

cc Professor Griffiths
Mr Gray

MR WICKS

BROADCASTING WHITE PAPER

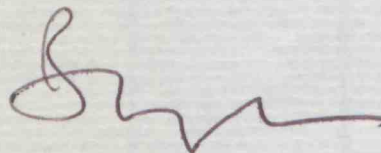
This draft had great difficulty in sustaining my interest because, while it tries to simplify things, it does get rather technical and assumes a certain knowledge. There is also too much unexplained jargon - eg downloaded, uplinked from and off air.

It does however seem to cover the waterfront in a reasonably coherent way.

I also take the view that the revised proposals for news on Channel 3 meet the point I have been making about the BBC monopoly and give ITN a reasonable chance for development.

But there is one aspect of the wider draft which concerns me. In Chapter VI, Para 11 et seq I believe we shall lay in trouble for ourselves unless we make it clear that Channel 3 stations will be required "to show national and international news and current affairs". If we do not require a national and international news programme those regional companies with a political as well as a commercial drive may find it possible to justify their dropping ITN in favour of their own news service.

It is far from clear what will be the position of ITN in relation to Channel 4 and 5 for January 1, 1993. This is an obvious question at a press conference and it might be spelled out in the White Paper - at least as to whether from January 1, 1993 ITN would be precluded from providing a news service to Channel 4 (as it does now) or from competing for the contract for Channel 5 as a national channel.



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26 September 1988