

25th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

August 1st marks the 25th anniversary of BARB audience measurement, which generated industry standard viewing figures for BBC and ITV, each of which had previously issued separate viewing estimates. In 1999 BARB restructured and is now owned by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, BSkyB and the IPA.

This Bulletin contains examples of notable milestones in the life of BARB to date and major events occurring in the television industry during the same period. A more detailed chronology can be found on the BARB website, www.barb.co.uk

BROADCASTERS' AUDIENCE RESEARCH BOARD LTD

25 years of BARB

BARB starts reporting BBC1 BBC2 and ITV on 1st August

Satellite TV trials in October

BARB reporting 5 channels

Channel 4 and S4C begin transmission in November

BARB announces push button Enhanced Measurement System incorporating a people meter

BBC Breakfast Time (January) and TV-am (February) begin transmission

BARB now measuring up to 4 TV sets per household

Sky Channel launches in the UK

Cable Authority established

End of 405 line VHF TV broadcasting

Daytime TV starts on BBC1

NIC<mark>AM d</mark>igital stereo TV sound launches Broadcasting hours extended to 24/7

IBA ru<mark>les 25% of ITV programm</mark>es must be produced by Indies (BBC agrees too) Broadcasting White Paper published

Astra satellite launched

BARB issues spec. for a panel of 200 Astra satellite homes

House of Commons televised

New BARB contract awarded

Broadcasting Act 1990 published

BARB incorporates VCR timeshift and guest viewing

TV listings deregulated

BARB reporting 17 channels

UK Gold launches

ITV Network Centre established

BARB reporting 20 channels

Government relaxes rule on ITV takeovers

UK Living, Nickelodeon and QVC launch

BARB reporting 24 channels

Interactive television trialed in 250 Midlands homes

BARB extends contract for 2 years to July 2000

Channel 5 Broadcasting awarded service for fifth terrestrial channel

BARB reporting 39 channels

Bruno v Tyso<mark>n fig</mark>ht i<mark>s first</mark> pay-per-view programme on Sky BARB reports cable separately

BARB extends contract to the end of 2001

Channel 5 starts transmission in March
New 10 year BBC Charter period

ONDigital <mark>and Sky Digi</mark>tal lau<mark>nch</mark>

BARB reporting 57 channels

BARB increases its underwriters to include the IPA, Channels 4 and 5 and BSkyB

of digital satellite in November Open launches world's first interactive TV service in the UK

BARB commences measurement of ONDigital and Digital Cable

BARB introduces Lifestage Classifications

Widescreen TV sales exceed 1 million

BARB reporting 132 channels

Sky turns off analogue service

New BARB contract commences in January, panel size increased to 5,100 homes (from 4,300 net)

Freeview launches and is reported by BARB in October

BARB reporting 175 channels

Government publishes "Digital Television Action Plan" heralding digital switchover BARB reports sponsorship data

BARB extends contracts to the end of 2009

ITV plc formed

BARB introduces VOSDAL (Viewing On Same Day As Live)

Mobile TV trials in London and Oxford

HDTV services commence

BARB commences PVR reporting

BARB reporting 227 channels

ntl and Telewest merge



25 years of BARB

The BARB panel has increased from 3,000 to 5,100 reporting homes in the course of 25 years. The current panel reports the daily viewing of approximately 11,500 people – this is more than 80,000 days of viewing across a week.

In the 25 years of BARB reporting the multi-channel world has developed – with the launch of satellite and cable services and digital viewing options becoming available from 1998. BARB is currently reporting 227 channels on six platforms, compared to 3 analogue terrestrial channels in 1981.

The shape of TV sets has changed over the 25 years – with the development of widescreen sets and, more recently, flat-screen variants. BARB has met the challenge to monitor these. TV screens are growing and contracting in size at each end of the range of equipment available.

Time-shift viewing became a reality in the late 1970s but has developed as a phenomenon during the lifetime of BARB – to the situation today where digital video recorders (DVRs/PVRs) offer major developments in the time-shift proposition, with greater ease and flexibility of recording and playback. VCR and more recently DVR/PVR figures have been incorporated into BARB's daily reporting.

The emergence of transaction services via subscription or pay per view are other notable developments in the industry over this time. The nature of viewer control has developed (starting with the now ubiquitous remote control) and, in terms of both equipment and services, the choices available for watching programmes has dramatically expanded across 25 years and continues to do so.





As television services continue to develop, BARB is focussed on the future – with active programmes of development.

The Future Into View consultation, the creation of scenario projections that have been shared with the industry and the launch of an exploratory programme regarding potential measurement techniques have all contributed to thinking about the way that the measurement process may need to develop.

BARB is about to issue to potential suppliers a Request For Proposals, which will outline the nature of solutions that are being sought to take the service forward to meet the needs of the future.

