

**UK Film Council  
Response to  
Consultation on Provisional conclusions by the BBC Trust  
on Project Canvas**

**February 2010**

1. The UK Film Council is the Government-backed lead agency for film in the UK ensuring that the economic, cultural and educational aspects of film are effectively represented at home and abroad. The Board of Directors, appointed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, oversees the work of the UK Film Council and provides advice to the Government on film.

2. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation by the BBC Trust regarding its provisional conclusions on Project Canvas.

3. In overall terms, we would reiterate the points made in our response to the first and second consultations by the Trust on the subject of Canvas which we submitted to the Trust last year.

4. As we stated in those responses, the UK Film Council strongly welcomes the proposal to create and deliver Project Canvas and the BBC's central involvement. In particular, we believe that Canvas can provide a platform for audiences to access innovative services offering access to film, cultural content and other forms of content in new ways. We believe that Canvas has become even more important in the light of the very disappointing decision by the Trust that the BBC will not be allowed to proceed with the Open iPlayer initiative.

5. By delivering a rich mix of video content to the living room, Canvas will help to encourage the creation of new legal services of all kinds offering audiences opportunities to engage with on-demand content in many new ways. This should help to drive take-up of broadband, build Digital Britain and, from our particular perspective help to broaden access to film in the UK in all its richness and diversity.

6. Also as previously stated, by encouraging take-up of such legal services, Canvas will help to stem online copyright theft and infringement which is currently widespread in relation to digital content, including films and other audiovisual material.

7. In addition to the points made in our two previous submissions we welcome the fact that in the current consultation:

- it is made clear that the BBC Executive has stated that Canvas will be open to free, advertising-funded and paid-for content (via a range of payment models<sup>10</sup>).
- the Trust recognises that Canvas's ability to stimulate "creativity and cultural excellence, by furthering the media literacy agenda, is...important." We strongly agree.
- the Trust recognises "the role of Canvas in furthering the [BBC's] partnerships agenda." The UK Film Council, would very much welcome the opportunity to contribute to the partnerships agenda in relation to Canvas. Like many other organisations which help to produce and/or distribute public service content (including archive content), we see

Canvas as a platform with enormous potential for helping to ensure that content reaches a wide and diverse audience in a digital age

- it is recognised that “Third party content providers and aggregators can develop and personalise their respective areas of the non-core interface”: this will provide valuable opportunities for independent UK film companies and those seeking to promote film culture.

- it is explicitly recognised that there will be “an ability for applications to be developed that sit on top of the core UI.” We believe that such “web apps” are a key component which will help Canvas to succeed and help enable it to maximise its delivery of public value.

- it is stated that Canvas will operate on a cost recovery basis; we feel this is vital to permit the widest possible access, including from independent film companies and non-profit organisations promoting film culture.

- there is a clear focus on “open standards” as this will help facilitate access to the widest possible range of content and services.

- the Trust observes that it “welcome[s] the use of objective measures to prevent undue prominence of major existing services” with regard to the navigation system for Canvas.

- there is a recognition that, over time, Canvas could help to deliver digital inclusion among vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

8. We have read with interest the supplementary document produced for the consultation by Value Partners on the Impact of Canvas on Pay –VOD services and welcome its recognition that Canvas could help to increase spend on Pay-VOD services delivered by Digital Terrestrial Television. We would underline that the opportunities presented by Canvas in this regard are not just for major studios but also for independent UK film companies.

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If you would prefer that all or part of your response be treated as confidential, please complete the confidentiality section below.

What do you want the BBC Trust to keep confidential?

Nothing	✓
Whole response	
Part of it	
Which part? (Please indicate)	

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have sent my response by email, the BBC can disregard any standard e-mail text about not disclosing email contents and attachments.

Name

NEIL WATSON

Signed (if hard copy)