The Digital Britain Report

Global ICT Summit Tokyo June 2009
Background

- Communications policy traditionally spread between Ministries
- Convergence makes us look at the ICT sector as a whole: £52bn annual turnover and a vital enabler for the UK economy
- Lord Carter is the first UK Minister to deal with the whole sector
- The Digital Britain Report is his strategy for the sector
- This presentation is intended to show the breadth of the vision
The prize

• 2012 London Olympics will make this an iconic year. We aim for:
  – Upgraded wired, wireless and broadcast networks
  – The right framework for investment in content
  – Diverse sources of valued UK content for UK users
  – Fairness, access and universality
  – Network and user capability to allow efficient digital public service delivery,
• The economic downturn makes action more urgent: declining financial services, property and manufacturing highlight the importance of growth sectors
• TMT sector is a traditional area of UK strength but facing real current problems and obstacles, inc spectrum inflexibility, advertising inventory re-pricing, reduction in broadband investment, and stalling online participation/take-up.
Digital Britain Report - process

- Steering Board established including Byron (Internet safety), Caio (next generation broadband) Gowers (intellectual property) and Cox (radio) to provide expert input
- Close contact with stakeholders across broadcasting, internet and communications sectors and beyond
- Interim report set out 22 actions
- Outputs a combination of vision, regulatory and other interventions, possible legislation and longer term aspirations
1. Universal connectivity

- Countries in Europe and beyond are recognising the need for inclusion and reach for their digital technologies, and are promising broadband for all.
- We have a good record and broadband availability is in the high 90s – but speeds are variable and some can still get nothing at all.
- UK needs to respond so that all can benefit from the digital economy and from effective delivery of public services online.
- 2 Mbps universality commitment
2. Spectrum

- **Spectrum**: UK a trailblazer, but we need to get liberalisation moving to secure new services and universal coverage
- Liberalisation agenda under some strain: need careful policy decisions around 800 MHz and 2600 MHz
- We proposed a spectrum modernisation period:
  - Aim of realigning existing holdings, change use of existing spectrum and start the move to next generation services
  - Ensuring more spectrum for next generation mobile services
  - Considering moving to indefinite licences
  - Considering more network sharing
2. Digital Networks (cont)

- **High speed broadband**: BT has announced a £1.5 Bn investment in FTTC and FTTH. Virgin Media has already implemented a 50 Mbps network based on DOCSIS 3 available to 45% of homes.
- Will be looking at Ofcom’s powers to ensure that they must consider encouraging investment alongside consumer interest and promoting competition.
- **Digital TV switchover**: We will switch all analogue TV transmitters off by 2012 and see how we can exploit this programme to raise awareness of what broadband can do.
- **Digital Radio**: Digital migration plan
  - likely to compete by the end of 2015
3. Economics of Digital Content

- UK has a strong content production sector. But this is under threat from peer to peer file sharing. One way is to establish better ways of **protecting rights**. Building on the work to date, we propose
  - Encouraging industry to educate consumers on the importance of respecting copyright
  - Encouraging industry to establish legitimate and legal business models for accessing content online
  - Legislations requiring ISPs to notify alleged infringers that their conduct is unlawful, with the requiring technical measures if the notification a successful.
4. Public Purposes

• Additional steps are needed to safeguard elements of content we value but without further intervention will be left to the BBC alone. Several types of content are under threat but our first priority is local, regional and national news

• We need to move towards creation of sustainable structures for delivery of Public Service Broadcasting. Channel 4’s role vital but the advertising-funded PSB model is in decline
5. Universality and participation

• Making the most of Digital Britain needs a step change in skills, both for professionals and the wider public. We propose:
  – Developing firm recommendations on how to make ICT jobs attractive, ensure the national curriculum is suitable and train the existing workforce sufficiently in ICT skills
• We also need to raise our game on media literacy and online safeguards. We propose:
  – Bringing public authorities and industry together to deliver a step change in digital participation
  – Bringing forward detailed proposals on online standards, providing protection for children, empowerment for parents and informed consent for adults.
Next Steps

- Final Report published 16 June 2009
- Implementation projects and legislation if necessary following on through 2009