

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

Public service media (PSM) organizations produce a wide range of content and services that are distributed not only as traditional linear radio and television but also as time-shifted, on-demand, hybrid and data services. A set of distribution requirements has been defined to ensure the desired availability and technical quality of PSM services across all platforms and on all devices.

BACKGROUND

PSM organizations produce a wide range of services and use different ways to deliver these services to viewers and listeners. Audiences have a range of user devices at their disposal, from large television sets and home radio receivers to personal computers, tablets and smartphones.

Not all distribution methods are equally suitable for all services. Likewise, not all user devices come with the same capabilities. The result, in some cases, can be a poor user experience. In addition, sometimes services may be unavailable or the quality level provided may be inadequate because of technical or commercial reasons beyond broadcasters' control.



PSM DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

To ensure that the desired availability and quality of services are provided to all users in all situations, a set of requirements has been defined. These requirements should be met for a distribution method to be suitable for PSM.

Two types of requirements have been defined:

- General requirements, which apply in all situations
- Specific requirements, to be applied in particular cases.

General requirements

These address not only technical issues but also regulatory, market and business-related aspects relevant for PSM organizations. They apply across all distribution options.

The general requirements are:

- Ability to provide content free-to-air.
- Deliver PSM content to the public without blocking or filtering the service offer (i.e. no gatekeeping).
- Content and service integrity: no modification of the PSM content or service by third parties. For example, television content and additional services (e.g. subtitles, HbbTV, etc.) must be displayed on screen, unaltered and without unauthorized overlays.
- Quality of service (QoS) to be defined by the broadcaster, including availability of a network, robustness, up-time, and reliability.
- QoS for each user shall be independent of the size of the audience.
- PSM shall not be subject to discrimination compared to equivalent services.
- Geographical availability of the service (e.g. national, regional, local) is to be defined by the broadcaster.
- A distribution method needs to support at least a minimum service offer (e.g. a minimum number of programmes) as defined by the broadcaster.
- Ease of use: straightforward accessibility and prominence of the PSM offer.
- Low barrier for access to PSM content and services for people with disabilities (e.g. subtitles, audio description and signing).
- Ability to reach audiences in emergency situations.

Specific requirements

Depending on the service, user device and distribution method, a set of specific requirements should be defined and fulfilled, in addition to the general requirements. Examples could include technical parameters (e.g. data rates, bit error rate, latency) and peak size of the concurrent audience.

WHAT IS THE EBU DOING?

A high-level analysis of the relevant use cases and an assessment of the available options for the distribution of broadcast services are given in EBU Technical Report 026. The EBU is also involved in ongoing 5G developments with a view to facilitating the distribution of PSM content and services. The work continues in the Strategic Programme on Future Distribution (FD).

FIND OUT MORE

EBU Future Distribution Group
Technical Report 026

tech.ebu.ch/fd
tech.ebu.ch/docs/techreports/tr026.pdf

See also the EBU European Affairs unit's fact sheet titled "How 5G can enhance public service media's contribution to the digital society", available from www.ebu.ch.