in viewing share in Scotland than anywhere else in the UK since 2004 (down 19 percentage points compared to a UK average of 16 percentage points).

A country of contrasts

Ofcom's annual report examines the take-up and use of communications services across the country, and shows that Scotland is below the UK average in the take-up and use of many communications services, like broadband, fixed line telephones, social networking, games consoles and mobile phones.

Fewer Scots also use the internet to access health, banking or government websites than elsewhere in the UK. Just 13% claim to access local council or government sites online, half the UK average of 26%. In Glasgow, Clyde and Lanarkshire the figure falls to just 4%. 29% of Scottish households access online banking sites (the UK average is 43%), while 14% use the internet to find information on health issues (the UK average is 27%).

Broadband take-up in Scotland showed the smallest increase across the UK, at just 1% between 2009 and 2010 (to reach 61%), but varies from 72% in Edinburgh and the Forth Valley to 53% in Glasgow, Clyde and Lanarkshire.

The research found that Scotland has the lowest level of mobile phone ownership (85% compared to a UK average of 89%), yet along with Wales has the highest level of mobile-only households (19% compared to a UK average of 14%). Despite this, Scots are ranked lowest for accessing the internet with a mobile phone (9% compared to a UK average of 16%).

Radio listening is lower in Scotland than the rest of the UK at 21 hours a week compared to the UK average of 21.9 hours). However, local commercial radio in Scotland receives a higher share of listening (41%) than elsewhere in the UK (32%). 37% of Scots listen to BBC network radio compared with a UK average of 46%.

Rural communications

Ofcom's research confirmed that people who live in rural locations across the UK including rural Scotland are less likely to have access to super-fast broadband, a 3G phone signal, and to a choice of suppliers through their local fixed telephone exchange. The research shows that the average broadband speeds delivered to premises in rural locations are typically lower than in urban areas; that fixed-line take-up is often higher; and that households are less likely in rural areas to take communications services in bundles.

In Scotland, people in rural areas were less likely to have a mobile phone (80% compared to 86% in urban areas) and to buy a 3G handset (17% in rural areas compared to 27%). However, consistent with the picture across the UK, people in rural areas were more likely to have a landline phone (88%) than those in urban areas (77%).

Vicki Nash, director of Ofcom Scotland, said of this year's Communications Market Report: "This report provides a vital snapshot of communication trends in Scotland. Ofcom's data shows improving news for Scottish broadcasting, but also a slowing in demand for broadband - Scotland is now the least connected nation in the UK.

"With such obvious economic and social benefits to broadband, this development will be of interest to both policymakers and the public."

Professor Philip Schlesinger, chairman of Ofcom's Advisory Committee for Scotland, said: "This annual report has now become indispensable to public debate in Scotland. I hope that many will discuss the findings and air their thoughts."

The Communications Market Report for Scotland can be found here: www.ofcom.org.uk/cmrsotland.

Developments in Scotland

1. Key market developments in Scotland

Telecoms and networks

- Broadband ownership in Scotland is up 1% to 61%, but is the lowest of the UK nations (UK average 71%). Take-up varies across Scotland from 53% in Glasgow, Clyde and Lanarkshire to 72% in Lothian and Forth Valley.
- Twelve% of people in Scotland use mobile broadband, below the UK average of 15%. Take-up is above average in Grampian, Tayside and Fife (18%) but significantly below in rural Scotland, and in Glasgow, Clyde and Lanarkshire (10% for both).
- Fifteen% of households in Scotland are 'involuntary' non-owners of internet access (that is, non-adoption that comes about for reasons of availability or cost). This is the highest of any UK nation and higher than the UK average of 9%.
- Consumers in Scotland have the highest level of satisfaction with the overall service provided by their fixed-line (93%), broadband (92%) and mobile (96%) suppliers.

Television and audiovisual

- 91% of homes have digital TV in Scotland, in line with the UK-wide average (92%). Fifty two% of digital TV homes in Scotland take a pay-TV service such as Sky or Virgin Media.
- Digital TV take-up is broadly comparable across rural areas (91%) and urban areas (89%). Rural Scots are more likely to use satellite TV - 56% took a pay satellite service compared to 51% of Scottish homes in urban locations
- Digital switchover was completed in the Scottish Borders at the end of 2008. The STV regions began the process in May 2010 and will continue until summer 2011.
- STV broadcast a higher volume of own-productions for viewers in Scotland than the ITV networks in other nations of the UK. Non-news output has increased 67% since 2005, from 221 hours to 370 hours in 2009.

Radio and audio

- 87% of people in Scotland listen to radio on a weekly basis, lower than the UK average of 90%. Time spent listening is also lower than the UK average, at 21 hours per week compared to 22 hours.
- Just over half of Scottish radio listening (54%) is to commercial stations, an increase of 2% and above the UK average of 43%. Revenue from commercial stations in Scotland declined by £3m (8%) on 2008, to £38m in 2009, but at £7.84 per head is the highest of the UK nations.
- Over a third (36%) of adults in Scotland have a DAB set in the home. This is comparable to the UK average of 38% and higher than Wales (29%) and Northern Ireland (22%). Take-up was highest in the Glasgow, Clyde and Lanarkshire area, at 41%.