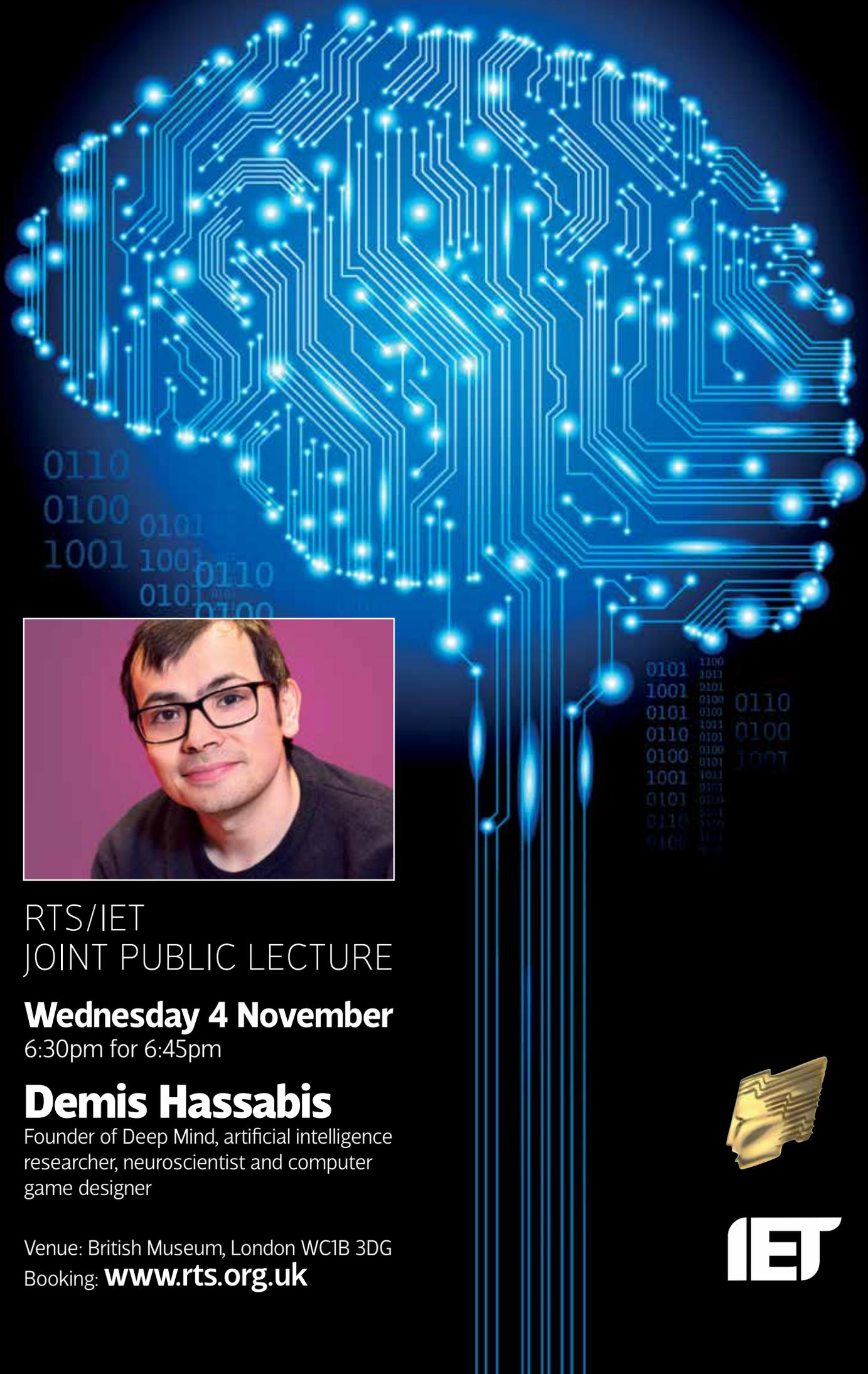


September 2015

Television



**Eurosport
breaks from
the pack**



RTS/IET
JOINT PUBLIC LECTURE

Wednesday 4 November

6:30pm for 6:45pm

Demis Hassabis

Founder of Deep Mind, artificial intelligence researcher, neuroscientist and computer game designer

Venue: British Museum, London WC1B 3DG

Booking: www.rts.org.uk



IET



From the CEO



It's been a productive summer at the RTS. The big news is that our new website went live in July. The feedback that I've received so far has been very

positive. We hope that everyone finds the site intuitive to use. As our Digital Editor, Tim Dickens, explains in this issue of *Television*, we have added a lot of new, training-related resources.

The debate over the future of the BBC is generating a wide range of views across the creative industries.

In July, Chris Bryant, the Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, spoke at an RTS early-evening event where the BBC was centre stage.

I'd like to thank all those who attended and our producers, Dan

Brooke and Sue Robertson. Thanks, too, to the brilliant Anne McElvoy, who chaired the occasion.

I was pleased to see at least one member of the BBC Trust in the audience. Also present was Stewart Purvis, one of the eight-strong panel advising John Whittingdale on his post-green paper Charter renewal review.

The culture secretary is a keynote speaker at the RTS Cambridge Convention, which is almost upon us. If you haven't booked, there is still time but places are going fast.

We have assembled a stunning line-up of domestic and international players. One of the speakers is All3Media CEO Jane Turton, profiled in this issue.

I am thrilled that Emily Bell is flying over from New York to join a conference session and that, among other

Cambridge participants, we have Tom Mockridge, Stuart Murphy and Jane Tranter on stage.

Accenture has kindly helped develop a special Cambridge app. This will provide details of speakers, sessions, schedules, any supporting research and the opportunity to vote live on some big industry issues.

Finally, I'd like to draw attention to September's cover story, written by *The Guardian's* Owen Gibson. He provides an incisive analysis of Discovery's plans for Eurosport and reflects on the consequences of the channel's recent Olympics rights deal.

Theresa Wise

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Cover picture: Jeff Pachoud/AFP/Getty Images

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National events

RTS CONVENTION

16-18 September

RTS Cambridge Convention 2015: Happy Valley or House of Cards – Television in 2020

Venue: West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge CB3 9DP and King's College, Cambridge CB2 1ST

■ Book online at www.rts.org.uk

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Monday 28 September

In conversation with Mike Darcey, CEO, News UK

6:30pm for 6:45pm

Venue: The Hospital Club, 24 Endell Street, London WC2H 9HQ

■ Book online at www.rts.org.uk

JOINT PUBLIC LECTURE

Wednesday 4 November

Joint RTS/IET public lecture with Demis Hassabis

Demis Hassabis is founder of Deep Mind and an artificial intelligence researcher, neuroscientist and computer game designer. 6:30pm for 6:45pm

Venue: British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

■ Book online at www.rts.org.uk

RTS MASTERCLASSES

Tuesday 10 November

RTS Student Programme Masterclasses

Venue: BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT

■ Booking opening soon

RTS MASTERCLASSES

Wednesday 11 November

RTS Craft Skills Masterclasses

Venue: BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT

■ Booking opening soon

RTS AWARDS

Monday 30 November

RTS Craft & Design Awards 2014-2015

The closing date for awards entries is Tuesday 1 September
Venue: The London Hilton, Park Lane, London W1K 1BE

Local events

BRISTOL

Wednesday 16 September

Boom Bust Boom

Film screening followed by discussion with the directors Terry Jones and Ben Timlett. Organised jointly with Encounters Short Film & Animation Festival. 8:00pm

Venue: Watershed, 1 Canon's Road, Bristol BS1 5TX

Wednesday 23 September

In conversation with Philip Edgar-Jones, Director, Sky Arts
Commissioning strategy and the Amplify initiative. 7:00pm

Venue: TBC

October – date TBC

Breaking into TV

Student event, preceded by a facilities tour. 2:00pm-4:00pm

Venue: Bath Spa University, Newton St Loe, Bath BA2 9BN

■ Belinda Biggam
■ belindabiggam@hotmail.com

DEVON & CORNWALL

■ Contact TBC

EAST ANGLIA

■ Contact TBC

LONDON

Wednesday 23 September

IBC review

6:30 for 7:00pm

Venue: Riverside Bar, ITV Studios, Upper Ground, London SE1 9LT

■ Daniel Cherowbrier
■ daniel@cherowbrier.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Tuesday 1 September – TBC

RTS Legends lunch with David Jennings, Head of Regional and Local Programmes, BBC West Midlands

Venue: BBC Birmingham, The Mailbox, Birmingham B1 1RF

Thursday 12 November

Awards/Student Awards

Venue: Motorcycle Museum,

Coventry Rd, Solihull, West Midlands B92 0EJ

■ Jayne Greene 07792 776585
■ jayne@ijmmedia.co.uk

NORTH EAST & THE BORDER

Wednesday 30 September

Networking evenings

The last Wednesday of the month, for anyone working in TV, film, computer games or digital production. 6:00pm onwards.

Next event: ■ 28 October

Venue: Tyneside Bar Café, Tyne-side Cinema, 10 Pilgrim St, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6QG

Thursday 15 October

Keynote Lecture: Julian Bellamy, Managing Director of ITV Studios

Venue: TBC

Tuesday 3 November

Digital guru: Stephen Whitelaw

Venue: TBC

■ Jill Graham
■ jill.graham@blueyonder.co.uk

NORTH WEST

Thursday 1 October

Awards launch

Venue: Compass Rooms, Lowry Centre, Salford Quays M50 3AZ

Saturday 14 November

Annual Awards

Venue: Hilton Deansgate, 303 Deansgate, Manchester M3 4LQ
■ Rachel Pinkney 07966 230639
■ rachelpinkney@yahoo.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

Thursday 5 November

Inaugural Northern Ireland Programme Awards

The centrepiece of the Belfast Media Festival

Venue: The MAC, 10 Exchange Street West, Belfast BT1 2NJ

■ John Mitchell
■ mitch.mvbroadcast@btinternet.com

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

September – date TBC

Visit to the Vikings set.

Venue: Ashford Studios, Ballyhenry, Ashford, Co Wicklow

■ Charles Byrne (353) 87251 3092
■ byrnecc@iol.ie

SCOTLAND

■ James Wilson 07899 761167
■ james.wilson@cityofglasgow-college.ac.uk

SOUTHERN

Wednesday 14 October

Ultra-HDTV in UK TV

With Richard Salmon, BBC Research & Development. 7:30pm
Venue: Queen Mary College, Cliddesden Road, Basingstoke, RG21 3HF

■ Gordon Cooper
■ gordonjcooper@gmail.com

THAMES VALLEY

Friday 27 November

25th Anniversary Dinner Dance

Venue: Beaumont House Hotel, Burfield Rd, Old Windsor SL4 2JJ

■ Penny Westlake
■ info@rtstvc.org.uk

WALES

September – date TBC

'Challenges and opportunities for television in small nations'

A joint event with the University of South Wales

Venue: The ATRium, University of South Wales, 86-88 Adam St, Cardiff CF24 2FN

Thursday 22 October

IWA and RTS Wales 'Coffee Shop Debate': The future of Welsh broadcasting

With Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

Venue: Glyndwr University Wrexham – TBC

■ Hywel William 07980 007841
■ hywel@aim.uk.com

YORKSHIRE

Thursday 15 October

An evening with Barry Cryer

Chair: Louis Barfe. 7:30pm
Venue: Trinity Arts Centre, Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 6HW

■ Lisa Holdsworth 07790 145280
■ lisa@allonewordproductions.co.uk

TV diary

On holiday with his kids, **Dan Brooke** is subjected to some urban slang. It's not the kind of language he hears back home, at the House of Lords for dinner



Back to work for a break after a week of bodyboarding, go-karting and Mine-crafting in southern Spain with my kids – Gus, 10, and Fordie, eight. They kept calling me a “nube”.

I've no idea what this means, though urbandictionary.com says it is “someone so pitiful and idiotic that they have not even the meagre skills to be titled a noob”.

The second top definition is: “The incorrect spelling of noob or newb. Only noobs spell this word as ‘nube.’” Noof said. Lol. Sorry, Lool.

■ **Easing my return to the real world is my new assistant, Harpreet, for whom new words also need inventing. She is that good.**

First up is the Government's crisply named Paralympic Legacy Advisory Group, to present Channel 4's exciting plans for Rio 2016 to the new Minister of State for Disabled People, civil servants and various charity group heads.

In the afternoon, my team makes a presentation to Commissioning about what we do in Marketing & Communications.

In the hope of coming across as innovative and creative, we have adopted the departmental acronym, “MAC”.

We come up with a theme for the presentation, which, naturally enough, is... wrestling. A SmackDown,

no less, after those WWE-organised tag-team bouts.

My A-team of main-eventers – Chris, Harpreet, James, James, John, Lynette and Mark (in alphabetical order) – goes down a storm, making me look a lot better than the hoss mid-carder that I am. The extra cherry on top of the day is catching up on two missed episodes of *Humans*.

■ On Tuesday, the Channel 4 cricket team, which I captain, is off for a Twenty20 evening match at a new pitch in Hounslow. Ben, our Bob Willis-style opening bowler from *Channel 4 News*, emails, bemoaning the location and pointing out that “when you move to Birmingham, there's a much nicer ground in Solihull”. I haven't the faintest idea what he's on about.

■ Next, it's a Channel 4 Board meeting, which one member attends via video conference. From our seats in Horseferry Road, the hotel he is in has a portentously Fawlty Towers feel, but the IT turns out to work like a dream.

Less successful is the self-portrait I continue painting at home that night. My art-school training occurred more than 25 years ago and it shows in that left eye, which is drooping like one of Salvador Dali's clocks.

■ Thursday is the home of a diversity task force meeting. Titans of the subject, such as Oona, Ade and Ralph

tolerate my presence as the Exec Diversity champion.

I think I'm in the role specifically because I'm white, male, middle class and public-school-educated. However, I am also half Brazilian and used to have a disabled brother, which intrigues them.

■ **For dinner, my old man invites me to the House of Lords, which rarely turns out to be one of this mortal coil's unpleasant shuffles.**

My dad, Peter, prides himself on his memory. “My mind is less of a factory,” he observes, not infrequently, “more of a warehouse.” Concerned that his asset is depreciating at an undesirable rate, he has good news: “I've developed a new system for remembering things!” – though there's bad news, too: “I sometimes forget how the system works.”

He was a cabinet minister under both Margaret Thatcher and John Major, presiding, in his stint at what is now the DCMS, over the creation of Channel 5. This is, like his fondness for double negatives and elaborate clausal sentences, a source of not insignificant family pleasure.

■ Friday morning, I breakfast with a media journalist who passes on lots of interesting gossip. I fail to reciprocate adequately and feel decidedly nubish. Again.

Dan Brooke is Director of Marketing and Communications at Channel 4.

Eurosport

Now owned outright by Discovery, the pan-European sports channel that recently bagged the Olympics is looking to a turbocharged future. **Owen Gibson** reports

Over-the-top hyperbole is usually de rigueur when it comes to unveiling big TV sports-rights deals. But, this summer, when Discovery Chief Executive David Zaslav declared his company's €1.3bn, pan-European deal with the International Olympic Committee a "game changer", it seemed more like an understatement.

The contract, which runs from 2018, caused many people's jaws to drop – while others scratched their heads over its implications. It seemed like another blow to the BBC and its grip on the world's greatest festival of sport.

Discovery's move ended more than half a century in which European public service broadcasters showed the Olympics and fuelled its growth into a commercial and cultural behemoth.

Eurosport itself was launched in 1989 at the dawn of the satellite-TV revolution. Then, it was a joint venture between the European Broadcasting Union and the earliest iteration of Sky. The aim was to provide an outlet for rights the partners held but couldn't utilise on their main channels.

Now, with major US investment turning it from a sleepy backwater into a major player, Eurosport is in the vanguard of a new era.

The pan-European, long-term nature of June's IOC deal is, perhaps, the best signpost yet to where sports broadcasting is heading.

The pendulum certainly seems to be swinging towards complex, pan-regional deals between sports bodies and global players such as Fox, ESPN and the Qatari-owned BeIN Sports.

The deal was masterminded by Zaslav, who first acquired a 20% stake in Eurosport in 2012. This increased



Eurosport discovers a new playbook

to 51% in 2014 and – around a month after the Olympics deal – Discovery bought out the remaining 49% from French broadcaster TF1.

This last move garnered surprisingly few column inches, but it is equally significant in highlighting Discovery's ambitions for the sports channel.

Eurosport's brand has endured for three decades. It broadcasts to more than 50 countries in 20 languages.

Yet, in quite a number of these territories, it remains stuck in the popular imagination as an esoteric home for a continental smorgasbord of winter sports, cycling, tennis and other, more specialised, fare.

That is not always the case. When the Tour de France explodes into colourful, controversial life every July, for example, or during the French Open, when the world's best tennis players compete in Paris, it sits at the centre of the sporting world. But, in the main, it has remained a secondary player, rather than a big hitter.

The marriage of Discovery, the US giant that grew from a single cable science channel in 1985 into a global broadcasting network, and Eurosport, the Paris-based, quintessentially European, sports broadcaster, appears, at first glance, an unlikely one.

Reporting of the sports broadcasting

Hockey match at the London 2012 Olympics



Getty Images

“The goal for every sports channel is that you should be needed in a pay-TV package and that people will miss you if you’re not there. You’ve got to make it part of people’s sporting lives.”

When the IOC deal was announced, it genuinely came from left field. The attraction for the IOC is the allure of a pan-European broadcaster with deep pockets and global scale.

What’s more, Eurosport can partner on the IOC’s still fuzzy vision for its own Olympics channel that can boost the profile of its sports between Games. But, on both sides, it remains a high-stakes gamble.

Zaslav has been keen to highlight Eurosport’s “ability to develop and follow the same sports and athletes all year, combined with access to the archives”, which offers a win-win for both Discovery and the IOC.

The latter is all too aware that Olympic sports tend to fade from view as soon as the flame dies at the closing ceremony.

From 2018, across most of Europe (Russia aside) and in the UK and France from 2022, Discovery will hold exclusive rights to the biggest sporting show on earth. In practice, it will sublicense the rights to the Games in many markets.

But Discovery’s patchwork of free-to-air channels (including in the UK and Germany), pay services and online offerings gives it myriad options both during the Olympics and between them.

It is an innovative, in some ways brave, move from both sides. Under the IOC’s rules as they stand, at least 200 hours of the summer Games and 100 hours of the winter Olympics must be shown on free-to-air TV.

Some countries, notably the UK, have listed-events legislation that requires these competitions to be shown in their entirety on free-to-air channels.

But, even in the UK, the options are extensive. Eurosport could do a deal with the BBC or Channel 4. Or it could utilise space on Freeview to launch its own free-to-air Olympic channels. Or it could subcontract the best of the action and market itself as the only place to see every last moment.

The entrance of an emboldened, Discovery-backed Eurosport into the market is yet another challenge to the BBC’s grip on the sports rights that it still holds.

The intense competition between pay-TV giants BT Sport and Sky has ▶

world, as with many other business sectors (and, indeed, sports themselves), can be reductive.

It tends to be viewed through the prism of winning and losing high-profile rights packages when, in fact, the secret to success in a fast-changing media landscape is increasingly more complex and subtle.

When Discovery took its controlling stake in Eurosport, Zaslav eye-catchingly said that the companies would “look at opportunities to take bigger swings in certain markets”. They flirted with the 2014 UK rights auction for Premier League football – eventually a £5bn carve-up between Sky and BT.

And they were also linked with the Serie A contract in Italy.

But Peter Hutton, Eurosport’s Chief Executive, cautions against the idea that the broadcaster intends to wade in for every available rights package.

Instead, says Hutton, Eurosport will continue to invest heavily in production – he cites the innovations during this summer’s Tour de France, such as on-board cameras – and in making channels more locally relevant.

“You’ve got to be sensible,” insists Hutton. “The most difficult decisions are to say no to things and to say, ‘Let’s concentrate on the things we do well and do [them] better.’



Eurosport

› already squeezed the BBC's options and, while it is hopeful of coming to a sub-licensing deal around the Games, it will no longer be able to market itself as the home of the five rings.

Recalling the political and popular goodwill it earned from its London 2012 coverage, the ramifications are wider than simply two weeks of sporting action.

This blow to the corporation's status as *the* place where the nation gathers to view major events such as the Olympics comes in the midst of a wide-ranging debate about the BBC's future scale, scope and funding.

It is not only with the Olympics deal that Discovery will look to take advantage of the patchwork of channels it owns across the continent.

Traditionally, as a way of keeping production costs down, Eurosport has broadcast the same video feed across different territories but with localised commentary. That model is changing swiftly. Under Discovery's ownership, Eurosport plans a different emphasis for each territory.

"Before, Eurosport in Paris dictated policy to each local country. Now, that needs to change: we need to provide a toolbox for local countries to build channels out of," says Hutton, who joined Eurosport in March from rights agency MP & Silva and previously worked at ESPN and Fox.

THE GOAL FOR EVERY SPORTS CHANNEL IS THAT YOU SHOULD BE NEEDED IN A PAY-TV PACKAGE AND THAT PEOPLE WILL MISS YOU IF YOU'RE NOT THERE

"Part of that is investing in production and part of it is a focus on national players. In the UK, that might mean focusing on Andy Murray in the French Open."

It is also bearing fruit: UK audiences are up 24% since Discovery took a majority stake. Luck has also played a part. Eurosport has benefited in the UK from the fact that its two highest profile sports – cycling and tennis – are undergoing a spell of home-grown success.

Hutton also highlights the potential of the Eurosport Player, an online offering that currently has around 200,000 paying subscribers. The company intends to expand the service and its user base.

That might mean, for example, showing all the outside courts at the French Open while the main channel concentrates on the show courts. Or it might mean offering limitless options for enthusiasts to watch minority sports.

Ever since the beginning of the broadband age, the idea that smaller sports might be able to use the internet to aggregate a large audience has remained tantalisingly out of reach.

Hutton believes that this could change as technological advances and shifting viewing habits lead fans to gorge on the sports they are most passionate about, rather than being happy with a scheduled pick and mix.

"We saw research from the IOC that showed that the number of sports people are watching is decreasing, but we're watching more of the things we care about," he says. "You drill down to the things you care about most."

By the time Eurosport beams the 2018 Winter Olympics from Pyeong-Chang, the mutually dependent interests of the sports industry and the global media business are likely to have shifted again.

If Discovery's bold opening gambit over the past 12 months is anything to go by, it is clearly determined that a turbocharged, emboldened Eurosport will be at the heart of them.



BBC

A tough job in tough times

When Kim Shillinglaw became Controller of BBC Two last year, one of her predecessors took her for a drink. Roly Keating had launched BBC Four, moved on to BBC Two and filled in as temporary boss of BBC One. In a meeting room in New Broadcasting House, Shillinglaw recalls with terrible clarity what he told her.

"He said, 'You will find BBC Two is the toughest. Let me tell you that now. BBC Four has a lot of individual commissions but not very much money, so there's a limit to how many things it can commission."

"With BBC One, you make four or five really important decisions for the

The Billen Profile

Controller of BBC Two
Kim Shillinglaw
tells **Andrew Billen**
why she believes the
health of her channel
is vital to securing the
corporation's future

nation a year – who the new Doctor Who is – but, actually, the schedule is very stable: *EastEnders*, *Watchdog*, the news. On BBC Two, you have an awful lot of three-parters, two-parters and

singles, so you're making decisions all the time."

She says she did not quite believe him. She does now. She is at her desk in New Broadcasting House by 8:30am, making phone calls and writing emails. Although she is at home to see her children, 14 and 11, to bed, she toils again until 11:00pm. Weekends are rarely work-free.

This is why, although she does not number it in years, she knows her reign here must be "finite".

Yet Keating, now Chief Executive of the British Library, could not have known then how much stress the BBC would be under a year on. I ask if she is up for a scrap to save the BBC in its present comprehensive state, to shout her case for what she does. Her answer disappoints me a little. >

A quick skim through Kim



Kim Shillinglaw, Controller, BBC Two

Age 46

Lives West London

Married Steve Condie, TV producer; two children

Brought up Cameroon, Spain, London

Educated Holland Park School; Wadham College, Oxford

1990 Researcher, later series producer, at Observer Films, followed by contracts at ITV, Channel 4 and on the BBC's *The Money Programme*

2006 Creative Executive Producer at BBC London Factual and Commissioning Editor for Independents, CBBC

2009 Commissioning Editor for Science and Natural History Programming, BBC

2014 Controller of BBC Two (and BBC Four)

Triumphs *Stargazing Live*; *Earth-flight*; *Frozen Planet*, *Marvellous*, *Wolf Hall*

Flops 3DTV, whose potential she was charged with investigating for the BBC

Disasters Jeremy Clarkson exits *Top Gear* on her watch

Watching *Made in Chelsea*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *Modern Family*, *Backchat with Jack Whitehall and his Dad*

On pitching 'Most of the pitches I get for auteur-driven documentaries are shit'

On BBC Four 'BBC Two brings you the universe and BBC Four, the atom'

On the 10:00pm slot 'It is where BBC Two should show its knickers'

› "I hope we will always feel a real sense of clarity and purpose about what we're here for. Certainly, at BBC Two, I do."

She is at the centre of the public-service remit, I suggest.

"I suppose so. I'm obviously a massive supporter of the fight for the BBC and what I and my team put on air over the next years is obviously part of it, but our focus is very, very much on: where is the best talent? Are they making great things for us? What is the next *Marvellous* or *Wolf Hall*? How do we get the next *Inside No 9*?"

So, if she gets that right, the rest will follow?

"It's not that. It's bloody hard to make great television, or, rather, to enable other people to make great television. It's a 24/7 job."

I am surprised by that answer. She is one of the BBC's most persuasive executives, widely liked and pretty low on corporate speak: she should be out there speaking up for the BBC. But I am happy to talk television, great and less great, with her.

We disagree, I think, on how consistently high-brow BBC Two needs to be. *Coast*, she points out, is highly appreciated by her viewers. She says she favours, in the mix, more experts and fewer celebrity presenters, which is good. So why send Sue Perkins off to the Himalayas?

"I'm not sure that that's how I think of Sue. I think that she's actually a rather intelligent and very funny woman."

Talking of such, what has happened to the remake of *Civilisation*, announced more than a year ago?

"It's progressing. It's definitely happening."

Has she found her expert presenter?

"Well, I don't find them. But the team working on it is close. It is very close."

Has it got to be a woman?

"I never, ever, ever think about that. I said this about *Top Gear*: I never think about individual programmes in terms of gender. I think it's a really bad place to get to. What I do think about is the totality in terms of gender."

When I ask whether the time may have come to fold BBC Four into BBC Two – given that, outside Proms season, it rarely has more than an hour's new programming a night – she says that she is sad I should even moot it.

With overall responsibility for both channels, she is looking for a more "distinctive" yet "joined-up" strategy. I suggest that the next time BBC Two

broadcasts a documentary on *La Traviata*, BBC Four might actually show the opera.

"That is a good idea," she says. "We should have done that."

These, however, are my quibbles and my agenda. Most people agree that BBC Two is in good health. Documentaries are thriving again with the revival of *Modern Times* (although Shillinglaw is quiet when I ask if the strand will return). It continues to feed BBC One with hits such as *The Great British Bake Off* and drama is back with successes such as *The Honourable Woman* and *Line of Duty*.

What is more, in this spring's *Wolf Hall*, there is no doubt that she delivered the BBC an ace in its poker game with the Government.

On the other hand, BBC Two has also surely delivered the BBC's enemies a trump card in the BBC-mocking sitcom, *WIA*. Everyone says that it is not satire, but documentary.

"People also say it's very funny," she counters. "Do you know, the BBC and, I think, in particular, BBC Two just need to do the right things creatively. When the *Top Gear* debacle was unfolding, BBC Two had *The Wrong Mans* making *Top Gear* jokes, we had Charlie Brooker making *Top Gear* jokes and *WIA* making *Top Gear* jokes."

"And do you know what? With every single one of those, they came to me and asked, 'Is this all right?' And I said yes, because this is the DNA of BBC Two and all I can do is be the guardian of that."

The non-renewal of Jeremy Clarkson's contract to present *Top Gear* following his assault on a producer has been the great crisis of her tenure. Clarkson contacted Danny Cohen, the BBC's Director of Television, who then phoned Shillinglaw and called her in to a meeting.

"It was an incredibly difficult time but, then again, *Top Gear* had been pretty bumpy for a number of months that I'd been here and doing the job."

She was a fan of the show's "craft" and as a "collective viewing experience" at home with the family. But did she, as a woman and a graduate, consider its attitudes were outstaying their welcome?

"I would not have cancelled the show, if that's what you're asking me."

But would she have wished to make changes to it?

"I've always had a robust conversation with Jeremy and Andy [Wilman, its producer]. It's never been otherwise."



commissioner. Three years later, she was made Commissioning Editor for Science and Natural History, when she commissioned *Stargazing Live*, *Frozen Planet* and the science-drama *The Challenger*.

In the process, she helped propel the television careers of Brian Cox, Dara Ó Briain, oceanographer Helen Czerski and physicist Jim Al-Khalili.

She is said to be good with talent, and direct and decisive in meetings. Before our talk, at a meeting of the documentaries team, she has greenlit a follow-up to the series on sex crime investigations, *The Detectives*, and said “no” to one on butlers.

I do wonder, however, whether her BBC Two would be brave and decisive enough to commission a piece that really challenged this Government’s agenda, at a time when the corporation’s future lies in its hands.

If Alan Bleasdale came to her with a *Boys from the Blackstuff* for the twenty-teens, would she commission it?

“I think that’s a very interesting question. BBC Two has been incredibly looked after by my several predecessors, so it’s not a criticism – it’s more a question of how a channel evolves – but I *have* felt that BBC Two might look a little bit more at what I call the national conversation, at contemporary Britain.

“There is a place you can end up with an awful lot of bunting and cakes. There’s nothing wrong with bunting and cakes and marquees, and they have their place on the schedule. But I do think it’s also important that BBC Two really makes sure that it calibrates that against quite a strong set of perspectives on contemporary Britain.”

And this, I realise, is why we need a BBC with people of Shillinglaw’s calibre and character near the top, and why the choices she makes in the next few months will be a test of both. We talk about the Charter fight again.

“There are,” she says, “no wallflowers among the BBC’s critics. We need to make sure that those of us who believe in the BBC and believe in its essential purpose – whether, that’s the knowledge mission or the space I believe BBC Two should give the creative community to do their most signature work – realise that this is not the time to be a wallflower about our beliefs, either.”

It is good advice. The only thing is, I am not quite sure by this stage whether she is addressing me, RTS members or herself.

Long before the final incident, we had had a number of lively conversations. That’s part of making any show that is pushing the line.”

Does she think that Clarkson, as talent, was well handled?

“By me, personally? Yes, I do. And I believe, and I hope – well, I genuinely believe – that Jeremy would say the same. We always had a good, professional relationship that contained both support and the ability to say, ‘Jeremy, I think you’ve crossed the line.’”

Television must have looked very different to her when she discovered it in the 1980s. Her late father worked at the World Bank and in international aid, jobs that took his family to Cameroon and, later, Spain.

Until she returned to live in London as a teenager, her experience of television was limited. Cameroon had no television at all. Later, in Spain, a friend of the family had moved away and left behind a stack of VHSs.

“And there was *I, Claudius*, *Upstairs, Downstairs*, and so many, many other things, all slightly out of date. It was such a precious introduction, and scarcity always produces pleasure, doesn’t it?”

Back in London, she attended Holland Park comprehensive school, where she did well, although she says it was not “difficult to be bright there”.

“It was quite rough. I remember my teacher’s car being burnt out in the playground, and somebody getting stabbed in the corridor.”

She went to Wadham, Oxford, where she read history, partied and emerged with a 2:1. In her second year, she met a friend who was working in television. He assured her that it was possible to be paid to read the papers.

She wrote “a million” letters asking for a job and got a lowly one on Observer Films, where she rose to be a series producer. She went freelance and worked on *The Money Programme*, from where, having “probably watched *Broadcast News* too many times”, she pleaded for an attachment at *Newsnight*.

It was “absolutely terrifying. I discovered why I made long-form films.”

It was also where she met her husband, producer Steve Condie, now Head of Specialist Factual at 7 Wonder.

In 2006, she moved to the BBC’s London Factual department with an add-on, part-time role as CBBC indie

The hands-on hit maker

Profile

From *Game of Thrones* to *True Detective* and *Girls*, HBO is riding high. **Kate Bulkley** talks to **Michael Lombardo**, the man who helped the US cable station rekindle its mojo

HBO's President of Programming, Michael Lombardo, might have a reputation for being a touch obsessive, but, when it comes to his list of hit shows, it seems that such qualities work just fine.

HBO has received 126 Emmy nominations this year, 24 for *Game of Thrones* alone. Lombardo is the man behind *GoT* and other bull's eyes – from edgy dramas, such as *True Detective*, with Matthew McConaughey, to push-the-envelope comedies, including Lena Dunham's *Girls*, to *The Jinx*, the mini-series about alleged murderer Robert Durst, which HBO won the rights to after a nine-way bidding war.

In conversation, the New York native is disarmingly charming. He is one of those rare people who understand both the financial and creative aspects of television.

Lombardo reads scripts from beginning to end and has built a reputation for cultivating a deep working relationship with talent, especially writers.

He believes that it is HBO's willingness to roll up the proverbial shirt sleeves that gives it an edge.

"I remain very fluent in the business side of content creation," says Lombardo, on the phone from his Los Angeles office. "I understand the economics of making a show intimately. But a number of years ago, when I started using that muscle that you require when you talk to writers, I found myself enjoying it enormously.

"I felt a little bit like a kid in the candy store. I found myself leaning into it, as Sheryl Sandberg would say."

Lombardo is referring to the book *Lean In* by the Facebook Chief Operating Officer about how women are stereotyped in the workplace.

Stereotyping is something that Lombardo has strong views on. He and his husband, Sonny, are the parents of two children, and Lombardo serves on the board of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network).

Lombardo has worked for HBO for more than 30 years. He joined HBO's legal department in New York in 1983 and, three years later, relocated to Los Angeles to run business affairs. There, he rose through the ranks to become Executive Vice-President, Business Affairs, Production and Programming Operations in 2003.

It was in 2007 that Lombardo was given the chance to begin flexing his creative muscles. It was an inauspicious moment. The spectacular run of *The Sopranos* had ended and there was not



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much that was exciting on the channel. The buzz in the business was that the famous HBO acronym had come to mean “HB-Over”.

In the midst of this creative malaise, Lombardo was given creative control of programming, overseeing the flagship channel, HBO, sister channel Cinemax and HBO Films. His remit was, and is, a big one, covering entertainment, documentaries, sport and family programming.

It's easy to forget what a spectacular rejuvenation has been wrought by Lombardo and HBO's Chairman and CEO, Richard Plepler, who was promoted to his present job in 2013. Arguably, HBO's reputation has never been higher than it is today.

“The secret sauce of HBO is about talent – and not just big, known talent,” Lombardo says. “We offer a very honest, value-added relationship and I think that stands for something.

“And we support our programming, we stick with it and we let it grow.”

Unlike free-to-air broadcasters, HBO doesn't have to generate big ratings with every show. As a premium subscription service, HBO can afford to take risks and support programmes that might appeal only to some of its subscribers, some of the time.

“The good part of this is that it allows you to finely explore the [show's] creative ambitions with someone without worrying about the demographics of the show or whether there are unlikeable characters in the scripts,” says Lombardo.

HBO famously does not “do” focus groups for its shows. Instead, it relies on the judgement of its programming executives. But HBO does do development (at any one time, up to 70 scripts are being developed) and it does do pilots. The pilot for *Game of Thrones* is believed to have cost \$35m. Lombardo and his team were so unhappy with it that the pilot was partially re-shot.

The drama series has been a breakout show around the world. In the UK, the fifth series returned to Sky Atlantic in April with an average consolidated audience of 2.7 million. This was twice as many viewers as for Sky's own, heavily marketed, original drama *Fortitude*.

HBO may be on a roll. Lombardo, however, knows that creating ambitious shows, particularly dramas, is more competitive than ever, with the rise of global digital players led by Netflix and Amazon.

WE FIND CLEAR VOICES AND MORE VOICE-DRIVEN SHOWS FROM OUR UK ARTISTS... THEY HANDCRAFT THEIR SCRIPTS... SOME MIGHT SAY SMALL BUT VERY BEAUTIFUL

HBO is under more pressure to grow since its parent company, Time Warner, rejected an \$80bn takeover bid from Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox. It told shareholders that it could deliver value by expanding the business itself.

A big part of that growth story, according to Time Warner boss Jeff Bewkes, is the launch of HBO Now, a stand-alone, \$14.99-a-month streaming service that doesn't require a traditional pay-TV subscription. It looks like HBO's answer to Netflix and Amazon Prime.

Netflix has been gunning for HBO almost since it launched. CEO Reed Hastings famously said that his ambition was to “become HBO faster than HBO can become us”.

Indeed, Netflix beat HBO in the race to produce a US version of *House of Cards*. HBO wanted a pilot first. But Netflix was willing to back the series without one and signed a bigger cheque to secure it.

So was *House of Cards* the one that got away? “I think that waving a cheque at talent is one thing, but what talent is looking for is a relationship – someone who gets what they are doing and gets what their ambition is,” says Lombardo. “And that requires sitting down and

WHAT TALENT IS LOOKING FOR IS A RELATIONSHIP – SOMEONE WHO GETS WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND GETS WHAT THEIR AMBITION IS

communicating with someone. Being hands-on is critical.”

In Sky, HBO has found a substantial European partner. Sky Atlantic renewed its exclusive UK access to all HBO programmes in January 2014 in a deal – reportedly worth £275m – that runs until 2020.

Sky Italia and Sky Germany also have programme deals with HBO: co-production is very much part of the plan. In May, HBO, the Sky group and Canal+ greenlit Paolo Sorrentino's *The Young Pope*, an eight-parter starring Jude Law and Diane Keaton. “This is something where the director is going to take a big, bold, beautiful swing. This is what we do at HBO,” says Lombardo.

He is a big fan of British talent. He worked with Armando Iannucci on *Veep* and, recently, he greenlit a series from Sharon Horgan called *Divorce*, starring *Sex and the City* actress Sarah Jessica Parker.

“As a rule, we find clear voices and more voice-driven shows from our UK artists,” says Lombardo. “They don't come from a culture where there are huge writing rooms.

“They handcraft their scripts and they are very specific – some might say small but very beautiful.”

With the launch of HBO Now, Lombardo is thinking about what content will work best on that platform. One obvious source is Vice Media, which already produces a nightly programme on the HBO TV channel.

Later this year, Vice will begin producing a daily newscast and a branded channel on HBO Now.

“The idea for HBO Now is to attract ‘cord nevers’, people who don't pay for TV,” explains Lombardo. “We aren't looking to cannibalise our existing business. And, inevitably, these ‘cord nevers’ are younger viewers. These are millennials who are very price- and time-conscious. And Vice does really well with that audience.”

If Vice is HBO's next great asset, then who is the future enemy? Netflix will probably play that role for at least a few more years. However, HBO enemies beware: Lombardo has very definite views on his competitors.

His put-downs are something to behold: “I would've liked our version of *House of Cards*” is his retort to my question about what he thought of the Kevin Spacey interpretation.

Arguing with Michael Lombardo is like facing up to Tony Soprano – there's usually only one winner.



Pay-TV

BT TV is opening up a new front in the battle with Sky by launching the first AMC-branded UK channel. **Stuart Kemp** investigates

BT dials up a zombie invasion

Pay-TV platform BT TV is hoping that an unfolding zombie apocalypse will help it bite out a bigger share of a competitive UK market dominated by Sky. *Fear the Walking Dead*, the much-anticipated spin-off show of US flesh-eating drama *The Walking Dead*, is airing exclusively on BT TV as the flagship drama for the first AMC-branded channel in the UK.

It is part of a wider deal struck in June between US cable operator AMC Networks and BT TV.

The headline-grabbing, multi-year deal gives BT TV exclusivity to all things AMC, the US stable that has showcased some of the biggest and most celebrated series on US television in recent years, including *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*.

While it may seem like a big gamble to pin a channel launch on an unproven spin-off show – it debuted in the US in August – it is exactly the sort of punt that BT TV is embracing.

According to Delia Bushell, Managing Director of BT TV and BT Sport, the pact with AMC is about more than an exclusive carriage deal for AMC, because BT TV is jointly curating the content.

Indeed, Bushell characterises it as a “great opportunity” for a full-on working partnership between the companies.

“The channel will broadly be very similar to AMC US in the sense that it will carry both premium original drama series and movies,” she says. “We will customise that for the UK to make it as strong as possible for a UK audience.”

Fear the Walking Dead, starring Kim Dickens, Cliff Curtis, Frank Dillane, Alycia Debnam-Carey, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ruben Blades, Mercedes Mason and Lorenzo James Henrie, is set in Los Angeles just as the zombie apocalypse begins.

Billed as a companion piece to the original hit that has developed a cult following in the UK, both on free-to-air broadcaster Channel 5 and pay-TV’s Fox UK, the first season of *Fear* comprises six one-hour episodes.

A second season is already scheduled to premiere in 2016 in BT TV households, say BT and AMC. The plan is to use the show’s first season to frame the AMC channel’s launch this month and to prove BT’s drama credentials and its ability to tailor AMC for UK eyeballs.

Bushell and her team emphasise that the channel will be home to other

BT TV

soon-to-be-announced AMC dramas, as well as scripted series from third-party producers and feature films.

This is a big moment in BT TV's evolution as it attempts to realise parent BT Group's long-held ambition to make its mark in the pay-TV arena.

The deal is BT TV's highest-profile commitment to exclusive scripted content since launching in 2006.

While Bushell describes the partnership with AMC as "a logical next step" for BT, some have noted that this step has been rather a long time coming.

But Bushell hints that BT had merely been waiting for the right opportunity. "There is a clear appeal and traction from premium US drama in the UK marketplace and that is something that we want to deliver to our customers," she notes. "AMC was one of the first and strongest opportunities we saw to do that with a business that is trying to grow its brand and channel globally. It was just a win-win partnership opportunity for us and AMC."

Since the announcement of the deal, Bushell says that her team has been approached by more content providers with ideas. All avenues will be explored.

"Over the past 12 months, we feel that we have been quietly transforming our BT TV service by adding Sky Sports 1 and 2, Netflix, buy-to-keep movies and box sets such as HBO series *Game of Thrones*," says Bushell. "We are now evolving the BT TV service into something that is much stronger."

"By looking at BT Sport and offering a new Ultra-HDTV service, we think that this is a big turning point for us in terms of the quality and the depth of our BT TV offering."

While the AMC deal is something of a coup, it is, of course, BT's audacious football rights deals that signpost serious intent.

BT dished out just under £1bn for two packages of Premier League football rights earlier this year, a cost dwarfed by the £4.2bn Sky stumped up for five packages of rights in the blind bidding process.

It meant that, while the satellite operator got more matches to show – 126 per season versus 42 for BT Sport – it paid just over £11m per game while BT paid only £7.6m.

It was the 83% jump in the price paid by Sky, compared with a 30% rise in BT's bill, which punctured Sky's reputation for deal-making acumen, according to one media analyst.

He notes that the satellite operator

"passed the price increases on to consumers straight away". While consumers might feel the pinch, Morgan Stanley analysts point out in a recent research note that Sky's move shows "pricing confidence" based on the company's "grip on a number of major content strands, such as EPL football, the new output of the key movie studios and HBO".

Bushell, a former Sky high-flyer who ran operations in Ireland and Italy for Rupert Murdoch's satellite empire, says BT TV's strategy is to address the middle market "that is looking for a great-value selection of pay-TV but not necessarily the full-fat offering".

Others see it slightly differently. "BT is using ambush tactics against Sky and they're working with the AMC deal, while stealing in to take the Champions League football games from under Sky's nose and with the Premier League packages," says one media analyst. "It shows that there is reward when BT doesn't take Sky head-on in the battle."

Bushell remains tight-lipped about future deals and acquisitions, but says these will be informed by a strategic pledge to remain "financially disciplined" while striving to continue to be "a consumer price champion".

In the national press, the battle between BT TV and Sky to sign up customers to service bundles that span pay-TV and broadband has been portrayed as increasingly "vicious", as they go toe to toe for business.

BT has AMC, Sky has a marquee deal with HBO; both platforms offer box sets and on-demand services; and Sky publicly regards Netflix as a service consumers can choose to have alongside their Sky subscription, rather than a competitor, while BT has Netflix as an add-on to its menu.

Both are tablet- and smartphone-friendly and both are addressing the growing pay-lite TV market: Sky's Now TV – a pay-to-play, dip-in-and-out service – is growing in popularity.

Only time will tell whether BT, armed with the financial firepower of a company with a market cap of £39bn (compared with Sky's £19bn), will be able to build on its 1.2 million BT TV subscribers and grow towards Sky's 12 million-strong customer base.

But whether or not an army of AMC-backed zombies will help BT TV's assault on the UK's 25 million-plus television homes, the battle for subscribers is a gripping drama in itself.

WE THINK THAT THIS IS A BIG TURNING POINT FOR US IN TERMS OF THE QUALITY AND THE DEPTH OF OUR BT TV OFFERING

IT MAY SEEM LIKE A BIG GAMBLE TO PIN A CHANNEL LAUNCH ON AN UNPROVEN SPIN-OFF SHOW

18 months to save the BBC

Media policy

Shadow culture secretary **Chris Bryant** warns that reducing the scale and scope of the BBC would severely damage the UK's thriving creative industries



Paul Hampartsoumian

No one can now be in any serious doubt that the BBC is under siege. It started the day after the general election. Maybe, it's the excitement of unexpectedly winning the election that has got to the Conservatives. Maybe, they've just had an overdose of testosterone.

But it is all the more important that we remind them that they do not carry the nation with them on this particular bully crusade.

With fixed-term parliaments, we should consider an 11-year Charter, to take the next renewal out of the heat of battle and well beyond the 2025 election.

That is not to say that I think the BBC doesn't need reform. I remain a critical friend. I will, for instance, continue to criticise its record on diversity. The BBC cannot stand still; it has to embrace change and reform, because change is intrinsic to broadcasting.

We now watch audio-visual content in myriad ways – on tablets, on smartphones, through YouTube, Facebook and newspaper websites.

The remote control, the video cassette recorder, the hard-disk recorder and the iPlayer have successively changed our habits.

The new means of watching catch-up TV is adding audiences to must-watch shows, so that, far from disappearing from view, the shared national TV experience is still very much alive.

The BBC is the cornerstone of the creative industries in this country and the creative industries, in turn, are not just a pleasant added extra to the UK economy, a luxury if you like, they are the powerhouse of our future prosperity.

They represent one in 11 jobs, they bring in £76bn a year, they enhance our reputation overseas, they are intrinsic to our whole added-value economy and they have seen growth year on year well ahead of the rest of the economy.

The BBC co-operates with its commercial competitors, it commissions work from a vast range of production companies and it gives a platform for actors, directors, singers and artists, whose work will regularly take them from the very commercial to the remarkably niche.

The point is that the British creative industries cohere as a balanced ecology with the BBC at its heart. Only a

madman would take an axe to the tallest tree in the middle of the forest and not expect to do serious harm to the whole of the forest.

The BBC doesn't harm the wider industry, it fosters it: it creates a competition for quality; and its £3.7bn from the licence fee is the largest investment we make in the arts.

There are those who argue that the BBC is too big, and think the BBC should limit its ambition. The Secretary of State thinks that it is "debatable" whether the BBC should even make *Strictly Come Dancing*, let alone show it on Saturday night, and his Charter Renewal is apparently meant to be a root and branch review of the scope and scale of the BBC.

John Birt was absolutely right to build a strong BBC internet presence. Rupert Murdoch was wrong to claim that it was illegal state aid. Audiences continue to move online. The BBC of 2027 can only manage that transition with a strong internet presence.

And a BBC without sport would no more be a national broadcaster than a BBC without a serious evening news bulletin.

This goes to the heart of the issue. The golden thread that runs through the BBC is that everyone gets something out of it because everyone has paid for it.

Yes, it's the BBC's mission to do something more than just chase audiences, and I think the BBC could take the foot off the cross-promotion pedal, but popular programming is what justifies the licence fee to the vast majority of my constituents.

It cannot just be posh TV at the public expense. A universal service that binds the nation together, the BBC can remain our cultural NHS.

That is why, although I remain open to the idea of the household levy, I believe the licence fee should remain for the full period of the Charter, with the CPI inflation rise, as promised.

I don't think that there is anyone who now believes that the governance structures of the BBC are fit for purpose.

The events of the last two weeks, when the Chancellor mounted a stick-up job on the Director-General and the Chair of the Trust, prove the point. There was nobody independent enough of the BBC or of the Government who was prepared to utter a word of dissent.

The Chair of the Trust issued a letter after the event, objecting to the process, >

ONLY A MADMAN WOULD TAKE AN AXE TO THE TALLEST TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOREST AND NOT EXPECT TO DO SERIOUS HARM TO THE WHOLE OF THE FOREST

THE CORPORATION DOUBTLESS HAD A GUN TO ITS HEAD AND CHOSE TO GET SHOT IN THE LEG INSTEAD

Staying to fight



Richard Ayre

Paul Hampartsourmian

BBC Trustee and former BBC Controller of Editorial Policy Richard Ayre explained why he and his Trust colleagues did not threaten to resign over the Government's decision to force the BBC to cover the cost of free TV licences for the over-75s.

Speaking from the floor, he said: 'Yes, I listed the pros and cons. I didn't [resign] because of the next six months. The BBC Trust and the Director-General are in a fight, a licence-fee battle.'

'If the BBC had no Trust – it takes [at least] six months to recruit trustees – there would be nobody for the next six months, when it is vital to fight for the Charter.'

'That is why we stayed. That is what we will do.'

He added: 'Five years ago, I said that I was willing to resign [when George Osborne first argued that the BBC should pay for the over-75s' free licences]. We had every indication that the coalition would back down.'

Reporting by Stuart Kemp.



› but, since it was exactly the same process as was used in 2010, you might have thought Trustees would have made clear their objections in advance and in public. The end result is that the Trust has proved itself a busted flush.

However able or independently minded the Chair might be – and it is not exactly an enviable position – she will always be caught in a double bind of either undermining the corporation or lip-syncing the Director-General.

I suggest that the BBC needs a proper unitary executive board, with a non-executive Chair and a majority of non-executive directors, who should be appointed for a fixed period so that they retain their independence.

Their focus should be not to act as a regulator of the BBC, but to carry the fiduciary responsibility of the corporation, ensuring that it is well run financially and creatively and within the law.

The Government should appoint the Chair after nomination hearings by the parliamentary select committee. It should be for the Chair and the non-executive directors to appoint the Director-General.

For many years, the BBC has fought off external regulation. It has argued that it is unique, a one-off – and so it is. I do not think, however, that this means that it should evade proper regulation and oversight. Parliament will, of course, maintain an important role representing the public. But the BBC should now be fully subject to the National Audit Office.

This leaves the question of regulation.

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee argued for a particular model, with this role split between Ofcom and a new Public Service Broadcasting Commission.

I would far prefer to see the full regulatory role adopted by Ofcom. I accept that some aspects of regulating the BBC would have to remain distinct from the regulation of other commercial broadcasters – not least because the BBC is not just a broadcaster.

But judgements on impartiality and the operation of electoral law apply identically. So could matters of taste and decency.

My fear is that, on this trajectory, if the Government engages in a deliberate attempt to limit the BBC in the



Chris Bryant (left) and Anne McElvoy

Paul Hampartsoumian

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q Anne McElvoy: Is there anything you think the BBC should change that it isn't doing at the moment?

A Chris Bryant: We need a change of the licence fee to deal with the iPlayer, to recognise the change in technology. The BBC should do more to cut down on senior pay.

I don't want to see cuts to services. And I think the BBC should do far more for diversity. When I said earlier that people want to see the world around them, I don't mean that they only want to see the world around them, sometimes you want to be taken to another world on broadcast and in film.

Q Anne McElvoy: Why do the BBC and other broadcasters seem to have so much difficulty with diversity?

A Chris Bryant: The truth is that the broadcasting industry in this country (and the wider media) needs to find new audiences if it is going to have a strong commercial success in the future.

To do so, it is going to have to change the set of faces on and behind the screen. It's a depressing fact that, according to the available figures, the number of people from BAME communities working in the media in the past seven years has fallen, rather than risen.

Q Anne McElvoy: What should the commissioners do to improve things?

A Chris Bryant: You have to have more [BAME and female] senior commissioners, you have to make sure there is money available for production, you have to be absolutely determined about it. In particular, people look to the national broadcaster that is funded by the licence-fee payer to look

like the country that is paying for it. All too often, I just don't think it does and sometimes when it does, it goes to the stereotype.

Q Anne McElvoy: Did the BBC give in too easily to the Government over having to pay for free TV licences for the over-75s?

A Chris Bryant: Yes, I think it did. It, doubtless, had a gun to its head and chose to get shot in the leg instead but, sometimes, when you're shot in the leg it leads to the same terminal effect.

Q Anne McElvoy: What would a Labour government have done?

A Chris Bryant: A Labour government would not have held the BBC to pay for it. We introduced free TV licences for the over-75s and it was an express part of the deal that this would not be paid for by the BBC, but paid for by the tax-payer. You cannot turn the BBC into a subsidiary of the Department for Work and Pensions. [The BBC] will now have to make decisions about who gets free TV licences. I just don't think that's morally defensible.

Q Anne McElvoy: Which news do you watch at 10:00pm?

A Chris Bryant: I very rarely watch the news. My news feed is from Facebook and from Twitter. I'm rarely home in time for 10:00pm and then, when I do get home, I go to various news websites.

Q Anne McElvoy: Does Labour still have a commitment to oppose the privatisation of Channel 4?

A Chris Bryant: We still do. There's an ecology here that works. Effortless British superiority really does irritate me, but the one thing where I think you can genuinely say we do something better than anyone else in the world, and every country would probably agree, is broadcasting.

Reporting by Stuart Kemp.

Charter renewal, the BBC will be a national irrelevance by 2027, little more than a PBS channel.

Even if the BBC gets its CPI inflation rise as half-promised, it will still be shrinking, even as sports rights, movie rights and top-talent inflation are racing ahead. And we shall all be the poorer for it. Less British programming and fewer great British talents on our screens and winning Oscars.

Let's be clear, if the Government aim is to cut the BBC down to size, it does not carry the nation with it in this particular bully crusade.

And I will fight it every inch of the way. I hope that you will do, too. We have just 18 months.

This is an edited version of Chris Bryant's speech to the RTS on 14 July (the full text is available on the RTS website). 'In conversation with Chris Bryant' was an RTS early-evening event held at The Hospital Club, London, on 14 July. It was chaired by Anne McElvoy and the producers were Dan Brooke, Channel 4's Director of Marketing and Communications, and Sue Robertson. Chris Bryant MP is Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

There was a great deal of quiet satisfaction across the British production sector when Jane Turton was named Chief Executive of All3Media back in February. The steely, 53-year-old Scot had triumphed over external candidates following a five-month, global search by its new US owners, hard-driving Discovery Communications and Liberty Global, who paid around £550m for this important producer.

Instead of opting for a noisy outsider, an alpha name bent on making a mark, they backed the respected number two. Turton was deputy to one of All3's key founders, Steve Morrison (who has left after 12 years), and then its CEO of two years, Farah Ramzan Golant, who facilitated the sale.

Lee Bartlett, who currently sits on the All3Media board as Discovery Studios Production Group President, explains: "Motivating talent is one of the greatest gifts an executive can have and Jane is very good at that. She has the right business skill sets and an understanding of the biggest markets for All3Media: the UK, the US and Germany."

The former senior BBC and All3Media executive Wayne Garvie, now at Sony, says: "I'm a big fan. I really enjoyed working with her. She is fantastically bright, really able and good with creatives."

Talk to people in the industry who broker commercial deals opposite her and similar responses comes back.

Hilary Strong, Chief Executive of Agatha Christie Ltd, negotiated All3Media's stake in the new BBC One drama *Partners in Crime*, starring David Walliams and Jessica Raine, in return for distribution rights outside the US. She says Turton is "a brilliant choice" for a tough, challenging role.

Another outside operator adds: "Jane's also nice to deal with, straightforward."

The key to her ascent is that All3Media, composed of 18 smallish companies plus a rights business, operates in a federal manner, which is quite complicated to understand and manage.

As Turton explains, the individual operations are run by "these brilliant people, creative entrepreneurs" – which can also translate into lots of egos and angst.

All3Media includes Lion TV (*Horrible Histories*), Lime Pictures (*Hollyoaks*), Optomen (*Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares*), One Potato Two Potato (a joint venture with Gordon Ramsay), Maverick TV

(*Embarrassing Bodies* and interesting spin-offs), Little Dot Studios (YouTube channels), Objective Productions (entertainment and Derren Brown) and Studio Lambert (*Gogglebox*).

Stephen Lambert is a shining example of how All3Media accommodates and retains top talent. In January, the influential creative and founder of Studio Lambert extended his contract to 2020.

Lambert took the pivotal role of Chair of All3Media's US operations, which has been designated a key growth area. Unusually for the group, All3Media America has a unitary structure to better serve that market.

Turton runs the group from Holborn in London (though she is in the US when needed), with a central team of around 30 executives specialising in finance, human relations, corporate development, legal issues and rights.

Some 43% of the company's close-to-£600m turnover is earned in the

UK. Of the remainder, half (28%) is generated in the US.

So why does Turton think she got the job? Initially, she laughs about how it is hard for a self-deprecating British person to praise themselves. Then, she says: "Strong relationships with the operating companies, sector knowledge and, finally, I'm ambitious. I really want this business to grow."

The months after the appointment proved how fast she could operate once freed from the company's enforced period of inaction. This had been imposed when investor Permira went into sales mode after 2010 in a lengthy four-year search for a buyer.

Now that All3Media has wealthy US owners, she is able to spend and take full advantage of opportunities.

"We can take risks and carry deficits. With capital behind us, we can do bigger, better, challenging things," she enthuses.

In March, Neal Street Productions – which makes *Call the Midwife*, *Penny*

The business brain who rose to the top

Maggie Brown meets All3Media's CEO Jane Turton, who knows the company inside out



All3Media

degree at St Andrews and then worked abroad in the paper industry. Her father had a printing company and she thought she might take over the business.

After five years, she decided she didn't want to spend her life in that sector, so went to Cranfield and did an MBA. That led her to PwC, where she was a consultant for two years.

When Clive Hollick's MAI won the Meridian ITV franchise in 1993, Turton joined his management team. As ITV consolidated, she became Controller of Business Affairs at United Productions and then at LWT as well; and, ultimately, Director of Business Affairs for the whole network, before joining All3Media in 2008 as Director of Business Development and Business Affairs.

Along the way, she married another PwC employee and they have three children, 21, 19 and 16. She has a house in Fife, Scotland, where they holiday, and has inherited her parents' home in Tuscany.

One key to All3Media's success, Turton believes, has been its flexibility in the deals it strikes with its customers, the broadcasters: "You win by being flexible. You have got to be nimble, you must adapt to the environment."

All3Media is very willing, she says, to deficit finance and enter into joint-venture arrangements. "We have a history of being good partners," she insists. "We are very, very driven and commercial. We will do anything to fund things. This is a changing world".

"We would love to make some more programmes for Discovery – that would be cool." But she doesn't have an output deal. Turton says the business link is of particular interest to All3Media's North One factual independent, which is based in Birmingham.

She says she would love to extend the group's geographical spread in Europe beyond Germany and the Netherlands, something that dovetails with both Discovery's and Liberty's ambitions. Inevitably, the US is also on her agenda.

Turton says she is "far from complacent about the challenges" she faces. As we talk, she has the Ofcom report on public service broadcasting in front of her. It charts the 15% drop in investment in new British PSB content between 2008 and 2014.

"I always say that we should be terribly proud of what we do in this country, creating world-beating formats," says Turton. "We are an extraordinary nation. Let's celebrate that."

Dreadful, *The Hollow Crown* and stage hit *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* – was bought for a sum believed to top £40m.

"We loved the programmes, the people, the exceptional talent. The catalogue is fabulous," says Turton.

Founded in 2003 by Pippa Harris, Sam Mendes and Caro Newling, Neal Street also saw in All3Media an alternative to purchase by a US studio.

"We always look at great acquisitions... and start-ups, too," adds Turton. The deal means that she has enhanced the group's high-end drama and film capacity – both eligible for tax breaks.

Since then, Michele Buck, co-founder of *Poldark* producer Mammoth Screen (bought by ITV in June), has joined All3Media to run Company Pictures. Company is off its peak after the flop of BBC One drama *The White Queen* and the departure of its founders.

Turton says: "She's a very classy drama producer and will bring an energy and focus [to the company]."

This is a critical part of Turton's role: refreshing talent in the companies.

"Absolutely, [it is] a constant process," says Turton. She previously worked with Buck at United Productions and ITV between 1998 and 2007.

In another fast move, in April, Turton hired the highly experienced Sara Geater as Chief Operating Officer (her own former role), reinforcing the central team. Geater is a close friend of Turton's and oversaw a major restructuring of FremantleMedia UK as its Chief Executive. She pushed its "label" strategy by setting up genre specialists, such as Euston Films, Boundless and Retort. Her previous posts include Head of Commercial Affairs at Channel 4 and Director of Rights and Business Affairs at the BBC. But the process is never finished. Entertainment producer Objective has recently lost its founders, one of them to ITV Studios.

Turton has never worked in television production. She took a French



Claire Enders

CEO of Enders Analysis

The RTS Campbell Swinton Lecture 2015



16 November

6:00pm for 6:30pm

Venue:

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40 Pacific Quay,
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OUR FRIEND IN THE CAPITAL

As I find my seat among the 150 or more people who have come to Steve Dann's latest Meetup, I know that the evening will be stimulating and, possibly, provocative. Dann, CEO of Amplified Robot, runs regular monthly Meetups, and this one, "AR and VR in medical education", is being held in a lecture theatre at St Bartholomew's Hospital.

London is an exciting place to be, as we live and work through the digital revolution in content creation and distribution.

For one thing, London is home to the Digital Production Partnership, set up (initially by the PSB broadcasters) to support the digitisation of our industry. As it has grown, it has guided broadcasters, production companies and other players through the move to file-based delivery and on to IP distribution and Ultra-HDTV.

But this Meetup is just one of the many in London that look further into the future, to where the global digital revolution is disrupting the very definition of television.

Tonight, we are watching a surgeon operating on a patient, filmed in 360°.

The total immersion provides a unique feeling of presence alongside the operating team. This virtual-reality experience is already being used to train doctors and other medical staff, and there is a genuine sense of the disparate cultures of IT, communications and media merging and bringing expertise from one world into another.

My original guide to Meetups is also here tonight – long-time expert in "contextual technologies" Ken Blakeslee, Chairman of WebMobility Ventures. He certainly knows his way around these events, attending two or three a month. He restricts himself to the few that attract a useful cross-section of technologists, developers, entrepreneurs and investors.

Daunted by the digital disruption of TV? Then check out one of London's regular Meetups, says **Terry Marsh**



Terry Marsh

So, here he is at Dann's Meetup, which is one of his favourites. We agree that the most successful ones are run by leaders who show real knowledge, passion and drive – and offer the best networking opportunities.

At the end of the session I join the queue to get hands-on experience for myself on an Oculus Rift, then we move on to a bar to network further.

At every Meetup it becomes more obvious that what was geekery a while back (drones, virtual reality, augmented reality, the internet of things) is now infiltrating more mainstream areas. Indeed, the rate at which change is happening is accelerating, and I believe that Fear of Missing Out now qualifies as a real industrial disease in media-tech.

Fortunately, these Meetups, which are free, but fill quickly, offer one of the most thought-provoking ways of keeping up with the digital information overload. And there is usually one happening most evenings at different venues across the city. People from all disciplines gather to listen to the latest in "augmenting reality" or "mobile start-up stories" or "big data" or, even, to attend a "data scientist networking gala".

As I write, for example, there is a Meetup on "Programmatic buying technologies reshaping marketing strategies" – who knew that "algorithmic" would become a buzzword in TV!

Shawn DuBravac, Chief Economist at the Consumer Electronics Association, maintains that we are at the beginning of a perfect storm of digital change, with the coalition of computing power, always-on internet, the proliferation of inexpensive consumer products and (his great new portmanteau word) "smartifacts" – smart artifacts with sensors providing data from the "internet of things".

However, it's the consumer products part that is driving content creation right now. The sheer accessibility of these innovative technologies means that, alongside the new tech businesses, the erstwhile consumer or viewer is also a producer (see the wonderful 360° films on the Kolor Eyes app).

So, how *are* virtual reality, the internet of things, big data and mobile start-ups affecting the TV industry?

Already, production companies are being inspired by these technologies to devise innovative formats based on them. Maybe we are just at the beginning of a digital future that will disrupt and permanently change "television" – for the better.

Terry Marsh is Secretary of RTS London, Chair of the RTS Young Technologist of the Year Jury and an independent consultant.

Apprenticeships in television and radio are expanding.
Pippa Shawley hears why on-the-job training makes sense

‘You’re hired!’

When Tony Hall was appointed BBC Director-General, he pledged to widen the corporation’s recruitment net by ensuring that 1% of its public-service workforce were apprentices by 2016.

He reached the target two years ahead of schedule. By the end of 2014, 177 apprentices were employed across the UK in departments ranging from local radio to business management.

BBC apprenticeships last between 12 months and three years. Participants on the production scheme undertake placements on programmes in addition to training with the BBC Academy.

Those on the three-year engineering scheme work towards a degree in broadcast engineering, taught jointly by the University of Salford and Birmingham City University, while gaining industrial experience.

“Apprenticeships are a great way for us to connect with young people who might never have considered applying for a job at the BBC,” says Claire Paul, the BBC Academy’s Head of New Talent.

At Sky, training for creative and digital media and for customer service lasts one year. The broadcaster has schemes in other areas, including journalism, operations and finance, which last two years.

All placements at ITV and Channel 4 last one year. Channel 4 changes its slate of apprenticeships each year in response to demand. Candidates know from the outset, however, that they will not necessarily be offered a permanent job at the end of their course.

In contrast, Sky apprentices start on a permanent contract “so that they’re guaranteed employment right from day one,” explains Martha Jennings, Sky’s Starting Out Manager.

With the *Creative Media Workforce Survey 2014* revealing that 72% of those working in TV are educated to degree level, apprenticeships are seen as a good way to discover young talent from beyond the graduate pool.

While it’s still early days for the BBC apprenticeships, according to Paul, all of last year’s production apprentices successfully competed with graduates to secure jobs in the industry.

In the past, TV apprenticeships have suffered from a notion that they do not carry the same clout as degrees. However, with broadcasters offering an increasingly wide range of apprenticeships – many of them leading to degree-level qualifications – the tide is turning.

Laura Boswell, 4Talent Industry Talent Specialist at Channel 4, has found that apprenticeships attract young people who are very career-driven: “They want to be creative and practical, and have a tangible purpose to be working towards, so they feel that the education setting doesn’t fit their skill set.”

Apprenticeships represent a practical choice for school leavers, believes Paul. She points to other countries to illustrate the potential of apprenticeship schemes: “In Germany, an apprenticeship is not something you do because you can’t afford higher education or because you aren’t smart enough for

university. It’s a genuine choice about what’s best for the individual.”

Last year, the BBC received around 4,500 applications for 46 places on its Local Apprenticeship Scheme.

In response to this demand, both the BBC and ITV plan to expand the number of places available.

Business, administration and technology are the dominant areas employing apprentices in broadcasting, though production is making a growing contribution.

With 48% of the creative workforce having undertaken unpaid work at some point in their career, this opportunity to gain experience while being paid is something that today’s school leavers are not taking for granted.

“There is absolutely no way that I would have been able to work in the broadcasting industry without this apprenticeship,” says Robby West, a local apprentice with BBC Radio Essex.

After leaving school, West trained as an electrician, working in building maintenance, but it wasn’t a good fit.

When he saw an advert for the BBC Local Apprenticeship Scheme on Twitter, he says, “I knew that second that I had to apply”.

Local apprentices such as West are based at one of 45 local radio stations across the UK and the Channel Islands. They work for 15 months towards an NCTJ-accredited Level 3 Diploma in Journalism, and receive their training from the BBC Academy and City of Wolverhampton College.

Before embarking on the apprenticeship, West struggled to gain work experience in the industry, despite spending his spare time blogging about local politics in Essex.

“For years leading up to this scheme, I applied for various work experience roles in the BBC, ITV and Channel 4,” he recalls. “As I didn’t know anyone in this

AS I DIDN'T
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Big Creative Education offers London based media training courses and apprenticeships

BCE

field, and had no real training in the media, I never even got an interview.”

West has been offered a contract with BBC Essex as a broadcast journalist once he completes his apprenticeship.

This chance to earn while learning is a draw for candidates concerned that going to university is too expensive.

Although the National Minimum Wage for apprentices will rise by 57p to £3.30 per hour in October, broadcasting apprenticeship salaries vary tremendously. ITV apprentices on a 12-month contract are paid £8,000, which rises to £10,000 for those working in London; Channel 4 apprentices earn twice as much, receiving £16,000.

The BBC’s engineering apprentices get a training allowance of £11,500 per year while studying for a BEng, with their tuition fees picked up by their employer.

“It’s definitely nice not to be living on a student budget like some of my friends are,” says Carys Blackburn.

She applied for a degree in media culture and production, but then chose to embark on a technology apprenticeship in broadcast services at Sky. This allowed her to gain work experience while earning.

As Sky’s Jennings highlights, investing in apprentices means investing in

the future talent of the business. “In order for a young person to join our business and hit the ground running, they need to have confidence in their ability to face the challenges of a bustling work environment,” she says.

The benefits of this are twofold, she continues: “[The apprentices] are learning how we do things here at Sky, and are able to bring a fresh pair of eyes to our work. We know that a diverse and broad workforce helps to ensure the best service for our customers.”

Paul takes a stronger view, arguing that apprentices are vital to the future of broadcasting: “Our industry lives and dies by its creativity and cutting-edge innovation, so it’s hard to envisage a time when we won’t need a constant supply of great new talent.”

Fifteen per cent of the television workforce attended private school, compared with 7% of the overall UK population, and the sector has long been criticised for its domination by Oxbridge graduates.

Apprenticeships have gone some way to redressing the balance, not least because most employers offering them insist that candidates must not hold a qualification higher than A levels or the equivalent.

Thanks largely to a collaboration with

the Stephen Lawrence Trust, 47% of the BBC’s current production apprentices are from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds. Many of those on other schemes come from homes where their parents did not go to university.

“This is a huge cultural shift for an industry dominated by Russell Group alumni,” says Paul. Her team is increasingly supported by Jobcentres around the UK. These help the BBC to talent spot high-potential candidates whom it would otherwise miss.

Speaking to both recruiters and employees, it’s clear that apprenticeship schemes are popular across the board. Despite the minor problems that are inevitable when hiring people who haven’t worked before, or who are used to working only with colleagues from a similar background, the overwhelming impression is of great excitement.

“I think some people don’t realise how easy it is to take on apprentices,” reckons Channel 4’s Boswell, “and that there’s funding in place to pay for the academic side.”

Paul agrees that more companies should consider hiring apprentices. She suggests that, without apprenticeships, “it is unlikely that this exciting talent would ever have considered a job in the media.”

The age of disruption

Adrian Pennington looks at the big technology trends that will dominate September's International Broadcasting Convention



Curved screen display at CES 2015

Panasonic

September's International Broadcasting Convention (IBC) will mark the transition from hype to reality for a wide range of transformative new technologies. Attendees of the week-long broadcasting conference and exhibition in Amsterdam will be able to assess the growing impact of Ultra-HDTV, big data and Cloud computing.

It is no coincidence that IBC has themed its entire conference as "The future of media in an age of disruption".

The hardware to make programmes in the 4K version of Ultra-HDTV is now available, albeit at a hefty price. In the US, DirecTV has announced that it will follow Netflix into making Ultra-HDTV shows for the video-on-demand market. In the UK, BT TV has unveiled BT Sport Ultra HD, the first 4K channel in Europe.

Live 4K production became a practical possibility even more recently, with the arrival of cameras that can slot into existing outside broadcast workflows and use standard zoom lenses. All the main manufacturers – FOR-A, Grass Valley, Panasonic and Sony – have

announced suitable models in the course of this year, with BT selecting the Sony version to shoot its live Ultra-HD work.

One element of the traditional camera chain that is still missing in 4K is live coverage from wireless cameras. Existing 4K transmitters are simply too bulky to be mounted on a hand-held camera and the video signal latency (the delay while the signal is processed) is still too great to sync reliably with audio.

But that will change, as it did with HDTV, which suffered the same difficulties in its infancy, and possibly as soon as IBC.

With Futuresource Consulting predicting that 20% of UK homes will have a 4K-capable TV by 2018, a business case can be made for offering 4K content, if only to reduce churn among pay-TV subscribers (see box on page 28).

Having made big inroads into media archiving and distribution, Cloud computing is now pushing into non-live TV production. Cloud workflows rely on transporting video as packets of data over internet protocol (IP) networks (see box on page 28).

The ability to repurpose and deliver content to multiple screens more efficiently than with the bespoke equipment and tape-based workflows of old has been embraced on an enterprise-wide scale at Italy's RAI, France's Canal+ and Disney/ABC. All three companies will share their experiences in conference sessions at IBC.

The last step is live production. No longer an experiment, this is the most fundamental technical change to sweep broadcast in decades. Expect the first IP live production technology to be available to buy on the IBC exhibition floor (see box on page 27).

Big data is another buzz phrase that has been translated into genuine TV currency. The traditional, pre-sold, 30-second spot advert is under threat from real-time, automated ad trading based on big data about viewers.

Channel 4, one of the first broadcasters to introduce programmatic advertising, will share its experience at the IBC conference. Twitter will talk about how social media can trigger content discovery to create a new personalised programme guide.

One technology whose transfor- ➤

Production Sports producers look for their 10%



Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics

The value of sport in driving pay-TV businesses is evident in the recent deals struck by BT Sport, which landed Champions League soccer from this season, and Discovery, which gained exclusive rights to the Olympics in Europe from 2022.

Both will feature prominently at IBC, with President of Discovery Networks

International JB Perrette and Delia Bushell, Managing Director of BT TV and BT Sport, giving timely keynotes.

'[Although] 90% of the technology we use is standard issue and established,' says James Abraham, Director of Digital Strategy at Sunset+Vine Digital, 'it's how you weave in that 10% that makes the difference.'

His company broadcasts the Henley Royal Regatta using rugged, lightweight GoPro cameras on rowing boats and on drones over the Thames.

'There's always a lot of new stuff, but the tricky bit is deciding what to use and where to use it in an editorially relevant way,' adds Abraham.

Gadgets aside, most of the innovation

has been in the way in which live sports are presented digitally. Since London 2012, it is clear that the trend is for international sports events such as the Olympics to be consumed less on free-to-air, linear TV than on streams to mobiles, where viewers can pick and choose content, including camera angles, of their choice.

Sports programming that is distributed over the open internet is characterised as an OTT (over the top) service.

The production and packaging of sports offerings such as YouTube channel Copa90 and Whistle Sports (part-owned by Sky) will be discussed at IBC by executives from Major League Baseball and digital consultancy Seven League.

Data More Cloud on the horizon

Cloud computing is beginning to make significant inroads into certain genres of television production.

Two genres that particularly benefit from off-site, scalable computing resources and data storage are news reporting and observational documentaries.

The production workflows that make best use of the Cloud are characterised by the sifting of large amounts of footage to build storylines and the need to get on air fast.

Manufacturer LiveU targets the news gathering market. The specialist in IP-based, live video services is continuing to construct its Cloud network for hosting video captured by roving news crews on wireless cameras.

Panasonic camcorders offer a live video uplink to LiveU's Cloud platform, the same platform used by Sky in May to live stream 150 feeds on election night in the UK.

Forscene and Aframe are among the vendors renting Cloud-based editing and



review services to programme-makers. At IBC, film-maker Paul Kittel will explain how he transferred footage direct from camera into the Cloud and whittled down thousands of hours for Channel 4's *Born Naughty?* series.

Shooting Drones get their own aviary

One of the most dramatic innovations to enter the mainstream over the past year is the drone. Affordable and (relatively) easily controlled miniature flying machines, coupled with a new breed of small HDTV and Ultra-HDTV cameras, have created a new tool that can capture stunning aerial viewpoints.

But a drone sitting on an exhibition stand isn't that exciting, so IBC visitors will be able to see them in action in the Drop Zone, a 'large outdoor flying cage'.

'Imagine console-type camera angles,



Aerigon drone

such as tracking overhead coverage of a football match or following a golf ball as the golfer hits it,' suggests Jon Hurndall,

co-founder of drone operator Batcam. Fox Sports used drones to cover the US Open golf for the first time this June.

Operators are also testing the practicality of carrying heavier, high-speed cameras, such as the Panasonic Varicam 4K or Phantom Flex4K, for super-slow-motion shots.

'Drones are opening up new sports, such as mountain biking or surfing, which TV has not been able to cover before [as easily],' says Jeremy Braben, owner of Helicopter Film Services.

IP communication Signal problems cause delay



■ The migration to Ultra-HDTV production is intimately linked to the IP (internet protocol) communications standard that is ubiquitous in the IT industry.

IP is less reliable than the broadcasting industry's existing connectivity standard, SDI (serial digital interface).

However, a single SDI cable cannot handle the volume of data required by Ultra-HDTV, which, in its 4K incarnation, is at least four times greater than that used in HDTV.

Transporting this data along a single

gigabit ethernet cable using IP is a lot more efficient than routing it through four parallel SDI cables.

The trouble with IP in a live television environment boils down to timing. With SDI, engineers can guarantee that video emanating from one source (a camera, say) will arrive in sync at a particular end point, such as a vision mixer. This cannot be said about IP with the same degree of assurance.

'It is much more difficult to see what's going on in IP,' says Tim Felstead, Head of Product Marketing at Quantel Snell. 'Where SDI routers were very reliable, IP systems are more opaque. This creates risk and a lack of confidence.'

The cost advantages of IP are not limited to the price of cabling. Instead of ripping out and replacing equipment every time there's a demand for new formats, an IP infrastructure can scale to accommodate leaps in frame rate

or resolution, to Ultra-HDTV 8K and to anything beyond or in between.

Another cost saving is live, remote production. At IBC, equipment service provider Gearhouse Broadcast will be demonstrating this by sending HD footage down a single 10Gb ethernet connection and editing the pictures on an IP-enabled switcher from EVS.

'We're increasingly being asked about remote production by customers,' says Ed Tischler, Gearhouse's Head of Projects. 'It's still very early days, but new technology means that we're now in a position to offer remote production as a workable solution.'

Since live production is subject to on-the-fly changes to complex material – a late-breaking news story that includes a satellite link, for instance – it could be the best part of a decade before risk-averse broadcasters consign SDI to history.

Ultra-HDTV The pipeline starts to fill

Even before the first generation of Ultra-HDTV – 4K – has had its problems ironed out, equipment for the next generation is on its way.

Ultra-HDTV 8K – offering 16 times the resolution of HD – cameras and post-production equipment are being pushed by vendors such as Ikegami and Quantel. They have one eye on feature film production and the other on the Japanese domestic market.

Japanese broadcaster NHK is committed to adding 8K transmission by 2018, and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games will be covered in both Ultra-HD 4K and 8K.

One of the bodies shaping the development of Ultra-HDTV is the Ultra-HD Forum, an alliance of manufacturers that includes Dolby, Ericsson, LG and Sony.

'Ultra-HDTV is now entering a phase where content, technology and consumer experience have to be aligned,' says the forum's President, Thierry Fautier.

The forum is establishing guidelines for the implementation of a broad range of new Ultra-HD technologies.

Abbreviations that we can expect to see stickered on consumer kit in the near future include WCG (wide colour gamut), HDR (high dynamic range), HFR



Ikegami SHK-810 4K/8K camera

(high frame rate) and NGA (next generation audio).

An indication of the importance of HDR is that IBC has awarded its 2015 Conference Prize to a paper from two BBC R&D staffers, Andrew Cotton and Tim Borer, for their report, 'A display-independent, high-dynamic-range television system'.

► formative potential remains the stuff of speculation, with only conflicting guestimates as to its likely commercial impact, is virtual reality (VR).

Even so, the format's promise has caught the imagination, and IBC is reflecting this with a series of technology exhibits in its Future Zone, on the exhibition floor, and in the conference. For the latter, the focus is very much on VR – and its sibling, augmented reality – as a new creative storytelling medium.

There's no doubt that VR content is sufficiently different to conventional programmes for it to be labelled a disruptive technology.

So, too, is the "internet of things", the machine-to-machine communications network that is just beginning to seep into broadcasters' business plans. For example, video content streamed to a home could be modified in response to data received from web-connected health and lifestyle-related gadgets in that building.

IBC will look at the threat to traditional broadcasters from content distributed by the likes of Netflix, YouTube and Amazon over the open internet as an OTT (over-the-top) service. One conference session poses the question, "Is video-on-demand the new broadcasting gold?"

Another session asks: "Is OTT simply broadcast rebooted?" The rhetoric behind these is clear. Over-the-top video could simply be broadcasting as we know it from now on.

BBC drama tops Yorkshire Awards

Leading indie Red Production Company was the night's big winner at the Yorkshire Centre Awards, which were held at the Royal Armouries in Leeds towards the end of June.

Red's hard-hitting police drama *Happy Valley* picked up a clutch of prizes.

The six-part series, which aired on BBC One last year to critical acclaim and strong audiences, won the awards for Filmed in Yorkshire, Writer (for Sally Wainwright), On-Screen Performance (Sarah Lancashire) and Drama.

The long-serving anchor of BBC One regional news programme *Look North*, Harry Gration, and the Channel 4 daytime show *Countdown* were both honoured with RTS Yorkshire Centre Awards.

The evening was hosted by Nick Hewer, the current host of *Countdown*, which has

clocked up more than 30 years on C4.

"Once again, the awards reflect just how much skill and talent there is in this region. And, given the quality as well as the quantity of the entries, it's no surprise that Yorkshire productions across all genres continue to have such a significant impact regionally, nationally and internationally," said Yorkshire Centre Chair Mike Best.

Emma Glasbey from *Look North* was named Outstanding Journalist. ITV regional show *Calendar* picked up the News Programme award for its coverage of the sentencing of Will Cornick, the schoolboy convicted of murdering his teacher Ann Maguire. *Calendar's* Vidhi Doshi was named One To Watch.

The Miners' Strike and Me, made by Shiver for ITV, won the Factual Programme prize. The Leeds-based



Harry Gration (right) receives his award from Nick Hewer

Paul Harness Photography

factual entertainment specialist also took the Independent Spirit award.

The Factual Series winner was *Junior Vets* (True North Productions for CBBC).

The award for Promotion or Commercial Production went to Roger Keech Productions for *When the Tour de France Came to Yorkshire*.

Children of the Holocaust (Fettle Animation for BBC Learning) took both the Animation and Visual Effects

and the Made in Yorkshire awards.

Rocket won the Second Screen Award for the website of C4's *Embarrassing Bodies: Live from the Clinic*.

The Yorkshire Centre made craft awards to lighting cameraman John Anderson, *Look North's* Alistair Candelin (Professional Excellence: Production) and True North Post (Professional Excellence: Post-Production).

Matthew Bell



Skypower drone in flight

Thames Valley hosted a display of drone technology in July at Pincents Manor, featuring daring fly-past stunts from Skypower's Russell Cleaver, who guided a drone to hover in front of, and then fly towards, a setting sun.

Thames Valley's daredevil drone

Aerial-filming specialist Skypower provided a wire-cam system, typically used above sports stadia, and two drones for the display, although the larger, six-rotor Hexacopter proved too difficult to handle in the wind.

The lightweight, four-rotor Quadcopter was launched and reached a height of more than 100m. Cleaver and Neil Willis operated the drone; one piloted the craft while the other operated the 4K camera mounted on a gimbal.

The drone proved its stability in the gusty wind and, with the help of GPS, was able to return home automatically and land almost exactly where it took off.

Cleaver flew the drone out to its 500-metre limit and then back directly towards the Centre members at a speed approaching 90kph. He also performed a pirouette with the drone, completing a circuit of the field while spinning on its axis.

An unmanned airborne

command-and-control vehicle, one of a pair designed and custom-built for the University of Southampton by Broadcast Networks, was brought to the display by the company's Ian Davis, Phil Keeling and Tom Haye.

The vehicle provides command-and-control facilities for a range of international airborne research missions, including pollution monitoring, weather prediction and civil aviation.

Julian Knight and Geoff Love

Midlands boosts kids' TV skills

Wednesfield High School was declared the winner at the grand finale of Midlands Centre's schools challenge, during a ceremony hosted by the BBC at its Birmingham headquarters in June.

Ten schools were represented, and the prize for the winning team, which was awarded by BBC *Midlands Today* presenter Nick Owen, was a VIP tour of BBC Birmingham.

"BBC West Midlands was delighted to be involved in the schools challenge," said David Jennings Head of Regional and Local Programmes for the West Midlands, who was one of the judges. "Members of our teams gave their time willingly to visit the participating schools, and there was a terrific buzz around our Birmingham HQ when 80 youngsters joined us for the finale."

The competition was part of a wider secondary school



Midlands Today presenter Nick Owen

BBC

education programme, now in its second year, run by the RTS centre.

From March to June this year, it organised a series of workshops for year 8 and 9 students at schools across the West Midlands, offering an insight into the TV industry.

The four-hour workshops

explored TV jobs and, at each one, professionals, including an employee from BBC Birmingham – which worked closely with Midlands Centre on the project – offered their take on the industry.

The workshops also sought to provide students with skills in preparation for

work. There is a widespread belief that UK school leavers often lack the right skills to make them "employable".

At the end of each workshop, students were given a certificate of achievement, listing the skills they had developed, such as confidence, communication and leadership.

Some 880 students from 10 schools took part in this year's programme. They found the workshops "fun and stimulating", and many said they gave them a better understanding of the television industry.

Teachers, too, were appreciative of the RTS centre's efforts. "Your approach was just right for our students and it was great to see them motivated, buzzing with ideas and totally engaged for the entire day," said Rosie Moss, Assistant Principal of Baxter College. "The input from the professionals really struck a chord with students."

Matthew Bell

ONLINE at the RTS

■ The RTS has comprehensively rebuilt its website and extended its online services – with more to come soon.

This is not simply a redesign of the Society's online showcase for its wide-ranging activities. A big priority was to offer a valuable resource for people starting out on their television careers.

Cue a brand-new Education and Training section (rts.org.uk/education-training). From putting together your CV for that first runner's job to tips on how to pitch to commissioners, there is a no shortage of helpful information, with more to appear in the

months to come. There are also videos with tips from Sky Academy, 4Talent and the BBC Academy, and details of our technology and production bursaries.

In addition, we've written about our marvellous Patrons, with a section devoted to their news and videos (rts.org.uk/patrons).

Plus, there's a new series of guest posts, offering unique insight from industry game-changers, such as this one from Fujitsu's Haydn Jones – j.mp/rtsquest.

Under the bonnet, we've been working hard on our new, web-based awards

system: entries for all our awards are now submitted and judged online. We kicked this off in July with a call for entries to the RTS Student Television Awards, and the first videos have already been submitted.

And what else is hot? Video Producer Rebecca Stewart took a trip to Elstree to film backstage at the riotous Sky 1 show *A League of Their Own*: j.mp/RTSaloto

The site is now much more user-friendly and accessible, and we hope it will widen the reach of the RTS beyond our current members to "anyone interested in television".

CORRECTION

In last month's interview of Paul Reveley by Donald F McLean, we inadvertently introduced an error. It was wrongly stated that the scanning machines of the Baird-designed colour projection television system rotated at 17,500rpm. This was incorrect and we apologise to Donald F McLean for any embarrassment this may have caused.

But it is also a work in progress, so I would love to hear your comments and suggestions, either by email at tdickens@rts.org.uk or Twitter: [@tim_dickens](https://twitter.com/tim_dickens).



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