

## CHAPTER 2

# The Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto

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### Key Principles and Messages

#### Principle 1

Democracy and digital democracy require Public Service Media. We call for the safeguarding of the existence of Public Service Media.

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## **Principle 2**

A democracy-enhancing Internet requires Public Service Media becoming Public Service Internet platforms that help to advance opportunities and equality in the society. We call for the creation of the legal, economic and organisational foundations of such platforms.

## **Principle 3**

Public Service Media content is distinctive from commercial media and data companies. It addresses citizens, not consumers.

## **Principle 4**

Public Service Internet platforms realise fairness, democracy, participation, civic dialogue and engagement on the Internet.

## **Principle 5**

The Public Service Internet requires new formats, new content and vivid co-operation with the creative sectors of our societies.

## **Principle 6**

Public Service Media should continue to be supported and funded so that they have the resources they need to realise and further develop their remit. In addition, the Public Service Internet requires sustainable funding that is based on mechanisms such as the licence fee, the Nordic model of a public service tax, and transnational funding mechanisms.

## **Principle 7**

The Public Service Internet promotes equality and diversity.

## **Principle 8**

The Public Service Internet provides opportunities for public debate, participation, and the advancement of social cohesion.

## **Principle 9**

The Public Service Internet is a driver of change in the creation of new content and services while creating a sustainable ecosystem for media innovations.

## Principle 10

Public Service Media and the Public Service Internet contribute to a democratic, sustainable, fair, just, and resilient society.

### 1. Crisis and Utopia: Renewing Public Service

The original idea was simple and changed society: A public broadcasting service that is paid for out of public funds, independent of government, equally accessible to all, provides trusted information and analysis of issues that are of common concern, makes programmes that reflect the diversity and complexity of contemporary life. Introduced first in Great Britain, with the launch of the BBC in the 1920s, this vision of public service broadcasting was adopted and adapted around the world. After the devastations caused by the Second World War, public service broadcasting re-emerged in Germany where it helped to restore democracy. It was a cornerstone in further waves of democratisation.

In 2021, the world again faces a global crisis: a pandemic crisis, accelerating climate change, persistent and deep social inequalities, increasing political polarisation, and an infodemic crisis where lots of misinformation is spread online. The dominant forms and uses of digital technologies and the Internet endanger democracy. They undermine the indispensable resources of trusted information, in-depth analysis, rational debate and diversity of representation that allow us to fully understand the challenges we face.

That Public Service Media simply moves to the platforms operated and controlled by the commercial digital giants is not a sufficient option. Establishing a public service channel on YouTube or Facebook supports the digital major's cultural centrality and offers no alternative to their operating procedures and business models. Public Service Media requires a Public Service Internet.

**This Manifesto is a call to save and advance democratic communications by renewing Public Service Media and creating a Public Service Internet.**

## 2. The Way Forward

**The Internet and the media landscape are broken. The dominant commercial Internet platforms endanger democracy.** They have created a communications landscape dominated by surveillance, advertising, fake news, hate speech, conspiracy theories, and algorithmic politics that tailors and personalises commercial and political content according to individual tastes and opinions. As currently organised, the Internet separates and divides instead of creating common spaces for negotiating difference and disagreement. Commercial Internet platforms have harmed citizens, users, everyday life and society. Despite all the great opportunities the Internet has offered to society and individuals, the digital giants led by Apple, Alphabet/Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Alibaba, Facebook, and Tencent have acquired unparalleled economic, political and cultural power.

However, public communication is more than business. It is a public purpose. This is why we call for action.

We have a vision. **We strive for a revitalisation and renewal of Public Service Media in the digital age.** Public Service Media that are fit for the 21st century. We dream of a different Internet and a different media landscape. We envision the creation of a Public Service Internet: an **Internet of the public, by the public and for the public**; an Internet that advances instead of threatens democracy and the public sphere and an Internet that provides a new and dynamic shared space for connection, exchange and collaboration.

The Public Service Internet is based on **Internet platforms operated by a variety of Public Service Media, taking the public service remit into the digital age** in co-operation with civil society, individual media users, citizens, and the creative, cultural and educational sector. The Public Service Internet advances democracy. It enhances the public sphere. It supports active citizenship by providing comprehensive information and analysis, diversity of social representation and creative expression and extended opportunities for participation. Public Service Internet platforms

can support new and young creatives who will build the cultural industries of tomorrow and foster social cohesion.

Now is the time for a Public Service Internet and revitalised Public Service Media.

### 3. Public Service Media-Visions

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the continuing indispensability of Public Service Media. Locked down at home and faced with the constant danger of infection, audiences have turned to Public Service Media for trusted sources of objective and impartial information; high-quality educational materials for home-schooling; diverse entertainment and drama and a reference point in times of crisis. Since its foundation, public service broadcasting has been defined by a commitment to universality and independence. These core values must be retained and extended.

**Public Service Media must provide a universal service** equally available to everyone. This requires a continuing commitment to guaranteed **public funding** to ensure that Internet access and Public Service Media are **available to all** as a right of citizenship.

**Public Service Media must defend its independence** and ensure that editorial and creative decisions are independent from governmental and business interests. Safeguarding Public Service Media's role as a trusted and independent source of information and analysis and as a responsible mediator and moderator of user-generated comment and content requires transparent procedures of accountability. Such procedures need to be based on clear ethical principles.

**Public Service Media must promote diversity.** To ensure that it provides a service that is universally relevant and engaging, Public Service Media must aim to reflect the social, regional, economic, political, cultural, and religious diversity and complexity of every day life. Ensuring that the full range of experiences and voices are

seen and heard requires a renewed commitment to widening the social bases of recruitment to creative and institutional positions opening opportunities to minorities underrepresented in the mainstream commercial media.

**Public Service Media must be a driver of change in the creation of new content and services.** Public Service Media news and entertainment affairs production should pay particular attention to developing innovative styles of media production that highlight, explain, and contextualise issues with far-reaching social implications and their possible consequences.

**Public Service Media must build on its proven strengths** to produce innovative programmes and online content that supports children's educational development, speak to the full range of young people's interests and concerns and provides comprehensive resources for life-long adult learning. In the digital future, as in the past, entertainment, drama and sport events will remain central sites of public cultural expression and social solidarity.

**Public Service Media must play a central role in maximising the social value of public cultural resources.** Public service broadcasting emerged alongside an array of other publicly funded cultural institutions: museums, libraries, art galleries, universities, archives, and performance spaces. Public Service Media offers a readily accessible platform for collaborative ventures. Public Service Media are ideally placed to create and house a new public service search engine and platform, directing users to the full range of freely available relevant materials produced and curated by public educational and cultural institutions.

**Public Service Media must provide new opportunities for participation to safeguard inclusion and democracy.** Civil society supports a rich variety of self-organised, collaborative, activity-producing shared collective resources, from community

choirs to groups protecting wildlife habitats and campaigning for disadvantaged groups together with new forms of digital action, from creating open source software to contributing to citizen science projects. Public Service Media must use the full range of voluntary engagement and develop new forms of popular participation in key areas such as the production of programmes and the creation of public Internet resources.

#### 4. Digital Public Service Media: Towards a Public Service Internet

The digital giants have weakened democracy and the Internet. We need a new Internet. We need to rebuild the Internet. While the contemporary Internet is dominated by monopolies and commerce, the **Public Service Internet is dominated by democracy**. While the contemporary Internet is dominated by surveillance, the Public Service Internet is privacy friendly and transparent. While the contemporary Internet misinforms and separates the public, the Public Service Internet engages, informs and supports the public. Although the contemporary Internet is driven by and drives the profit principle, the Public Service Internet puts social needs first.

- **Data privacy** is a core aspect of the Public Service Internet. The Public Service Internet provides role model practices of data processing. Public Service Internet software and its contents are a common good that can be reused for non-commercial purposes. On Public Service Internet platforms, users can manage their data, download and re-use their self-curated data for reuse on other platforms. The digital giants store every click and every online move we make to monitor and monetise our behaviour. Public Service Internet platforms **minimise and decentralise data storage** and have no need to monetise and monitor Internet use. Public Service Internet platforms experiment with new forms of content licencing that advance the cultural and digital commons for not-for-profit and non-commercial purposes.

- Realising the Public Service Internet requires **new ideas, new technologies, new policies, and new economic models**. Public Service Media has the potentials it takes for becoming the key force that advances democratic communications in the digital age. Public Service Media and their Public Service Internet platforms need support and enablement. The licence fee that sustains Public Service Media is not a mechanism of the past but one for the digital future. The digital licence fee will extend and transform Public Service Media's licence fee in the digital age.
- **Public Service Media** should continue to be supported and funded so that they have the **resources they** need to realise and further develop their remit. In addition, the **Public Service Internet requires sustainable funding** that is based on mechanisms such as the licence fee, the Nordic model of a public service tax and transnational funding mechanisms.
- Public Service Internet platforms **treat users and workers fairly**. They are independent from corporate and political power. They are spaces where critical, independent journalists make high-quality news and where creative professionals make high-quality programmes that educate, inform and entertain in ways that reflect the affordances of the digital age. They engage citizens in new forms that build on the experiences, structures and content of the public service broadcast model. Public Service Internet platforms build on the broadcast model and go beyond it by making full use of and transforming the creative potentials of digital technologies and user participation. Public Service Media's remit will thereby be transformed into a new digital public service remit.
- The Public Service Internet's algorithms are **public service algorithms**. Such algorithms are open source and transparent. They are programmed in ways that advance the digital public service remit. Public service algorithms are algorithms by the public, for the public, and of the public. Public service algorithms help organising the platforms, formats and contents of the Public Service Internet by making recommendations and suggestions based on transparent procedures and without advertising, commerce, and surveillance. Public service algorithms are committed to reflect the diversity of the public and advance accessibility, fairness, and inclusivity.
- **The Internet is global**. The public sphere is global. The Public Service Internet and its platforms should be **global, regional and local**.

Such platforms can be accessed by anyone at any time and from anywhere. Public Service Internet platforms maximise the availability and permanence of Public Service Internet contents that contribute to humanity's cultural heritage. Public Service Internet platforms are ideally operated as international networks of Public Service Media organisations. For operating Public Service Internet platforms, Public Service Media organisations co-operate with others, including public organisations (universities, museums, libraries and so on), civil society, civic and community media, artists, digital commons projects, platform co-operatives, and so on. There is a sharing of content between such public and civic organisations on a joint platform. As a result, Public Service Media organisations together with public interest organisations create public open spaces that are mediated by Internet communication and that together form the Public Service Internet. An example for advancing the Public Service Internet is that European Public Service Internet Platforms based on the already existing infrastructures of the European Public Service Broadcasters could co-operate in creating a European Public Service Internet platform.

- The public service Internet requires a **global communications infrastructure**. Such a global infrastructure is independent from commercial and governmental interest and serve citizens and democracy.

## 5. Imagining Public Service Media Utopias in 2040

The contemporary Internet is the Internet of the corporate digital giants. However, an **alternative Internet** is possible. A **Public Service Internet** is possible. In fact, a Public Service Internet is needed. We envision a world where the Internet serves the public and advances democracy.

### *Imagine 2040*

- In 2040, Public Service Media will have remembered its future. It has adapted and transformed its **public service** mission to inform, educate and entertain according to an open and transparent digital society. It advances cultural citizenship and renew its contract with society.

- In 2040, Public Service Media's quality is **distinctive from commercial media and data companies**. It reaches the majority of the population. It serves humans' daily personal and societal needs. It will address citizens, not consumers.
- In 2040, Public Service Media is **sustainably funded** and will be based on a **reformed licence fee** that is accepted by citizens. The Public Service Internet's value for money is comprehensively documented, evaluated, publicly controlled, and transparent to the public.
- In 2040, a new, radical governance structure has made **Public Service Media independent from any external influences** like government and business interests. There are public hearings. There is quality control. Individuals feel represented by Public Service Media and its programming. They feel that Public Service Media's reporting is as neutral as possible, not influenced by any external pressures. Public Service Media news features public opinion.
- In 2040, Public Service Media is **universal**. It reaches out to all parts of the society, including fragmented and less educated audiences, info-avoiders, and minorities.
- In 2040, Public Service Media organisations are wealth creators for the creative sector that provide visibility to many artists such as musicians and filmmakers. In 2040, Public Service media delivers and creates high-quality entertainment to reflect and represent **the culture and diversity of everyday life**.
- In 2040, Public Service Media operates on the **local, national, regional and global level**. It invests into quality journalism, including investigative journalism, innovative formats and new technologies with appealing user experience for different groups in the society. Young people see public service journalism as an attractive and viable environment of information, communication, collaboration, and participation.
- In 2040, Public Service Media is **present, accessible and discoverable** on all relevant platforms. In 2040, Public Service Media is fully present in the digital sphere and provides the right content at the right points of time tailored to a plurality of devices and user habits. Public Service Media stays connected to and will closely listen to all of its audiences and stakeholders. It answers to society's important challenges and issues. It effectively communicates its own contribution to society, and its public value.
- In 2040, Public Service Media has developed a **collaborative programme** with schools, focusing on **media literacy and digital**

**literacy** through online courses and educational kits developed by Public Service Media. The advancement of digital and media literacy in society, including in schools, based on the values of public service media is a key aspect of education.

- In 2040, Public Service Media's **workforce is highly diverse** in terms of social class, ethnicity, gender, age, cultural background and geographic origin. Public Service Media's hiring mechanisms are inclusive and transparent.
- In 2040, Public Service Media has transformed from one-to-many broadcasting institutions into a **network infrastructure** that is guided by principles of public network value. Public network value means the use of digital communication networks such as the Internet for advancing Public Service Media's remit to facilitate public benefit, information, education and learning, democracy, citizenship, culture, civil society, creativity, and entertainment. The Public Service Internet is a networked infrastructure that advances the digital commons and digital citizenship. It strengthens universal access, communication, participation, co-operation, inclusion, and democracy.

A **different media world** is possible. A Public Service Internet and revitalised Public Service Media are urgently needed for sustaining democracy. We call on all audience members, citizens, users, readers, experts and non-experts, inside and outside of Public Service Media, in fact all citizens who care for the future of democracy in our countries to **participate in the quest for strengthening Public Service Media and creating a Public Service Internet**.

You can sign the Manifesto here <http://bit.ly/signPSManifesto>  
The full list of the Manifesto signatories can be seen here: <http://bit.ly/psmmanifesto>

New names of the signatories are regularly added.