**Contextual Studies**

Task 3. Write A summary review on Media industries addressing the issues facing 21st Century Broadcasting and demonstrating your understanding of the institutional context of creative media production and its influence on production.

**THE TELEVISION AND VIDEO INDUSTRY IN THE UK.**

British broadcasting is made up of an array of services but can be broken down into 3 key sectors:

* Public funded broadcasting financed by the licence fee – BBC
* Privately funded broadcasting driven mainly by advertising – ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5
* Pay to View services – Subscription services provided by SKY, BT and Virgin

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) is publicly funded by the TV Licence Fee. Established in 1922, it provides a free broadcasting service over a number of mediums including terrestrial, satellite and internet streaming. Notably services are free of advertising breaks and include many public interest programmes such as world and local news, lifestyle, education and entertainment programmes as well as Arts features. The mission of BBC is “To enrich people’s lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain.”

Privately funded broadcasting services commenced operating in 1955 following the Television Act of 1954 which allowed regional enterprises to be licenced to broadcast in their areas. New small broadcasters were established and delivery was partly funded by government grant and partly by advertising. These regional services have merged over the years and through these mergers and growth within the media sector are now strong players in the broadcasting field. The businesses are driven by advertising revenue; they need to attract sufficient audiences to ensure the advertising slots they sell are value for money to the business sector. Therefore the majority of the programmes shown are entertainment shows and soap operas are a major feature of their style. The government licence however acts as a control and the operator must follow specific guideline regarding ethical behaviour and ensure corporate responsibility.

Sky launched in 1989 a new revolution in broadcasting in the UK. A 4 channel pay-to-view service launched by media giant Rupert Murdock’s News International. After a few years of uncertainty and change the new service began to grow and now offers services to 20 million customers in 5 countries across Europe. Sky has been joined by rivals Virgin and BT providing subscription based TV services. These channels are costly and focus on providing access to sports and movie services which may be limited on other networks. The channels also generate extensive incomes from advertising and business services. This is a fast growing broadcasting service and is hugely competitive.

The development of broadcasting in the UK has led in turn to a vast expansion of the creative media industry. In 2013, 2.62 million people worked in creative media in the UK. This figure is growing at a rate of 2.6% annually across film, television, radio, fashion, animation, games, visual effects, textiles, publishing, advertising and marketing communications. New business opportunities to feed the demands of the growing broadcasting networks and the extension of services from traditional terrestrial broadcasting to satellite networks and most recently online as the development of fast broadband continues and internet and gaming services grow.

The UK broadcasting network of services has never been more competitive than it is now. On the one hand, the BBC wants to be able to develop their services without the restrictions of the licence fee agreement which drives their no advertising policy. They are increasingly find ways to generate income, programmes and programme formats are sold to other networks abroad. It is not uncommon to find a BBC documentary being broadcast in America or even in Australia. The format used for popular shows like “Strictly Come Dancing” has been sold to networks abroad and is being duplicated across the globe. Books, DVD boxsets and all sorts of promotional material sales are important income streams. Collaborations with business on research and development projects is seen as one important aspect of the service provision and a freedom from being a slave to meeting the needs advertising customers is a unique privilege in a world so consumed by driving sales of goods and services. But who noticed the nice “North Face” coats being sported by the presenters on the Countryfile programme recently? Is product placement really not just clever advertising and never mind good outdoor clothing, no kitchen in now complete without a fancy coloured mixer and a big American fridge!

The competition moves to a new level as soon as you mention SPORT! Big pay to view deals in Football, Formula One and other popular sports are increasingly controversial. Many people consider paying premium rates to watch football games which have been available on the free terrestrial channels for many years totally unreasonable. They are restricting access to games and making it difficult for those unable to afford the fees to enjoy these sports. The question is, is the income generated by these deals improving the services being delivered to the customers or are they simply driving the salaries of the footballers and those who run these sports.

Media in the home has moved from simply newspaper, radio and TV provision to an online environment where everything is available on demand 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. We are encouraged to absorb more and more material. For instance a new series of a popular drama was released by the online streaming provider NETFLIX and hundreds of thousands of viewers watched the full series the day it was released. We are becoming more and more consumed by the media, the time we spend on these activities is increasing and evidence shows an increasing rate of unhealthy lifestyle choices which is have an adverse effect on both our physical and mental health.

There are also responsibilities by broadcasting providers to provide safe and accessible products. They must protect users from unsuitable content particularly risks such as child abuse and managing adult content. They must also ensure accessibility for those with disabilities. Environmental targets and commitments are being promoted and media companies are encouraged to commit to reducing their adverse environmental impact and improve use of sustainable products. That’s as well as protecting their users by safeguarding their personal and payment data.

Headline like this make us ever more aware how vulnerable we are in this new media generation:

***“Samsung SmartTV customers warned personal conversations may be recorded***

***Voice recognition software could transmit 'personal or sensitive' information”***

***www.telegraph.co.uk 09/02/2015***

Sources:

<http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk> <http://en.wikipedia.org>

<https://corporate.sky.com> <https://www.bbc.com>

<http://www.itv.com/>