



# MEDIA

ALL THE HOT GOSSIP ABOUT MEDIA POLICY AND IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVES.

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Welcome all to the August edition of the Media Times! As Parliament takes a breath until September, this edition will take you through the latest developments in the media world, and what may be in store for the second half of the year.

One of the key developments over the last few months involved the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers (DMCC) Bill. I'm a firm believer in trusted and high-quality journalism, and therefore welcome the Bill in its aim to fix the current power imbalance

between UK news publishers and large tech platforms. Both through the chairmanship of this APPG, and as a member of the Bill Committee, I have heard evidence from people across industry who have stressed to me the importance of UK competition and consumer laws keeping pace with rapid market developments. I look forward to continuing to work with government to ensure that the Bill continues to promote our beloved media industry.

What else can be expected for the media sector in the year

ahead? Whilst we are now in the concluding stages of the Online Safety Bill, we can be sure that debates over the regulation of social media will continue into the summer and beyond. We can also expect legislation on the sustainability of local TV and the regulator Ofcom. Here at the Media APPG, we're looking forward to bring you regular events which will look to share debates and policies surrounding these developments.

Andy Carter MP  
Chair of the Media APPG

# NEWS, VIEWS AND EVENTS

## GOVERNMENT TO TIGHTEN RULES OVER ILLEGAL CONTENT ON INTERNET PLATFORMS

The UK government has pledged to crack down on illegal advertising by forcing social media and online platforms such as Google Ads to take tougher action to stop children seeing adverts for products and services such as alcohol or gambling.

In its [response](#) to the Online Advertising Programme consultation, the government said that it would introduce rules to make the online advertising industry “fit for the digital age”. New statutory regulations will hand major internet and “adtech” groups such as Google, which act as intermediaries for online advertising, more responsibility for policing such content alongside online publishers, apps and websites serving ads, the government said.

In addition to convening a new taskforce to work with the industry, ministers are examining the creation of a regulator to oversee rules on online advertising. The watchdog could be either a new or existing body, such as Ofcom.

## CMS COMMITTEE PUBLISHES FIRST REPORT OF ITS PRE-LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT MEDIA BILL

The Culture, Media and Sport (CMS) Committee has [published its first report](#) of its pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft media bill, where it has recommended that the government includes measures to protect radio. The concern is that larger platforms controlling access to radio stations and the rise of smart speakers may divert listeners away from traditional radio, posing a risk to the industry.

The committee supports the idea of focusing on providing local news and information rather than local non-news content for commercial radio. The report also calls for clearer guidance to Ofcom on enforcing this obligation. The report emphasises the need to protect UK radio's availability on voice-activated devices and suggests including on-demand and online-only content within the scope of the Bill to align with market trends. The Committee also addresses the risks posed by in-car infotainment systems and urges government and Ofcom to closely monitor the issue. Finally, the report highlights the importance of the Secretary of State's power to change the devices covered by amending the definition of a radio selection service for future-proofing legislation.



## US TECH GIANTS COOPERATE TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Tech giants Google, and Microsoft, along with AI research organisation OpenAI and start-up Anthropic, are [collaborating](#) to launch the Frontier Model Forum. This industry body aims to promote the safe and responsible use of frontier AI models, which are large-scale machine-learning models surpassing current capabilities.

The forum will leverage the expertise of its member companies to develop a public library of solutions and industry best practices. Its main objective is to ensure that powerful AI tools remain safe, secure, and under human control. The move comes amid concerns about the potential misuse of AI technologies, and it follows the US administration's efforts to secure commitments from various tech companies in upholding principles of safety, security, and trust in AI development.

# NEWS, VIEWS AND EVENTS

## OFCOM PUBLISHES ANNUAL REPORT INTO VIEWING AND LISTENING HABITS

Ofcom has published a [report](#) which reveals that traditional TV viewing in the UK has experienced its sharpest decline, with only 79% of people tuning in weekly in 2022, down from 83% in 2021. The decline is most noticeable among older audiences. BBC One retains the highest weekly reach of all TV channels at 58%, but its figure is 12% lower than in 2017 due to increased digital streaming. The average daily broadcast TV viewing has also decreased by 12%. The report highlights the increasing diversity and fragmentation of the UK's media diet, with more competition for viewers' attention than ever.

## MEDIA GROUP JOINS FORCES WITH ITN AND THE NEWS MEDIA ASSOCIATION

On Monday 3 July, the media group hosted an event in collaboration with ITN and the News Media Association on the Digital Markets, Competition, and Consumers Bill, specifically the impact on local journalism.

The event included contributions from our Chair Andy Carter, ITN chief executive Rachel Corp, News Media Association chief executive Owen Meredith, Public Interest News Foundation executive Jonathan Heawood, Chris Jenkins, Competitions and Markets Authority director, former No 10 economist Matthew Sinclair, Tom Smith from Geradin Partners, and Alex Davies-Jones MP, Labour shadow minister for tech.

For more information on the event and what was discussed, please follow this [link](#).



## LORDS COMMITTEE SETS OUT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DMCC BILL

The Communications and Digital Committee has [written to Kemi Banech, Secretary of State for Business and Trade](#), providing recommendations on the Digital Markets, Competition, and Consumers (DMCC) Bill. The Committee praises the Bill's objectives but emphasises the need for timely implementation, as the UK is falling behind the EU in regulating the digital space. The letter makes several recommendations, including on the countervailing benefits clause, which allows firms accused of breaching rules to defend themselves by showing significant consumer benefits. The Committee supports this exemption but urges the Government to maintain a high threshold to avoid big tech firms using it as a loophole.

The Committee also emphasises the importance of transparency and accountability to ensure public and industry confidence in the CMA. The letter stresses that the CMA should engage in clear and open communication with relevant businesses and organisations affected by its work.



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The All-Party Parliamentary Media Group: enriching and informing debate and policy.

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Feel free to forward this on to anyone you think would be interested. We welcome guest blogs and enquires about upcoming events.



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