Digital Dividend Review: Deliberative Group Discussion Guide

3 hrs approx

1. **Introduce moderator & research (10 mins)**

Hello, my name is __________ and I work for ORC International. We’re an independent research consultancy and have been commissioned by Ofcom, the communications regulator, to undertake a research study on their behalf. Between 2008 and 2012, the way that you will receive the main television channels, from a traditional analogue signal to a digital one. This is known as **digital switchover**. Once the analogue television signal is turned off this will leave space in the airwaves that can be used for a wide range of new services. The purpose of the study and the reason you have been invited along this evening is to discuss your views on what should happen with this space in the airwaves – which are also known as ‘spectrum’.

ORC International is bound by the Market Research Society code of conduct and although the discussion this evening is being recorded, no comments made will be directly attributable to you so please do feel free to be open to speak your mind.

Ask participants to introduce themselves – occupation; family status. And ask them to say:

- Which TV services they currently receive: traditional 5 channels; Freeview; Top-up TV; Freesat Satellite TV; Sky or other subscription Satellite TV; Cable such as NTL, Telewest etc).
- Which (if any) mobile services they use/have access to: Sending and receiving your e-mails using mobile phone, a blackberry or similar device; Accessing the internet using a portable or handheld device; Downloading video using a portable or handheld device; Laptops with datacard (i.e. with wireless internet connection); Handheld games consoles which access the Internet e.g. PSP; Listening to music using an MP3 player such as an i-pod.

2. **Background & Social Value discussion (75 mins)**

The purpose of the study and the reason you have been invited along this evening is to help inform Ofcom about the views of the public regarding the options arising from the release of spectrum afforded by the digital switchover programme.

The spectrum airwaves that become available could enable the launch of a wide range of different services. When you were initially invited, you may remember you were sent a series of slides briefly outlining this process and some of the options. *(SHOW CARD N1)*. For example:

1. Additional television channels including possible High Definition (HD) channels carried on Freeview.
2. New mobile services, with high quality video and TV broadcast delivered to handheld devices.
3. Wireless mobile broadband services, with high-speed connections.
4. Wider coverage for advanced services in remote and rural areas.
5. Local TV (Islington TV rather than London TV)
2.1 General understanding/implications

- Having been through these options again, how clearly do you think you understand what is going to happen?
  - Why do you say that?
- What are your thoughts about how the change-over could affect you?
- As well as how it could affect you, what do you think the affects would be for wider UK society?
  - What do you think the implications will be?
  - Why do you say that?
  - What do you think the benefits of this change-over could be? Why do you say that?
- What about the benefits of using the freed-up spectrum?
- What do you think the disadvantages / or adverse consequences of this change-over could be? Why do you say that?

FOR MODERATORS INFORMATION

- All households wanting to use aerials to receive TV would have to buy a set-top box so they could continue to use their TVs if they have not done so already.
- Households wanting to use their video recorders to record one programme while watching another would have to buy an extra box or a new video recorder to continue to do so.
- Some households might need to buy a new aerial if their existing equipment is of poor quality.
- In addition, consumers might be less interested in converting secondary TVs than their primary TV set. A substantial number of households would need to convert their primary TV to be compatible with digital signals and many more households would need to convert secondary TVs and video recorders if they wished to continue using them.
- Freeview will be universally available after switch-over

2.2 Value to society of new services

- What should the Government or a regulator take into account when organising the provision of these services?
- Thinking about what policymakers need to take into account, what considerations do they need to keep in mind when looking at what to do with the spectrum airwaves freed-up by the digital switch-over?
  - Why do you say that? (For moderator information: the spectrum available is a limited resource. Using spectrum to achieve a wider social good would mean forgoing other services which we may all value as individuals)
- Overall, what should the policymakers priority be and why?
- Looking at the provision of:
  1. extra services on Freeview for example; extra channels, High Definition TV, local television (consumers may have to pay to get the extra services though existing services would continue to be available for free),
2. Mobile TV, and
3. Mobile Broadband/internet in turn,

What benefits do you think these services could have – for individuals and for UK citizens as a whole?

- Why do you say that?

- Some of the new services might improve people’s quality of life and family life. Which of the new services we’ve discussed do you think might do this (IF NECESSARY PROMPT ON: WORK-LIFE BALANCE/ WORKING FROM HOME, KEEPING IN CONTACT WITH FRIENDS/ FAMILY).

- How important is it that the Government considers these benefits?

- What about taking part communities? Could these new services encourage or make it easier for people to communicate with other people with similar interests?

- Is it important to know about your local community?
  - (IF NECESSARY PROMPT) On the internet today there are chat rooms and websites where people interested in all sorts of things can communicate with other people with similar interests.
  - (IF NECESSARY PROMPT) At the moment, most TV channels are nationals or cover wide regions – could local TV channels tell people more about their local community and promote a community spirit?
  - How important is it that the Government considers these benefits?

- And what about the way people talk about TV programmes? How often do you talk to friends and family about TV programmes you’ve watched?
  - How important is it that the Government considers these benefits?

- What about understanding of other countries, cultures, and religions? Do you think these new technologies would have any impact on this?
  - How would this benefit society?
  - How important is it that the Government considers these benefits?

- Do you think it is important that people have access to the same programmes so they have the chance to talk about them with friends and family? What if everybody watched different TV programmes? Do you think that people would find other things to talk about or would they just talk to each other less?
  - How important is it that the Government considers these types of benefits?

- And do you that some particular groups/segments of society could be disadvantaged if they were not able to receive these services?
  - If yes, which option, which group/segment and why?

- Should the Government ensure that those with specific needs have equal access to new technologies? For example: sub-titling can be provided on TV programmes and voice-to-text conversion services for telephone services for people with a hearing impairment. Technology
also makes it possible to have verbal descriptions of graphic images for users who have sight impairment.

- Overall, do you think that some of the new services are more socially valuable than others? **PROMPT** for examples.
- **(IF NOT MENTIONED)** What about the cost of achieving the wider social good, should this also be thought about?
  - **(IF NECESSARY, PROMPT)** For example to ensure that some of the social benefits we’ve discussed are achieved it may mean that ultimately UK citizens pay a little bit more in tax.
  - **(IF NECESSARY, PROMPT)** Should the Government take the cost (tax) into account for each of these services before ensuring they are provided or are they so important that they should make them available regardless of cost?

### 2.3 Accessibility and availability

- What would be more important for society as a whole: availability of the new services throughout the country or availability free of charge?
- Does it make a difference if local info is available on your TV set in the home rather than accessing it via the internet, newspapers or radio?
- What is more important that all have access to a service or that those who do make use of it?
  - What impact do different levels of coverage have on society?
  - Are there specific groups for whom it’s more important?
  - What is the relative importance of rural coverage?
  - Does everyone have to use the service for it to be socially valuable or can social values be generated if only a proportion of the population uses the service?
  - **(IF THE LATTER)** What proportion of the UK population should use the service for it to be considered of social value?

### 2.4 Trade-off of available services?

**READ OUT:** Using spectrum to achieve a wider social good could mean foregoing other services. One example could be: If you want to ensure that the whole of the UK is able to receive high definition TV, because it would leave very little spectrum for the other services you might have to accept a reduced level of content on mobile TV (some of the channels you want to watch might not be available) and/or mobile TV only in built up areas (so you will be able to watch it on you way home from work but may not be able to watch it at home if you don't live in a built up area).

- How do you feel about this?
- What kind of trade off would you be willing to make yourself?
- What trade off would be of most benefit to the wider society as a whole?
- Should society be willing to forego certain groups in order to maximise the use of available spectrum?
2.5 Influence of free market/regulator

- Exploring how sometimes businesses that provide services might not take into the account the needs of all citizens:
  - How might these services be changed if they were only available through the private market – that is to say, supplied by companies who aim to maximise profits?
  - Which groups in society might be disadvantaged in this situation? (IF NECESSARY PROMPT RE. LOW INCOME GROUPS, GROUPS IN RURAL OR REMOTE COMMUNITIES WHERE IT MAY BE EXPENSIVE TO SET UP A SERVICE THAT MAY ONLY BE USED BY A FEW CUSTOMERS)

- When thinking about the services that can be offered using the newly-available spectrum airwaves, what groups in society might benefit from these services?

- Keeping in mind the services which could be offered, is this something that should be left to free-market forces to decide (the company willing to pay the most would receive it), or should the Government take steps to ensure that certain socially valuable services are available?
  - Why do you say that?
  - (IF NOT MENTIONED) What about the need to consider whether these services are of benefit to society and those in society who may benefit from them can receive them?
  - For example, many people think that everyone should have access to some service, such as running water, electricity and a telephone line.
  - Do you think this should also apply to the internet at home and mobile phones?
  - And what about the new services we've been talking about – do you think it should be a 'right' to be able to access mobile TV, mobile broadband and the extra channels and services that could become available on Freeview?

(For moderator information: Social values are things that are important to us as citizens/members of society, rather than as individuals/consumers. These can include, for example quality of life for all, levels of citizenship, belonging to a community, social inclusion and levels of cultural understanding)

BREAK (15 mins)
3. Chip Allocation Exercise (75mins)

We will now be looking at the way different technologies might be used to fill up the available spectrum after the digital switch over. Just to recap, there are several possible options that the freed-up airwaves can be used for: such as 1. Provision of extra services on Freeview for example; extra channels, High Definition TV, local television (consumers may have to pay to get the extra services though existing services would continue to be available for free), 2. Mobile TV, and 3. Mobile Broadband/internet

3.1 New Services (15-20mins)

Break group into 2 sub-groups, get each sub-group to appoint a spokesperson

READ OUT: Still thinking about society as a whole, I want you now to think of yourselves as operating as a policy unit responsible for making a decision on which of these services to progress with. I’d like you to share 10 points between the three services – digital TV, Mobile TV and Mobile Broadband Internet – to show me how important you think each is for the country as a whole. How many points would you give to each? Please share the points across the three services - you may give as many or as few points to each service as you like, or indeed none at all.

Digital TV
Mobile TV
Mobile Broadband Internet

For each sub-group
- Why is this service the most important one for society as a whole?
- How does this service benefit society?
- What is it about this service that makes it particularly attractive/unattractive?
  - How could it be made more attractive?
- Anything else?
3.2 Digital TV (15-20mins)

Break group into 2 sub-groups, get each sub-group to appoint a spokesperson

I’d now like you to think about each of the technologies separately, thinking first of all about digital TV. Listed here are the different aspects of digital TV you have just considered. I’d like you to share 10 points between these to show me how important you think each one is to society as a whole. How many points would you give to each? You may give as many or as few points to each as you like, or indeed none at all.

- Number of new digital channels on Freeview
- Breadth of population coverage for digital TV
- Number of additional local TV channels
- Number of additional HDTV channels
- Breadth of population coverage for HDTV

For each sub-group
- Why is this service the most important one for society as a whole?
- How does this service benefit society?
- What is it about this service that makes it particularly attractive/unattractive?
  - How could it be made more attractive?
- Anything else?

PSB discussion
[To discuss Monday. Probing questions on Public Service Broadcast channels – do these hold higher social value?]

HDTV
[To discuss Monday: Is PSB in HDTV particularly valuable? Is it necessary to have some HDTV on Freeview or is access via Sky/ cable enough?]
3.3 Mobile Broadband Internet (15-20mins)

Break group into 2 sub-groups, get each sub-group to appoint a spokesperson

In this instance there are different aspects of mobile broadband internet you have just considered. I’d like you to share 10 points between these to show me how important you think each one is to society as a whole. How many points would you give to each? You may give as many or as few points to each as you like, or indeed none at all.

Download speed
Breadth of population coverage
Ability to use on the move

For each sub-group
- Why is this service the most important one for society as a whole?
- How does this service benefit society?
- What is it about this service that makes it particularly attractive/unattractive?
  - How could it be made more attractive?
- Anything else?

3.4 Mobile TV (15-20mins)

Break group into 2 sub-groups, get each sub-group to appoint a spokesperson

Finally, in this instance there are different aspects of mobile TV you have just considered. I’d like you to share 10 points between these to show me how important you think each one is to society as a whole. How many points would you give to each? You may give as many or as few points to each as you like.

Number of channels
Type of device (stand alone or integrated)
Breadth of population coverage

For each sub-group
- Why is this service the most important one for society as a whole?
- How does this service benefit society?
- What is it about this service that makes it particularly attractive/unattractive?
  - How could it be made more attractive?
- Anything else?
4. **Summary (15 mins)**

- Having been through this process, have your perceptions about the value to society and yourself of new services that digital switchover will allow changed? If so, how and why?
  - Discuss any changes in attitude and opinions.
- What's the most important message that you would like to give Ofcom as a result of this discussion?

**THANK AND CLOSE**