

Name & address provided, but requested to be confidential.

I write as an individual end user of the Freeview service.

I am broadly in favour of the measures in the consultation. However I have one significant comment to make - channel changes and retuning exercises are already too frequent and "grossly annoying". This is, in part, based on the absolutely dire design of the UI of many receivers.

I have a MythTV PVR system, and with that I can, with a little maintenance each time there's a change, retune and by use of a pre-prepared script (the bit that needs updating) re-number the channels into my own preferred order - while deleting the rubbish (shopping channels etc). Even with this level of automation, a retune can take a couple of hours by the time I've retuned (which for technical reasons I have to do by individual transports), run my script, looked through the list of channels to see which ones have changed, updated my script, found and added an identifier for the listings service (Schedules Direct), run the script again, and ... well you get the idea.

For other devices, the effort involved in trying to renumber to my liking ranges from terrible to even worse. The effort required is such that we generally just don't bother, especially when we know that we'll need to redo it all again before long. I'll add that for some equipment, we've needed to add an attenuator to avoid problems caused by picking up signal from a main transmitter in a different region - in this case, we are using Winter Hill, but can also pick up Moel-Y-Parc strongly as well. Since the multiplexes on these transmitters are interleaved, there is no simple way to avoid getting a mix of regional channels with many wanted channels shunted up to 800+ (some equipment) or interleaved with the unwanted ones (eg, a friend has a very sensitive receiver which gives her 2off BBC1, then 2off BBC2, and so on).

And my experience is that most equipment doesn't have any (useful) option other than "delete everything and scan again". NB - this also probably explains why research has found few people using favourites. It's just too much hassle having to fix things every time a channel change breaks it all.

As many of us do not feel the imperative (nor have the cash) to throw away perfectly good equipment every couple of years, this isn't going to be solved by new "Freeview" branding rules (do the rules for Freeview branding even cover things like this ?)

Supplementary question on Freeview branding and design requirements. In the example of receiving a signal from multiple transmitters, it would be really useful if the receiver asked the user which transmitter to use, and automatically put only LCNs from that transmitter into the main guide (many units put duplicates starting at LCN 800). Is that part of the design requirements ? And if not, may I suggest it would be a useful addition.

This problem will get worse when we have the next major shuffle and find that our main transmitter is now using RF channels in the same group as the local repeaters.

So my main comment is PLEASE make any retuning rare - really rare. The thought that a single channel can have two changes a year is a bit disturbing. The thought that many channels could do this in an uncoordinated way is doubly so. In principle, in extreme it could mean a retune every week of the year without a lot of effort from the broadcasters ! Perhaps we need a "transfer window" a bit like they have in football ?