

Herald & Times Group

BBC Scotland and STV serve an important role in the overall media mix in Scotland, one of the most competitive markets in the world with 17 daily newspapers as well as a diverse range of commercial and community radio stations, web sites, magazines and weekly newspapers. However, the large appetite for television viewing in Scotland does give them an important place in the media landscape and a particular responsibility for news and current affairs coverage.

We believe that generally BBC Scotland and STV do provide a reasonable range of cover in the current economic circumstances, with commercial pressures on STV and budget cuts within the BBC. However, rather than focus too narrowly on the current position it is important to review a sector where, although daily newspapers still attract more than one million buyers a day, changing technologies and habits are rapidly redefining the landscape.

Media convergence and the growth of transformational new devices will increasingly blur the lines between public service broadcasters and other media as currently viewed. This will inevitably change the relationship with audiences.

Internet-connected television sets will become ubiquitous. Thus Scottish newspaper company web sites will appear alongside live television and audiences will dart between the two, absorbing Scottish news and current affairs from diverse sources.

Tablet computers are proving an attractive and potentially revenue-generating substitute for print products among increasing numbers of readers. But tablets also allow access to BBC Scotland and STV on the same device.

Many users rely on smartphones for much of their news where public service and commercial providers intermingle seamlessly.

DCMS say they intend the first local television stations to be on air by the second half of 2013 with the first Scottish stations in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The licenses carry news and current affairs obligations.

We believe that maintaining diversity of coverage and a strong commercial media sector, underpinned by an enduring indigenous newspaper/digital press, is the key requirement as Scotland moves to increased devolution or independence.

The Herald & Times Group publishes The Herald, Sunday Herald and Evening Times and their associated digital products. It also owns the highly-successful s1 online advertising company, magazines and a modern print plant.

Tom D. Thomson
Group Managing Editor

