

Written evidence submitted by Yeti Television

SVoDs

It's important to make the point that SVoDs commission comparatively little in the UK compared with the PSBs. For example: Amazon, Apple and Disney+ currently original commission fewer than 20 projects per year. That compares with thousands of hours of original content commissioned by the PSBs. It means prominence for PSBs is vital – so UK content has prime visibility to UK audiences. Ironically much of this PSB content can end up on SVoDs like Netflix (who acquire content after it's been a proven success on linear).

For smaller, less well-known Welsh companies, breaking into the SVoD market is difficult. The budgets are much bigger; but the commissions available vastly fewer. There's no doubt there are companies in Wales (like Yeti) who can absolutely deliver high-end factual content. Our multiple awards are testament to this. But we don't have the (global) visibility of other, bigger companies. This is where a light quota or opportunities to tender for a project – open only to genuine Welsh companies – would be a fantastic solution to start breaking down these barriers and opening doors.

PSBs: BBC Wales

In my experience there is a marked difference between BBC Wales and its counterparts in Scotland, Northern Ireland and England. The latter are fiercely protective of their local companies. I know this because I have pitched ideas to all of them. Only in very exceptional circumstances would they commission something from a company based outside of Scotland/Northern Ireland/England. BBC Wales take a very different approach. My personal view is that this has been damaging and to the detriment of the local sector in Wales. It's very much an open-door policy where anyone can pitch for business. It has led to the creation of pop-ups as well as companies who don't have any meaningful footprint in Wales securing business from BBC Wales.

I understand the need to create brands, commission the very best ideas and collaborate/co-commission with regional partners. The 'fewer bigger better' is one of the few bits of clarity the sector has from BBC Wales and their approach to commissioning. However, the willingness to engage and work with companies outside of Wales has undoubtedly taken business away from genuine Welsh companies. Some freelancers benefit of course. However it sends a message to network (UK) commissioners that perhaps there isn't adequate (senior/exec) talent in Wales to make and deliver network programmes. This is damaging and untrue. Finally, in a bid to adapt to the changing landscape, the representation of Wales/the Welsh on screen, 'local content for local people' has been diluted – it's more by stealth rather than loud and proud. Again, this is in marked difference to content coming out of BBC Scotland and BBC Northern Ireland. The current and longer-term commissioning strategy in Wales is very unclear to independents.

BBC Wales have made positive steps in trying to help indies secure network (as opposed to regional) commissions and have an ambition to co-commission with network. Indeed, Yeti

has been a welcome recipient of the BBCs Small Indie Fund. However, the reality is that there is no significant network commissioning power based in Wales (or even Bristol). The true decision-makers are in London. And many Welsh indies are not able to engage directly with this power. Many are often directed toward junior commissioners or assistant commissioners. Further devolved and real commissioning power (at a network level) based in Wales would go a long way in combatting this hurdle to securing work from network.

Pop-Ups

It's important to note that the companies themselves are not to blame – hence the reluctance to name them. It's those broadcasters who make big commissions conditional on setting up a regional office that should face greater scrutiny and rule-tightening.

There is a dearth of development talent in Wales – that is a genuine skills shortage. Most pop-ups develop their ideas out of Wales & do not invest in creating development teams at their Wales offices. So even when companies have intent to stay longer-term, this is an area where they aren't benefitting or enhancing the freelance sector in Wales.

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