



## **ELSPA Response to Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review**

### **Phase One: The Digital Opportunity**

#### **About ELSPA**

ELSPA (the Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association) is the trade association for video games publishers in the UK. ELSPA was formed in 1989 to establish a specific and collective identity for the country's video games industry and has grown to its current membership to almost 60 companies.

ELSPA works to protect, promote and provide for its members' interests via a number of activities including anti-piracy enforcement, research, sales charts and reports and political lobbying. It also ensures its members publish games which are responsibly age-rated with the pan-European PEGI ratings system to ensure parents can make informed choices when purchasing games for their children. ELSPA also helps organise a number of key gaming events in the UK including the annual London Games Festival, staged every October. For more information, visit [www.elspa.com](http://www.elspa.com).

#### **ELSPA's Response**

ELSPA's input is focused on Ofcom's questions about how interactive media contribute towards the public purpose, and what role interactive media can play in the future of Public Service Broadcasting.

1. Video games offer an engaging and enjoyable means of delivering interactive services and entertainment to a broad and diverse audience. Video games are familiar to - and enjoyed by - a wide spectrum of players across all age groups, ethnicities and genders. In the UK, 59% of people aged 6-65 years (some 26.5 million people) play video games. The perception that such games are only of interest to children and young people is out of step with reality – today the average age of a UK gamer is 32. More than 8.5 million British people aged 36 and over play games<sup>1</sup>.

2. The UK video games industry boasts a world-leading pool of creativity and talent, and produces innovative new products which are delivered to consumers in a variety of different formats and via different online and mobile platforms. The content available to users of video games consoles now

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<sup>1</sup> BBFC 'State of Play', 2006

extends beyond the traditional idea of what constitutes a video game. For example, TV broadcasters and news services have formed new cross-sector relationships and developed cross-platform access to multimedia products for consumers. This means that a video games console can function as a news and weather centre as well as a video games, music, TV and film entertainment system, creating new functionality for the consumer and opening up new opportunities for broadcasters.

3. In terms of the kinds of content which could be offered by Public Service Broadcasters via new interactive channels, the scope is huge and ranges from entertainment media to educational resources. Research such as that conducted by Learning and Teaching Scotland has shown that video games can deliver enormous educational benefits and offer an engaging means for children and young people to learn via interactive software<sup>2</sup>.

4. Some findings suggest that many types of videogames can provide educational and developmental benefits in terms of the skills and attributes they nurture, and by delivering a stimulus that other educational formats do not provide<sup>3</sup>.

5. It is vital that the networks used to deliver interactive content enable the content providers to manage and retain their intellectual property, and that consumers can access content only in accordance with the terms set out by the content providers. Networks which enable – and just as importantly, which do not discourage – illegal copying and distribution of intellectual property, whether by design oversights or because of a lack of conviction among ISPs and network providers, will damage content providers' businesses with an inevitable negative impact upon public service broadcasting and the UK Knowledge Economy.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.ltscotland.org.uk](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Cyberchaos study, University of Teesside