

BARB

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Bulletin

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





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.

The Future ►►



The Future

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.

BARB

We always encourage feedback, so do tell us what you think
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