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Thoughts on the "Specificities of Public Service Broadcasting" Today and Tomorrow

Presented at the FORO 50, Madrid Spain

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The Right Places during Interesting Times…

Forrester Research , a technology analyst firm in London during the dotcom crash

BBC in London during the launch of Freeview, the Hutton Inquiry, the departure of Greg Dyke

Joining a cultural industries consultancy during the first Conservative government in twelve years.

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The Nasdaq

New technologies cause a lot of hype – but often, change comes about by evolution not revolution

The purpose of public broadcasting remains ever important – but also under attack

Competing priorities will continue to threaten the funding for public service broadcasting

3

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So what will **technological evolution**, **an enduring purpose**, and **constrained budgets** mean for the future of public service broadcasters (psbs)?

➢ Current PSB strategies to deliver their purposes will continue for some time while we straddle the multi-channel and on-demand eras;

➢ But when the on-demand age truly dawns, PSBs may need to take on new forms, different strategies and types of content;

➢ PSBs must start considering their future form *now* to maintain relevance and hence funding.

The U.K. and Canadian PSBs Compared

	BBC	**CBC Radio-Canada**
Purpose	**"Build Public Value"** ➢ *Democratic* ➢ *Cultural and creative* ➢ *Educational* ➢ *Social and community* ➢ *Global value*	**English Canada:** Distinctive Canadian programming. **French Canada** : High quality programming for French Canada, a small market.
Measures	**R**each **Q**uality **I**mpact **V**alue for Programming	Reach Ratings Public opinion regarding quality
Funding	Licence fee and sales Revenue	Government funding, advertising.
Share of Viewing	35%	8%
The Future?	The licence fee to be reviewed in 5 yrs	A review of its licence pending

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Despite the Differences, as PSBs They Share Commonalities:

The Challenge:

- To be public, programming must reach a significant proportion of the population;

- To provide value, programming must be distinct from what is provided by the market.

- To be public service broadcasters psb's need to chase ratings, but should try not to chase ratings in their program choices

The Response:

- They both adopt similar strategies to work within this paradox.

Hammocking – or Audience Building – with Popular Programming
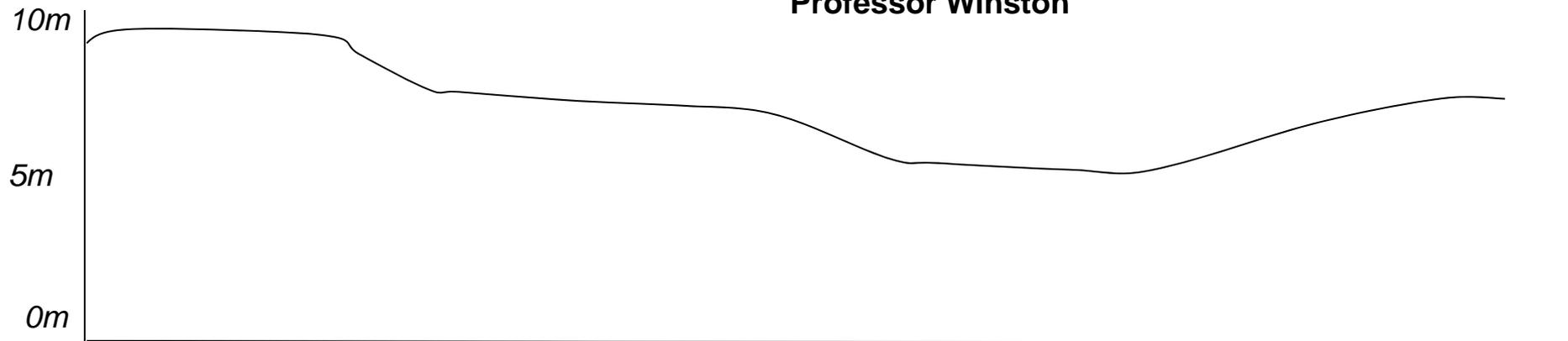
BBC 1 Peak Time Schedule, November 14 2006

7:30 PM: *EastEnders,* **Soap**

8:00 PM *Holby City,* **Soap**

9:00 PM *A Child Against All Odds,* **Science, with Professor Winston**
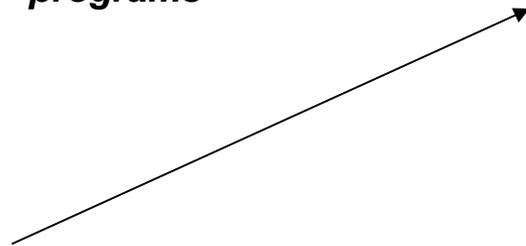
10 pm news

Estimated Audience

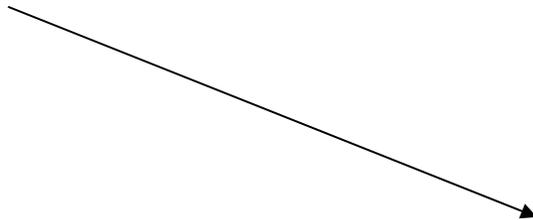# Cross-Promoting within Popular Programming

The CBC receives its highest ratings through airing national hockey games

And uses this opportunity to cross-promote other programs

Current Affairs

Canadian Drama

Hybrid Programming

CBC Current Affairs

Popular comedian

Rock Stars

The Nobel Peace Prize Winner

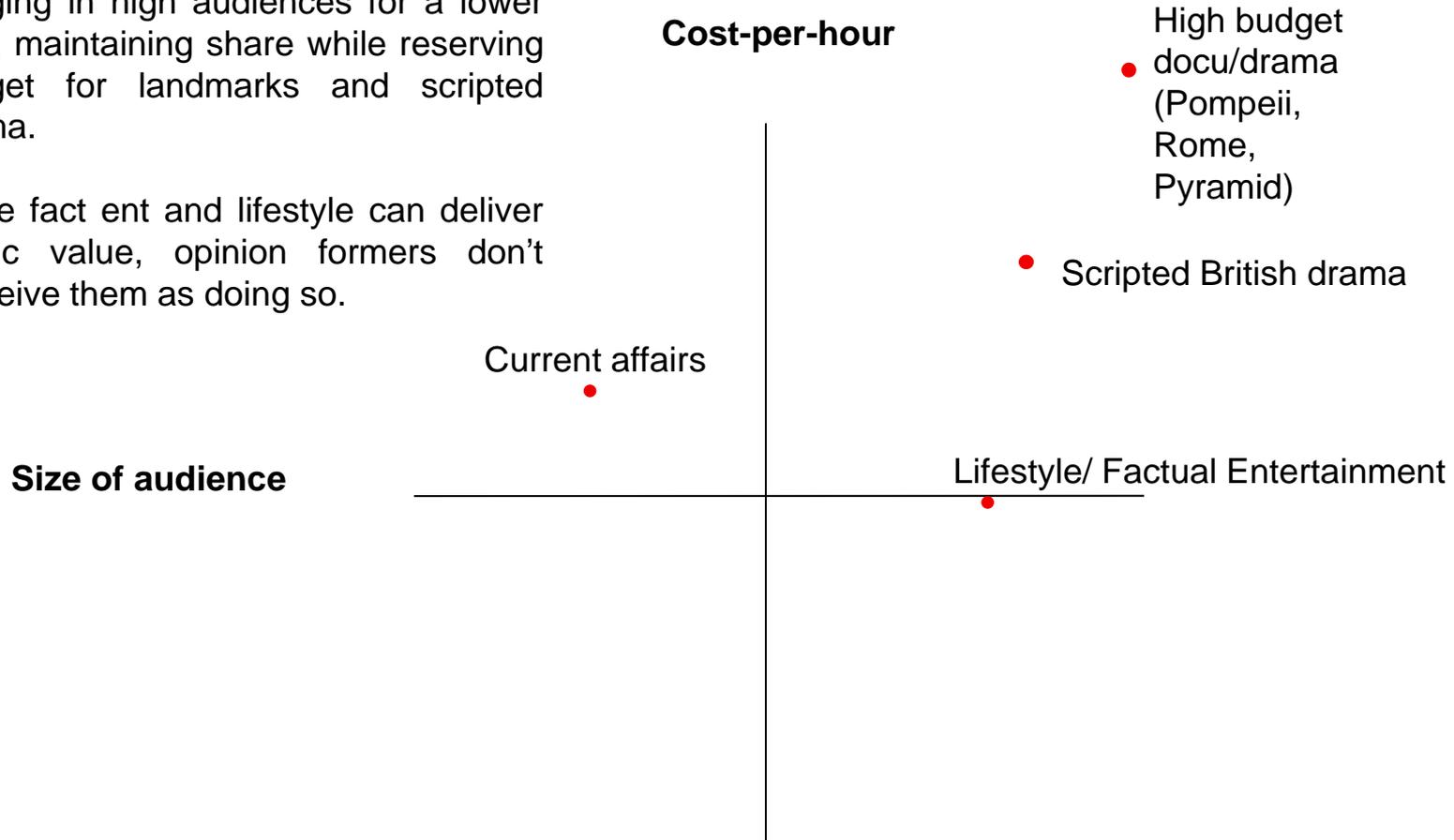**BBC Specialist Factual**

Drama with violence and sex

History lesson

The Portfolio Approach – Low Budget and High Budget

Factual Entertainment and Lifestyle programming play an important role in bringing in high audiences for a lower cost, maintaining share while reserving budget for landmarks and scripted drama.

While fact ent and lifestyle can deliver public value, opinion formers don't perceive them as doing so.

Cost-per-hour

High budget docu/drama (Pompeii, Rome, Pyramid)

Scripted British drama

Current affairs

Size of audience

Lifestyle/ Factual Entertainment

NB: placements on the graph are indicative only – obviously the placement differs by particular programs

BBC and CBC are Both Challenged by Uncertainty in a New Era

Phase 1	*Phase 2*	*Phase 3*
Spectrum Scarcity	*Multichannel*	*On-demand*

Lack of choice helps psb viewing.

New strategies needed to win audiences and deliver public value.

PSB takes on new forms?

The Opportunities and Challenges of On-Demand

- In this on-demand world, what will they look like as PSBs?

- How will they deliver their purpose?

- And what will strategies will it need to undertake to deliver against this purpose?

A Facilitator and Aggregator of the Local Long-Tail

A PSB portal, highlighting the best of user-generated content and locally produced content available on-demand, online

EXAMPLES:

A Public Service Publisher (PSP)

- Content published and commissioned by a PSB, serving many 'niche' audiences;

- Ofcom in the UK wants to add a PSP in addition to existing PSBs;

- Most similar to what PSBs are providing online now, in addition to the linear broadcast.

For 14-19 year old girls

…or a Branded Public Service Producer or Production Fund

A fund or entity to produce content with a common brand distributed via a range of providers across platforms (online, mobile, on-demand).

Similar Examples:

- **BBC in-house production unit**: Life of Mammals, Planet Earth, Rome, are distributed internationally and across a range of platforms BBC branded.

- **Canadian Television Fund:** Money allocated via broadcasters to producers in order to produce and broadcast Canadian content. Shown via the CBC as well as commercial networks.

15

To Consider…

- Currently, many PSBs/markets are dabbling in all three forms;

- In the on-demand future, will this continue, or will one form prevail depending on genre, the market and budgets?

- What will the path chosen mean for the strategies they need to employ to achieve reach and public value? Will the paradox persist?

- What kind of content will result from the ultimate model chosen and by those strategies employed?

- PSBs must start thinking about these issues now, to maintain relevance when on-demand becomes more prevalent.

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