

BSG Content Information Labelling Working Group – Terms of reference

Background

1. It looks increasingly likely that the scope of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive will apply to 'TV-like' services, in particular video on demand. It also seems likely that the Directive will permit National Regulatory Authorities to implement these requirements via self- and co-regulatory schemes.
2. In anticipation of this development, Ofcom has strongly encouraged key organisations in the audiovisual field to work together to develop a common approach to content labelling, as a component of the co- and self-regulatory activity that will likely need to take place once the Directive is transposed into UK law.
3. An initial cross-industry meeting was held on 22 November, and it was agreed that the group should hold a dialogue to establish a set of 'common principles'. These principles would not, however, extend to agreeing a common technological approach.

Aims and objectives

1. The Cross-industry Audiovisual Content Labelling Group (the Group)'s objective is to develop an agreed set of 'best practice principles' on AV content labelling and information.
2. The principles will focus on outcomes to be achieved and not the mechanisms for implementation (i.e. it will not specify metadata/technologies or a common set of labels etc).
3. The principles should be developed in such a way that they can be scaleable, implementable through a variety of self-/ co-regulatory schemes and companies, and applied on a pan-regional basis where necessary.
4. There is a broader question about where these principles should be housed and who should implement them, which is part of a wider debate about the future of self-regulatory bodies post-AVMS Directive.
5. However, the Group should focus on agreeing a set of principles, which can feed into the wider debate about evolution of self-regulation in this area.
6. Therefore, for the purpose of this particular task, the Group will not look to revise existing codes of practice but instead concentrate on where commonalities of approach exist between the different companies represented on the group.

Process and Timeline

1. Ofcom has indicated that the whole process (development of best practice principles and their implementation) should have made significant progress by the end of 2007 and this has been noted by the group.

2. Consequently, the group should aim to have a final agreed set of high level principles by the end of the Spring to allow time for further discussion as required on the implementation of these principles.
3. It is envisaged that this process will take place over a limited number of physical meetings between January and April, and by email. In order to limit the number and length of the physical meetings as much preparation as possible should be undertaken by members and the secretariat in advance of meetings.

A suggested meeting plan is as follows:

- a. Meeting Two – 5 Feb: agree a list of broad principles where commonalities exist
- b. Meeting Three: Compare list of broad principles against the minimum requirements demanded by AVMS (as interpreted by Ofcom) and identify gaps
- c. Meeting Four and/or by email: work up, develop and sign off list of principles

Organisation

1. The Group will be chaired by Campbell Cowie (Time Warner)
2. The Broadband Stakeholder Group will provide the secretariat for the Group, for any queries please [contact us](#). Ofcom has provided BSG with some funding to cover costs.
3. Ofcom will attend meetings as observers as and when necessary.

Participants of the Group include, but are not limited to:

- 3
- AOL
- ATVOD
- BBC
- BBFC
- BSkyB
- BT
- Channel 4
- Five
- Flextech Television
- Google
- Internet Content Rating Association
- ITV
- Mobile Broadband Group
- MySpace
- Satellite and Cable Broadcaster's Group
- Yahoo! UK & Ireland