

CHANNEL 4 REVIEW OF 2008

Major Themes in 2008

2008 was a year of dramatic creative renewal for Channel 4. In March, the organisation published *Next on 4*, a policy document laying out its public service vision for the future. Creative renewal in the schedule was evident even before then, with a raft of new programming in January occupying the space occupied in previous years by *Celebrity Big Brother*, which was rested. Over the course of the year, a range of authored series and campaigning programmes exemplified Channel 4's renewed commitment to high-impact programming capable of engaging mass-market audiences, stimulating debate and generating interest in important social, political and cultural issues. However, Channel 4's ability to fulfil its public service ambitions were curtailed by the downturn in the advertising market towards the end of the year, leading to significant reductions in the programming budget for both 2008 and 2009.

In an increasingly competitive environment, Channel 4's portfolio of channels and services maintained its viewing share at 11.9 per cent. The core channel share fell from 8.7 per cent in 2007 to 8.2 per cent in 2008.

Next on 4

Dramatic changes are reshaping the UK broadcasting ecology, as it moves towards a fully digital world. Viewers will have access to dozens, if not hundreds of channels, as well as the rapidly growing variety of video services delivered online. In this context, Channel 4 reaffirmed its commitment in *Next on 4* to remain a publicly-owned public service broadcaster whose primary purpose is the fulfilment of its legislative remit. To remain relevant to audiences, Channel 4 argued that it needed to make the transition from a *public service channel* (under current legislation the remit is applicable only to the core channel) to a *public service network*, with its digital TV channels and online services contributing to the overall delivery of public value.

Next on 4 laid out four core purposes which give practical expression to the end-benefits that result from the delivery by Channel 4 of its remit. These are:

- To nurture new talent and original ideas
- To champion alternative voices and fresh perspectives
- To challenge people to see the world differently
- To inspire change in people's lives.

The document also emphasised Channel 4's particular appeal to younger and more diverse audiences, and committed to strengthening its connection to them.

Channel 4 also committed to introducing a new 'Public Value report', which will provide a data-driven review of the organisation's delivery of public value each year. Its focus on quantitative measures that demonstrate impact will complement the existing Annual Review. The first Public Value report, covering 2008, will be published alongside Channel 4's Annual Report and Financial Statements in spring 2009.

Making space for the new

Next on 4 emphasised Channel 4's commitment to high-quality original British content as being the heart of its public service delivery. The decision to rest *Celebrity Big Brother* in 2008, and to cancel other popular long-running series such as *Brat Camp*, *You Are What You Eat*, *It's Me or the Dog* and *Selling Houses Abroad*, enabled Channel 4 to strengthen its commitment to new programming and original ideas from the start of the year. These are covered in the next section, 'Innovation, Experiment and Creativity'.

Major seasons and campaigns

2008 was distinguished by a series of high-impact authored seasons and campaigns. Over the course of the year, seasons such as *Islam Unveiled* and *Disarming Britain* aimed to raise awareness of topics such as understanding Islam and street weapons. Food was a recurring theme: *The Big Food Fight* season looked at the impact of Britain's eating habits on health and the environment, and exposed the horrors of intensive chicken farming. *Jamie's Ministry of Food* revived the national debate begun by *Jamie's School Dinners* in 2005. These are described in the relevant sections below.

Impact of economic downturn

Like other advertising-funded broadcasters, Channel 4 was severely affected by the economic downturn in the latter part of 2008, impacting on the scale of its investment in programming in the year, and its anticipated expenditure in 2009. The cyclical effects exacerbated ongoing structural changes relating to the digital switchover transition and the rapid growth in uptake of new digital media platforms, which compete with traditional television both for viewers' attention and advertisers' marketing budgets. Across the industry, television advertising revenues fell by five per cent in 2008, with even greater declines (of at least ten per cent, according to recent estimates) expected in 2009. The market looks set to decline by between 15 and 20 per cent in the first quarter of 2009.

While Channel 4 has no control over the overall advertising market, it can influence its own share of that market, and has worked hard to protect and grow its share of television advertising. Its share of the market held at 24.1 per cent in 2008 following growth in 2007. Channel 4 anticipates further share growth in 2009. However, even allowing for its strong performance in the market, total television advertising revenues are expected to have fallen by around £90 million over 2008 and 2009, with a corresponding impact on Channel 4's ability to invest in content.

As well as improving its share of the advertising market, Channel 4 has also worked hard to cut non-programming costs. Chief Executive Andy Duncan announced a massive restructuring and internal cost-savings project which was implemented in the fourth quarter of 2008 and included cuts in the workforce of around 25 per cent of total staff. Along with additional cuts in non-programming areas such as marketing, cost savings of over £50 million were achieved in the year. A further £75 million of cost savings have been targeted for 2009.

These measures enabled reductions in programming budgets to be minimised. Nonetheless, significant cuts had to be made. In 2008, the core channel programme budget was reduced by £21 million, from the original planned level of £517 million to £496 million. Across the TV channel portfolio, the total direct programme budget fell by £27 million, from £602 million to £575 million. Significant further cuts are anticipated in 2009 – total direct programme spend across the portfolio is currently budgeted at £525 million, a £50 million reduction on the 2008 level.

As part of the cuts in content in 2008, Channel 4 was also forced to withdraw its plans to launch a network of digital radio services, and some of the new commitments set out in *Next on 4* had to be re-phased.

Further details for future plans are set out in the 2009 Statement of Programme Policy.

Significant Changes

There were no significant changes in 2008.

Innovation, Experiment and Creativity

Channel 4 introduced a raft of new programmes in 2008. Creative highlights over the course of the year included *The Sex Education Show*, *The Family*, *Dead Set*, the *Generation Next* season focusing on new talent in August, *The Big Food Fight*, cross-platform initiatives in Education and the feature films *Hunger* and *Slumdog Millionaire*. Another triumph was *Britain's Got The Pop Factor... and Possibly A New Celebrity Jesus Christ Soapstar Superstar Strictly On Ice*. In this show, Peter Kay returned to Channel 4 with a hilarious and affectionate look at TV talent competitions, which became Channel 4's highest-rating programme of the year.

The pre-watershed *Sex Education Show* addressed serious issues such as the rise of sexually transmitted infections in Britain in a time slot accessible to families with children. Both this programme and *Embarrassing Illnesses*, supported by micro-sites *Sexperience* (www.channel4.com/sexperience) and www.channel4.com/bodies, took a frank and accessible look at health issues and aimed to encourage responsible sexual behaviour. These websites all generated an extremely high level of engagement (figures are given below in the 'Education Programme Support and Online' section).

Education launched a series of innovative cross-platform projects as part of its strategy to offer educational content on the platforms most used by 14- to 19-year-olds. £6 million was invested in projects tackling careers, leaving school, citizenship and sex education. *Osama Bin Everywhere* was a cross-platform initiative which aimed to broaden knowledge of Islam.

Dead Set was a witty satire on the world of television, asking what would happen if all of Britain were taken over by zombies apart from the contestants living in the *Big Brother* house. It proved a hit with audiences when it premiered on E4.

History innovated with the lavish period drama *City of Vice*, bringing to life lawless London in the age before the Metropolitan Police, and launched an online game *Bow Street Runner* to take the Georgian experience to a wider audience.

As part of *The Big Food Fight* season, *Hugh's Chicken Run* and *Jamie's Fowl Dinners* used the popularity and enthusiasm of Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Jamie Oliver to draw attention to the problem of intensive poultry farming in Britain. The themes of healthy and responsible eating were also evident in *Jamie's Ministry of Food*, with a 'Pass It On' campaign which aimed to show that it is possible to make tasty and nutritious meals quickly and cheaply.

The Family was an absorbing fly-on-the-wall documentary following the everyday lives of a family from Canterbury. This was a radical departure for documentaries, with elaborate new camera technology allied to traditional documentary editing techniques to create a series with the feel of a soap opera or kitchen-sink drama. It offered a novel perspective on the British family, and many viewers identified strongly with what was shown on screen, making comments such as, "it is an excellent programme that brings out all the emotions [...] It also makes you

learn a lot about your own family. Excellent viewing!" and "superb viewing material, praise indeed where praise is due. I am going through the same problems with my 16-year-old daughter and this programme has made me smile tonight after so many days of rows and turmoil."

Among the new projects that were rolled out in 2008 as part of the *Next on 4* blueprint were the launch of digital initiative 4iP, and new commitments to children's programming, diversity and talent. While the output of some of these initiatives will not come to the screen until 2009 or later, the commitment to new talent was particularly evident in 2008 with *Generation Next*. This month-long season in August built on Channel 4's tradition of promoting talent outside the broadcasting establishment, featuring projects such as *Comedy Lab* and *Tonightly*, four films by newcomers for *Channel 4 News*, and a competition to write an episode of *Hollyoaks*.

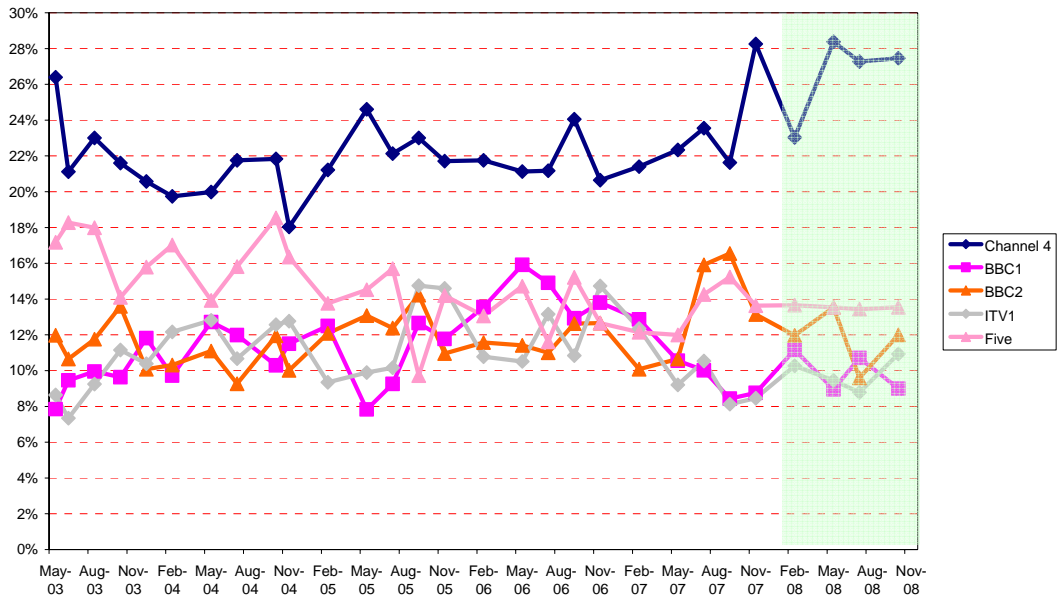
Also part of Channel 4's commitment to authored voices and to supporting new generations of talent, Andi Osho presented fresh comedy in *The Andi Osho Show* on E4 and featured in *Tonightly* on Channel 4. Chris and Alexander Van Tulleken got their big break as presenters in a series which looked at medical traditions across the world in *Medicine Men Go Wild*. And Mark Dolan went in search of record-breaking people and animals in *The World's... and Me*.

Further examples of the range of creative output supported by Channel 4 include the second series of *Fonejacker*, a hugely successful take on the prank phonecall. There was also a second series of *Skins*, the authentic drama about adolescence which has gained enormous popularity with a hard-to-reach youth audience. *Kevin McCloud's Big Town Plan* – the culmination of five years' work – was a unique documentary in which Kevin McCloud followed the struggle of Castleford's residents to secure attractive, sustainable regeneration for their town. *The Devil's Whore* brought together major actors like Dominic West, Michael Fassbender and Peter Capaldi in a drama set during the English Civil War – a refreshing departure from the overwhelming concentration of period dramas on the Tudor and Victorian eras.

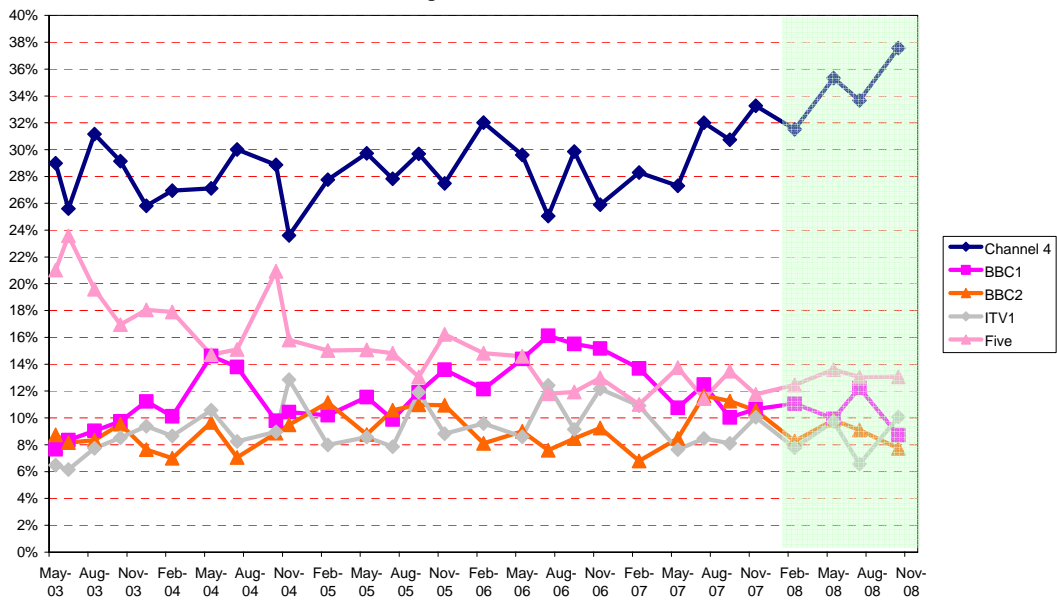
Channel 4 continues to perform very strongly on its main long-term audience tracking statements (four to five waves of research have been conducted each year since 2003). The five charts below show that Channel 4 maintained its distinctive place in the PSB ecology in 2008, notwithstanding the ever-growing proliferation of channels (2008 waves are shaded in the charts). On some measures, such as "Covers ground other channels wouldn't," the strength of feeling towards Channel 4 in 2008 was higher than at any time over the last five years.

Following the publication of *Next on 4*, Channel 4 has been piloting additional statements that reflect each of the core purposes articulated in that document. These will be presented in the Public Value report.

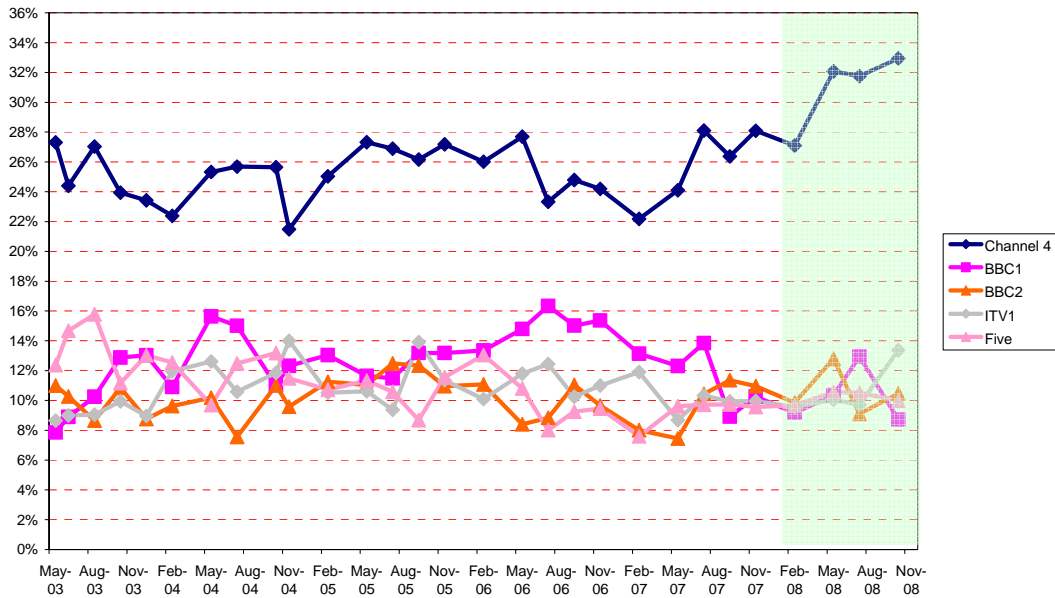
Caters for audiences other channels don't cater for



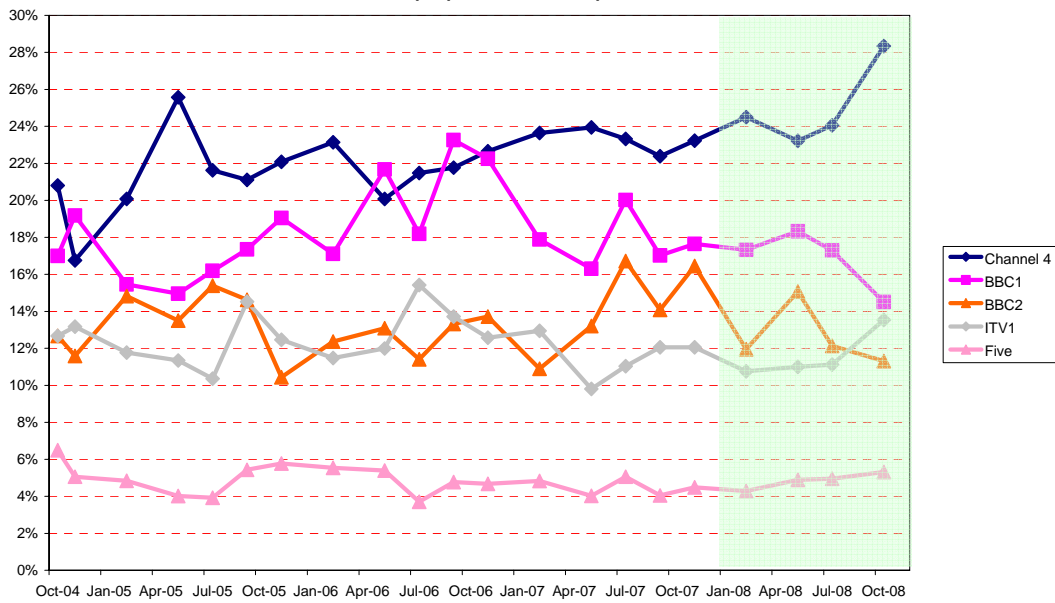
Covers ground other channels wouldn't

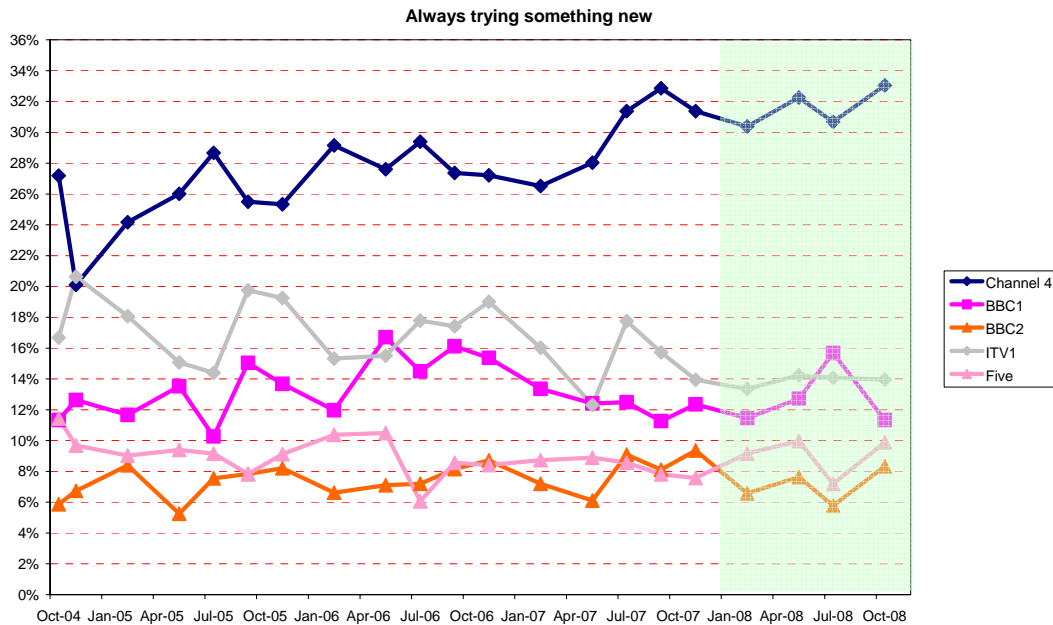


Takes a different approach to subjects compared to other channels



Allows people an alternative point of view





Tier 2 Arrangements

Channel 4 met all its quantitative licence requirements in 2008.

	Annual Quota	Achieved
News in peak	4 hours per week	4 hours
Current Affairs overall	4 hours per week	4 hours
Current Affairs in peak	1.54 hours per week	2 hours
Schools hours	330 hours per year	370 hours
Original production overall	60%	62%
Original production in peak-time	70%	76%
Production expenditure outside London	30%	33%
Regional hours	30%	41%
Independent production	25%	88%
European independent production	10%	56%
European origin	50%	70%

Subtitling, audio-description and signing quotas are given below in the 'Disability' section.

Programme Offer

NEWS

Channel 4 News continued to provide rigorous and distinctive reporting in 2008. The year began with an exclusive interview with former British Army officer Simon Mann, charged with plotting a coup against the President of Equatorial Guinea. A number of other foreign stories produced strong coverage, with undercover reporting from the Burmese cyclone and from Zimbabwe, and

powerful pictures from the civil conflict in Kenya. Chief Correspondent Alex Thomson's presentation from the Olympics refused to ignore awkward questions about whether the Chinese had kept to their agreement on press freedom and allowing protests.

The febrile atmosphere of British politics has generated a number of important reports. *Channel 4 News* broke the story that Gordon Brown would not be attending the opening of the Olympic Games and had a powerful live interview with a disabled athlete who was boycotting the Torch being paraded through London. Politics Reporter Cathy Newman's revelations contributed to the resignation of Boris Johnson's Deputy Mayor, Ray Lewis. Jon Snow hosted a live panel discussion from Crewe and Nantwich which pointed to a Labour loss. Politics Correspondent Gary Gibbon teased Ed Balls into a strong attack on David Miliband, warning that any attempt to unseat Gordon Brown would be 'crazy, destructive and divisive'.

News at Noon continues to grow in authority, with Krishnan Guru-Murthy as its regular presenter and a particular emphasis on politics and financial news. The programme broke the news that Home Information Packs were being scaled back. It revealed a huge increase in council fuel bills, leading to a likely rise in council tax bills. It also revealed the news of Peter Hain's resignation, and was extended to cover Tony Blair's resignation speech live.

More4 News has developed its style under the tenure of main presenter Kylie Morris, featuring the unexpected and unpredictable in addition to the main news of the day. It has reported on stories ignored by conventional news agendas, from riots in Bangladesh to former MI5 agent David Shayler proclaiming himself the Messiah. In 2008, it strengthened its UK coverage, with exclusive stories like the Russian government cashing in on the London property boom by selling its Embassy. The programme was nominated for Best News Programme in the Royal Television Society Awards.

The *Channel 4 News* website relaunched in 2007, with an immediate positive impact on traffic. The website's strategy is to focus on making the best possible use of original video as more people switch to high-speed broadband connections. Jon Snow's daily newsletter, Snowmail, continues to grow in value. His comments on Prince Harry were immediately linked by The Drudge Report, bringing 200,000 page views in the ensuing week. A strand of coverage around Freedom of Information requests has been developed – The Freedom Files – which has generated a series of exclusive stories that have aired on *More4 News* and *News at Noon*.

The newsroom moved to a new AVID production server in January. The introduction of newsroom editing for all producers has meant significant productivity and efficiency gains. The editorial team completed the move into a refurbished newsroom in May. It now accommodates all the production teams for *Channel 4 News*, *More4 News* and the online team alongside one another for the first time.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Dispatches continues as Channel 4's flagship documentary programme. Both *Dispatches* and *Unreported World* (the international-focused series) have remained at the heart of peak-time.

In 2008 *Dispatches* transmitted 40 programmes in peak-time, matching its output for 2007. The domestic agenda was given a higher priority as the year progressed and the true scale of the global financial crisis became clear. *Dispatches* covered subjects as diverse as food prices, bankers and their bonuses and how the City really makes money.

Domestic highlights included a two-part investigation into food (*The Truth about Your Food*) which kicked off the year to positive notices and strong audiences and was a key element of *The Big Food Fight* season. A revelatory enquiry into former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone

illustrated *Dispatches'* commitment to high-profile, long-term investigations – as did September's probe into Conservative Party finances (*Cameron's Money Men*). A three-part series on immigration presented by Rageh Omar (*Immigration – the Inconvenient Truth*) proved timely, confronting some of the myths and taboos around the subject.

Expanding its original and provocative coverage of multicultural Britain, *Dispatches* aired the follow-up to the critically acclaimed *Undercover Mosque* (*Undercover Mosque – the Return*). This received widespread notice and helped reignite the debate surrounding extremist Islamic teaching in the UK. *It Shouldn't Happen to a Muslim* asked whether terrorist attacks in recent years have led British society to become less tolerant of Muslims.

Dispatches also played a key role in Channel 4's *Disarming Britain* season, which examined street culture and gun and knife crime through a combination of documentary and drama. *Dispatches* contributed two films – one an investigation into the reality of knife crime reported by a doctor from a hospital in an area with high levels of street crime, and the other featuring exclusive access to Helen Newlove as she campaigned for changes in the law following the murder of her husband Gary.

At the same time, *Dispatches* maintained its reputation for delivering ambitious foreign investigations with an undercover film about life in Tibet under Chinese occupation in the run-up to the Olympics. *The Warlords Next Door* made the dangerous journey to an important and overlooked story in Somalia. A season marking the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq included Peter Osborne's trenchant critique (*Iraq – The Betrayal*) and a heartbreaking film from Sharmeen Obaid about the plight of Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan (*Iraq's Lost Generation*).

Other films featured energy prices, the high street sex trade, further analysis of the banking crisis and the plight of children in Nigeria accused of being witches. *Dispatches* met its target this year of offering around 30 domestic programmes and between eight and ten foreign films.

In 2008, *Unreported World* broadcast 20 editions. The series featured a number of rarely covered locations – such as Paraguay, Abkhazia and Bangladesh – while discovering new sides to more familiar countries: the Christians who live on rubbish in Cairo and the failure of Putin's policies in the arctic fringes of the Russian Federation.

Among the highlights of the year were an exclusive report from within the Darfur Janjaweed and major new insight into the population explosion behind electoral violence in Kenya. The programme's commitment to multiculturalism was reflected in an increasingly diverse team of reporters. The series oversaw the emergence of new talent, with three reporters and two directors new to UK network television.

INDEPENDENTS FUND – ILLUSTRATION OF CHANNEL 4'S COMMITMENT TO NEW TALENT

The *Channel 4 News* Independents Fund (or 'Indy Fund') is a key outlet for new and emerging young journalists. It provides them with often their first opportunity to produce and direct their own films.

In 2008 it focused on half a dozen such journalists and filmmakers who have worked with the *Channel 4 News* team over a period of months, building up portfolios of work that will help them project to the wider broadcast industry their abilities as news and current affairs producers. The Indy Fund plays a key role in contributing to the ongoing development of future British journalistic talent.

Twenty-six-year-old Kate Taunton of Minnow Films shot and reported four films for the Indy Fund in 2008. Kate had previously been producing *3 Minute Wonders*. The opportunity to make several films for *Channel 4 News* represented an excellent career development opportunity for her. Kate's films on young people and alcohol abuse have been profiled on the Channel 4 website under the banner *British Voices*.

The Indy Fund has also supported a number of investigative assistant producers as they make the jump to producing their first investigations. These include Mark Olden and John O'Mahoney of Evolve Television, Sian Bundred and Kate Quine of October Films and Phil Carter of Empirica. By October 2008, this group had produced ten Indy Fund films in total.

The Indy Fund also took part in the Channel 4 season supporting new talent, *Generation Next*. Dozens of universities and colleges of further education were contacted by *Channel 4 News* and their students asked to submit proposals for exclusive news reports. A shortlist of candidates was interviewed at ITN.

Journalism graduate Sam Kingsley of City University and Sarah Spendiff from Brighton City College were attached to Tony Stark of Moonstone Films for two months. Sarah produced a film in-house with Brigid Nzekwu on the disabled and fuel poverty which led the evening news. Sam produced and reported a piece on the shortage of social workers in the UK. *Channel 4 News* is continuing to work with Sam on his next investigation into mortgage fraud as producer on the Indy Fund.

4Talent has for the past two years supported the Indy Fund with £10,000 for training, which has been used to send producers on hostile environment courses and self-shooting camera courses.

EDUCATION

Education on Channel 4 spans peak-time programming with wide appeal, along with content specifically targeted at 14- to 19-year-olds, and a range of interactive educational content online.

Peak-time highlights included *Can't Read Can't Write* and *The Sex Education Show* – and there was substantial educational content in other programmes ranging from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's campaign against battery-farmed chickens to Niall Ferguson's history of finance, *The Ascent of Money*.

A new strategy was pursued in 2008 for Schools programming. The main feature of this strategy was a drive to make original content for the 14-to-19 age range as accessible as

possible through a strong focus on digital media. New cross-platform projects included *Battlefront* and *Year Dot*. A strong educational television schedule in the mornings remained, including series such as *KNTV Sex* and *Lifeproof*. Online Education offered websites and mobile content to complement peak-time series such as *Embarrassing Illnesses* and *The Sex Education Show*. Further details of these Education strands are given below.

SCHOOLS

Channel 4 Education in 2008 fulfilled its pledge to move its content for 14- to 19-year-olds onto the platforms where teens could find it most easily. New projects included *Year Dot* (www.channel4.com/YearDot), which traced the footsteps of 15 young people through their different ways of life, asking whether they could become more successful in their chosen paths – ranging from politics, music and comedy to fatherhood – with support from an online community. In partnership with MySpace, *Year Dot* gave teens the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges with other teens, via blogs, web video and three TV series over the year of the project.

Battlefront (www.channel4.com/battlefront) used a similar model to look at teen campaigning. In collaboration with Bebo, it followed 20 passionate campaigners as they tried to make a real difference to issues that affect their lives, from gun and knife crime, to recycling, to eating disorders. Via blogs, video and two TV series, the project saw them start their campaigns, meet with mentors and other campaigners, and find out how to make themselves heard in a media-saturated world. *The Insiders*, another partnership with MySpace, used real-life blogs from six people in careers that many teenagers aspire to – a teacher, a doctor, an actress, an indie musician, a policeman and a fashion promoter – as the basis for an online-only comedy series. Using video, blogs and workplace guides, *The Insiders* provided a raw, funny and informative alternative to traditional career advice.

Alongside web projects linked to social networks like Myspace and Bebo, Games formed a major part of Channel 4's new Education strategy. *Bow Street Runner* was launched as a web-based game to support the *City of Vice* peak-time history series. Using three-dimensional graphics and high-definition live action, *Bow Street Runner* created an atmospheric and historically accurate representation of Georgian London in which players were challenged to solve five mysteries as part of John and Henry Fieldings' nascent police force. The game has been played over one million times since it launched in February, and has won three major awards, including a British Academy of Film and Television Arts award for best interactive childrens' project.

A robust Education schedule continued between 9.30am and 12pm, with 30 new hours of programmes alongside repeats of some of Channel 4's best peak-time education series. *Year Dot* and *Battlefront* both launched TV series to feed back into their online projects. *KNTV Sex* was an innovative sex education series associated with *Slabovia.TV*, a humorous and informative take on the subject aimed at 14- to 16-year-olds. In addition, Channel 4 offered valuable education about relationships with *Lifeproof*, a ten-part series with teens asking their friends to help them solve dilemmas around contraception, marriage and other relationship issues.

Osama Bin Everywhere was a cross-platform project, bringing the Islamic world to teens by locating hundreds of people with the name Osama in order to illustrate the richness and diversity within Islamic communities. *Families and Drugs* looked at the effects of drugs on families and siblings, and *The Family: Teen Stories* gave teenagers a chance to comment on *The Family* series and their own experiences of family life.

Rockcorps was a stand-out initiative which introduced the concept of volunteering in exchange for concert tickets to young people across the UK. The project culminated in a concert featuring A-list performers at the Royal Albert Hall with an audience of 5,000.

Education has carried out extensive research into the impact of these new cross-platform projects, and worked with Futurelab to get teachers' feedback on their impact and usefulness. Channel 4 also commissioned focus groups with target audiences as the new projects developed. Responses to these projects were uniformly positive, with an average rating of eight out of ten, and recognition of how the projects are going beyond traditional TV to make it easier for teenagers to participate. Working with partners like MySpace and Bebo meant that teens had the tools to comment and discuss their opinions about Channel 4's projects. For example, one of the focus groups looking at *Battlefront* thought the project was "a lot more accessible for people who wouldn't normally [campaign]. Who don't want to stand up and speak, but typing or videoing is better for them." Another commented that *Battlefront* "made me discover lots of amazing ideas that young people have that could really change and improve the world." Meanwhile, *Year Dot* helped them think about the goals they were setting for themselves, and how they can discuss this with others. One member of the focus group said that *Year Dot* had "inspired me to begin making video blogs and making a video diary."

EDUCATION PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND ONLINE

January saw the launch of *Picture This* (www.channel4.com/picturethis), an arts series focused on the art and craft of photography with highly integrated television and online formats. Viewers could pit themselves against the TV contestants and take part in the on-air photographic challenges, the best of their efforts being added into the programmes. The web community continued to grow, with regular photographic challenges set and undertaken communally.

Embarrassing Bodies online (www.channel4.com/bodies) provided a comprehensive website centred on video commissioned for the web and mobile phones, including a series of 'self-check' guides. More than 3,500 (pre-moderated) user comments over the first week of broadcast indicated a remarkably high level of audience engagement. The *Embarrassing Teenage Bodies* website was also enormously popular, with 1.8 million video views and 99,000 checks taken with the site's STI Checker in the six months following its launch. User comments included, "thanks to you I've had the confidence to go and have an STD test," and, "after watching your show, my husband decided to check himself one night whilst having a shower. To his shock he found a lump [...] thanks to the show he managed to find it in time."

As mentioned above, *Sexperience* (www.channel4.com/sexperienceuk) is the online dimension of *The Sex Education Show*. It gathered real people's real experiences of sex (in both video and text form) to generate insight into a range of sexual problems and solutions. A majority of questions were from 15- to 18-year-olds, revealing a widespread desire among young people to fill basic gaps in their knowledge of contraception and physical development. In October *Sexperience* was running at 6,000 per cent of the traffic of the Government's official sex education site, with four million page views, 500,000 visits and 9,000 comments. NHS staff recommended it to patients as a resource – for example, at the Teenage Pregnancy Unit in Lincolnshire, and at the Royal London Hospital. One healthcare professional commented, "as a doctor, I am delighted that *Sexperience* seems to have lifted barriers for at least some of my patients who might never have come in otherwise."

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

Channel 4 launched its pilot Children's Fund, part of the vision laid out in *Next on 4*. A number of factual and drama projects were developed in 2008. For instance, *Big School* (working title) began filming at Dixons Academy in Bradford, following a group of 11-year-olds through the

highs and lows of their first year at secondary school. The financial cuts at the end of 2008 meant that transmission will be delayed from 2009 to 2010.

SCIENCE AND HISTORY

Specialist Factual contributed a wide range of programmes at 9pm, both in terms of formats and subjects covered. These ranged from the major drama-documentary about London before the Metropolitan Police (*City of Vice*) to adventure science in *Medicine Men Go Wild's* exploration of medical traditions across the globe.

There was high-impact authorship with Niall Ferguson's scrutiny of financial history *The Ascent of Money* and Richard Dawkins' *Enemies of Reason*, a polemic on knowledge and superstition. *Stephen Hawking: Master of the Universe* represented a triumph for core science, with the most famous living physicist introducing some of the most important questions in physics, such as String Theory, time travel and black holes.

Difficult subjects were tackled in popular ways. Particularly successful were *Tony Robinson's Crime and Punishment*, which attempted a history of the evolution of British law, and *Kevin McCloud and the Big Town Plan*, which oversaw the culmination of a five-year regeneration project in Castleford. Output linked with major online initiatives, such as the *Bow Street Runner* game that accompanied *City of Vice* and sophisticated web support for *Medicine Men Go Wild* and *Kevin McCloud and the Big Town Plan*. Niall Ferguson's *Ascent of Money* presented a history of money and financial institutions, especially pertinent in this year of economic meltdown.

RELIGION AND OTHER BELIEFS

Channel 4 set out to create a major religious 'event' in 2008 – something that would become a real talking point. This was achieved with the *Islam Unveiled* season. Tazeen Ahmad and Robert Beckford cemented their standing as established faces of Channel 4. In 2008 viewers heard from a series of alternative voices not often heard – from Sharia judges in the UK, to female Hamas politicians in Gaza and pro-life Christians in the UK.

The Qur'an was a highlight of *Islam Unveiled*. This critically acclaimed two-hour documentary was complemented by the visually stunning series *Seven Wonders of the Muslim World*, which combined history of architecture with the telling of personal stories by individual Muslims from different parts of the world. There was also bespoke website *Osama Loves* and a series of high-profile non-broadcast talks by Islamic experts such as Karen Armstrong and Tariq Ramadan.

The season set out to answer the question 'what is Islam?' by looking at what Muslims actually believe in and asking whether issues involving Islam today can be answered by going back to the Qur'an itself. *Divorce: Sharia Style* was a one-hour documentary that exclusively followed the work of the UK Sharia Council, the country's most significant Sharia organisation. It focused on the main aspect of the Council's work, Islamic divorce. The filmmakers gained the trust of the Council and people going through the process of divorce in order to examine for the first time on British TV how Islamic divorce works and the cultural issues involved.

There was an extremely positive audience response to the *Islam Unveiled* season. According to research carried out by YouGov in July, 77 per cent of non-Muslims and 78 per cent of Muslims interviewed agreed that *The Qur'an* was high quality – and these figures were 73 per cent and 83 per cent respectively for *Seven Wonders of the Muslim World*. The season was particularly admired by those who believe Islam is often portrayed in a misleading way on television. Eighty-two per cent of Muslims interviewed felt that the images of their religion on TV are

usually negative – and 86 per cent believed more programmes like *The Qur'an* ought to be broadcast.

Reverend Death was a 90-minute documentary by award-winning filmmaker Jon Ronson, charting his six-year relationship with an American Unitarian minister who 'assists' people to commit suicide. It was a challenging film that mixed humour with deep reflection on the ethics of 'assisted suicide'.

The Secrets of the 12 Disciples was a two-hour documentary broadcast at Easter, in which leading black theologian Dr Robert Beckford unravelled the story of the disciples. The show attracted an audience of over 1.5 million. *Make Me a Christian* and *Make Me a Muslim* were two powerful three-part series that asked whether traditional Christian and Muslim values have a role to play in addressing the problems of contemporary Britain.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Channel 4 upheld its reputation as the home of contemporary British documentary, with impressive series of *Cutting Edge* and *First Cut* as well as enormous popular successes like *The Secret Millionaire*.

Programmes such as these exemplify Channel 4's commitment to the documentary form. *Next on 4* committed Channel 4 and More4 to running 260 new documentaries a year, one every weekday on average.

High-impact seasons and campaigns were at the heart of Channel 4's pledge of creative renewal throughout 2008. These included:

- *Islam Unveiled*
This set out to demystify Islam through documentaries such as *The Qur'an* and *Seven Wonders of the Islamic World* (see above for full details).
- *Disarming Britain*
This was a timely examination of street weapons and gang culture, featuring both documentary and drama. Highlights included two special editions of *Dispatches* and the drama *Fallout*, which told the story of a police officer returning to the council estate where he grew up in order to investigate a murder. Chaired by Cherie Booth QC, *The Street Weapons Commission* gathered evidence on knives and guns across five cities to form the basis of a report and a debate chaired by Jon Snow.
- *The Big Food Fight*
The aim of this season was to provoke debates around the topics of healthy eating and animal welfare. In *Hugh's Chicken Run*, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall attempted both to produce his own intensively farmed chicken and to convert shoppers in his local town to buying free range. In *Jamie's Fowl Dinners*, Jamie Oliver held a gala dinner at which he demonstrated key aspects of the way intensively farmed chickens are reared and killed – then asked whether any of his guests were still hungry. Audience research showed that these popular campaigning documentaries resulted in a discernible shift in public opinion and behaviour. Almost half of respondents said the season had changed the way they thought about food – and over a third said they would change their buying habits as a result. Another survey found that over half of respondents claimed they would buy free range or organic chicken after watching the programmes.
- *Jamie's Ministry of Food*
This campaign focused on the northern town of Rotherham in order to draw attention to

the wider problem of unhealthy eating in Britain. In the programme, Jamie Oliver launched his 'Pass It On' initiative, teaching recipes to small groups of people for them to pass on to friends and neighbours. He opened a Ministry of Food Centre in Rotherham, where people could go for cooking advice, and challenged local businesses to take responsibility for encouraging their employees to eat healthily.

Channel 4 tackled the taboo subject of adult illiteracy in *Can't Read Can't Write*, which received widespread notice and generated much discussion on the Channel 4 chat forums. Other series like *The Woman Who Stops Traffic* provided an alternative, accessible perspective on the environmental debate. The highest-profile documentary event in autumn 2008 was *The Family* (described above).

Channel 4 increased the number of *Cutting Edge* films to 30 a year. The strand reflected numerous aspects of contemporary Britain. *Ambulance: 8 Minutes to Disaster* traced a month in the life of one team of paramedics. *My Street* was Sue Bourne's quest to meet many of her neighbours for the first time after having lived in the same house for 14 years. *13 Kids and Wanting More* looked at the strains and rewards experienced by some of Britain's largest families. *Scams, Fiddles and Honest Claims* gained rare access to investigators of insurance fraud, while *Bobski the Builder* took a light-hearted look at immigration and the increase of Eastern European construction workers in Britain.

Secret Millionaire was the highest-rating documentary series on Channel 4 in 2008, a phenomenal achievement in social documentary. The format drew in a huge audience whilst illustrating the realities of life for many of Britain's poorest communities.

The new talent project *First Cut* went from strength to strength with popular, talked-about films by new directors. These comprised *My Boyfriend*, *the Suffolk Strangler*, about one woman's attempt to rebuild her life after her partner was convicted of murdering five women in Ipswich in 2006, *Watch Me Disappear*, about people whose funerals are not attended by anyone, and *Britain's Whitest Family*, about young people living with albinism.

The series of short films *3 Minute Wonders* continued to offer new talent and new companies an entry point to Channel 4 at peak-time.

The Channel 4 Documentary Film Foundation, now in its third year, remained committed to investing in a range of innovative, challenging and campaigning documentary films that would have struggled to get made elsewhere. Several of these films featured on More4 as part of the *True Stories* strand. In *We Are Together*, filmmaker Paul Taylor told the moving story of a choir formed by children living at the Agape orphanage in South Africa, many of whom have been affected by HIV/AIDS. This aired as part of Channel 4's *Generation Next* season in August. *Chosen*, a film featuring three men talking about the sexual abuse they had suffered at school, was a powerful and insightful documentary about the nature of paedophilia and grooming, which prompted Nancy Banks-Smith of *The Guardian* to write: "The most wonderful thing last night was *Chosen* [...] I do not recall hearing truth so stripped and shivering before."

INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

In 2008 Channel 4 built on its reputation for strong international coverage across its output. *Unreported World* continued to provide exclusive investigations into the world's least-explored territories (highlights listed above), while *Dispatches* delivered arresting documentaries about a number of different countries. Somalia, Tibet and Iraq all received attention, and *Cutting Edge* produced several foreign editions. Among these, Jane Treays' film *The Virgin Daughters* stood out with its examination of the 'chastity' movement sweeping the US, as did the film about

evangelical child preachers *Baby Bible Bashers*, and *The 9/11 Faker*, the remarkable story of one woman who falsely claimed to have been in the Twin Towers when they were attacked.

One-off drama *The Shooting of Thomas Hurndall*, documenting the real-life battle of the Hurndall family to find out the truth behind the shooting of their son in Gaza, was broadcast to great critical acclaim and sparked fierce debate among viewers.

DRAMA

Drama developed its commitment to commissioning groundbreaking drama with a strong sense of authorship. Channel 4 worked with the best of new and established British writing, directing and producing talent to create programmes which felt genuinely fresh and unlike those seen on any other channel. It sought to commission drama that was high-profile, debate-provoking, audacious and entertaining.

Notable successes in 2008 included a second series of the highly acclaimed *Skins*. E4's first home-grown drama was one of the most talked-about series of the year, with an innovative online presence. The fifth series of *Shameless* maintained its freshness and popularity.

There were also a number of compelling one-off films, such as *The Shooting of Thomas Hurndall* (described above), a 90-minute drama set in a psychiatric ward (*Poppy Shakespeare*) and *Fallout*, which formed the centrepiece of the *Disarming Britain* season. *The Devil's Whore*, written by Peter Flannery, directed by Marc Munden and set against the backdrop of the English Civil War, was the highlight of the autumn schedule.

COMEDY AND ENTERTAINMENT

Channel 4's distinctive editorial values are embodied by its comedy and entertainment shows: they are young in attitude and appeal, modern and representative of contemporary culture, and feature new talent and new ideas.

Despite producing only a small fraction of what the BBC produces, Channel 4 won BAFTA awards for Best Sitcom (*Peep Show*) and Best Comedy (*Fonejacker*). *Star Stories*, *The Friday Night Project*, *The IT Crowd*, and *Russell Brand's Ponderland* were also nominated for major awards. *Peep Show* also won a British Comedy Award and an RTS Award. The third series of *The IT Crowd* gained both a Rose d'Or Award and an RTS Award. Another notable success was *Britain's Got The Pop Factor... and Possibly a New Jesus Christ Soapstar Superstar Strictly on Ice* (see 'Innovation, Experiment and Creativity' for details).

Channel 4 continues to champion innovative and distinctive programmes. *The Kevin Bishop Show*, *Tonightly*, *The Inbetweeners*, *Comedy Lab* and *Dead Set* were just a few of the programmes unlikely to have been commissioned elsewhere. This year new talent has been supported more than ever before. *Comedy Lab* and *Funny Cuts* series gave many new writers, performers, producers and directors their first break on television. With the *Generation Next* new talent month in August and in particular on *Tonightly*, diverse talent was showcased both on- and off-screen.

Many previously unknown comedians were given terrestrial TV exposure in more mainstream programmes like *Comedy Live Presents with Russell Brand* and *8 Out of 10 Cats*. *Dead Set* was a youth drama written by Charlie Brooker that blended a number of genres from horror to comedy to reality television (see 'Innovation, Experiment and Creativity' for further details). The *Comedy Lab* commissioned six films from new talent and new companies, and Left Bank's *School Of Comedy* has already been commissioned for a six-part series. *Funny Cuts*, ten ten-minute films on E4, featured even more new talent and original ideas.

Bremner, Bird and Fortune continued to be the only place for intelligent political satire on terrestrial TV, taking a light-hearted look at the credit crunch in October. *The Secret Policeman's Ball* featured Eddie Izzard, Alan Carr, Frank Skinner, Mitchell and Webb, the cast of *The IT Crowd* and many more performing fresh comedy in order to raise money for Amnesty International.

Justin Lee Collins and Alan Carr continued their successful partnership with Channel 4, presenting *The Friday Night Project*, *The Sunday Night Project* and *Alan Carr's Celebrity Ding-Dong*. Charlotte Church returned with her mixture of comedy and chat, *The Charlotte Church Show*, while Russell Brand embarked on a new venture with *Russell Brand's Ponderland*, his irreverent look at archive footage.

Online, *Fonejacker's* web presence and in particular the *Go Jack Yourself* application has been extremely popular. The *8 Out of 10 Cats* podcast continues to ride high in the iTunes chart, and *Dead Set* built a significant online presence and community.

ARTS AND MUSIC

The major trend in 2008 was for Arts projects to be increasingly cross-platform – notably, *Big Art*, *Picture This* and the launch of 4Mations.tv (all described below). The overriding aim was to create work which would make a difference and create change beyond the screen.

Channel 4's major public art series, *Big Art*, has been moved to spring 2009 for financial reasons. The four commissioned artworks are now in place, and *Big Art Mob* has engaged a new audience through mobile phone technology.

The four-part series *Picture This* was a competition for the next generation of digital photographers, designed to enlighten the viewer interested in the art of digital photography. The series dovetailed with the *Picture This* website, a unique collaboration with photo-sharing site Flickr and Yahoo, encouraging the general public to upload their photographs for review by Martin Parr. The programme was cast from the website, and viewers could upload their pictures during the show. This was the first truly cross-platform photography project and it successfully produced high levels of user engagement. By April 2008, there were almost two million page views and 100,000 unique visitors. The *Picture This* competition, which took place in January, received over 8,000 entries.

New animation site 4Mations.tv launched with the intention of providing a home for British animation. In addition to uploading films and creating communities online, the site will commission new work regionally and provide tools to create online animation films. A book by Clare Kitson, *25 Years of Channel 4 Animation*, highlighted Channel 4's contributions in this area.

In the *Art and Money* season, three presenter-led polemical films looked at the commercialisation of art and how it has changed the way art is made and experienced. These films combined current affairs with art history, and all three presenters were new to Channel 4 Arts. Robert Hughes – one of the most celebrated living art critics – discussed the implications of trends begun in the Sixties New York art scene for contemporary art. Marcel Theroux examined Russian oligarchs' investment in art, whilst Ekow Eshun looked into the effect of the modern art market on aboriginal art.

Channel 4 Arts routinely promotes new talent, bringing two ambitious long-term projects to fruition this year. *Peter and the Wolf*, Suzie Templeton's first animated feature – commissioned for TV – won an Oscar. *Hunger*, artist Steve McQueen's first feature film – developed and

commissioned by Channel 4 – won eight major prizes including the Camera d'Or in Cannes and the Gucci Prize in Venice, and will be broadcast on Channel 4 in 2009.

Channel 4 joined forces with Film London and the Serpentine Gallery to create the Derek Jarman Award, the new prize for a first-time filmmaker which includes a commission for *3 Minute Wonders*. To launch the award Isaac Julien's biographical feature *Derek* was commissioned for More4 and an exhibition of Jarman's artworks for the Serpentine.

Channel 4 maintained its links with the TATE to commission new work for the screen from artists, and its strategic partnership with Arts Council England to develop new work for 4iP.

FEATURE FILMS

Film4 continued to support new and experienced British filmmakers and to develop films that are innovative and challenging and that resonate with a contemporary British audience. Films in production this year have covered a wide range of genres, but are united by a strong sense of 'voice'. The focus is on visionary filmmakers – those leading talents of their generation who have something unique to say.

Significant success has been enjoyed at the box office this year. Film4 has received an impressive 12 Oscar nominations: ten for Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* including Best Director and Best Film, while *Happy-Go-Lucky* and *In Bruges* were both nominated for Best Original Screenplay. *Brick Lane*, *A Complete History of My Sexual Failures*, *Donkey Punch*, *Garage*, *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People* and *Hunger* all opened in 2008.

Warp X was rolled out, a low-budget digitally integrated studio based in Sheffield. This has the triple aims of developing the most distinctive first-time features, connecting them with audiences and building a viable and sustainable structure to continue to do this outside London.

At the same time, higher-profile films have been developed which have a real opportunity to find their audience in an overcrowded marketplace. Films in production in 2008 included *All Tomorrow's Parties*, *Unmade Beds*, Ken Loach's *Looking for Eric* and Peter Jackson's *The Lovely Bones*.

This Is England scooped the Best British Film Award at the BAFTA film awards, and was the second highest ever-rating film on the Film4 channel with over one million viewers. Film4 also took Best Short Film with Paddy Considine's *Dog Altogether*. Other new talent successes included Simon Ellis's *Soft* (part of Cinema Extreme), which won Best Short at Edinburgh International Film Festival along with numerous other accolades, Sam Taylor-Wood's *Love You More*, which was among the Official Selections for short films at Cannes, and *Kingsland*, the directorial debut of prolific writer Tony Grisoni, which was accepted into the London Film Festival this year and has been invited to submit for Sundance 2009.

Last year's short films were all transmitted within August's *Generation Next* season on Channel 4 and one film was shown as part of Film4's *Frightfest* season.

Channel 4 also made first-time features with black director Mark Tonderai (*Hush*) and Chinese director and Booker-shortlisted novelist Xiaolu Gao (looking at a young woman's erotic rites of passage in China and the UK). Film4 partnered with B3 Media and Binger Institute to create the FeatureLab, a six-month feature development programme for ten black and minority-ethnic writers and directors.

This year also saw the inaugural Director's Lab run at the Edinburgh Film Festival (EIFF), which Channel 4 co-funded with EIFF and the UK Film Council. This aimed to mentor and develop six

new directing voices in a similar way to the Sundance Labs and has Kevin Macdonald and Danny Boyle as mentors.

SPORT

Racing continued to be the major live sport covered by Channel 4. Audiences were up year on year, and the Cheltenham Festival saw the highest racing audience peak (over two million) for seven years. Other programmes to perform especially well were the live *London Red Bull Air Race Show*, and *The Highlander Games* which received the biggest early Sunday morning audience for a number of years (over 500,000).

Despite the gloomy financial situation, Channel 4 managed to secure around £4 million of sponsorship and event investment. Half of this went to racing, and half to approximately 350 hours of off-peak programming. Partnerships were formed to create new content such as Freeze, the four-day sports and music festival held at Battersea Power Station in London in October. Collaboration with Boomerang resulted in the acquisition of the *B-Boy World Series* and substantial sponsor investment from Sony Ericsson.

4Sport was commissioned as the first major 4iP fund investment project. This cross-platform sport project will bring to a wider audience a number of 'minority' Olympic sports in the run-up to the 2012 London games. It is already attracting a number of interested partners from sponsors to Sport England to the Youth Sports Trust.

LEISURE INTERESTS

In 2008 Channel 4 remained committed to catering for a range of audiences with diverse interests. Property-related features this year helped maintain the high profile of presenters like Kevin McCloud and Sarah Beeny, whilst examining the implications of the recession on the housing market, in programmes such as *Property Ladder*, *A Place in the Sun: Home or Away?* and *Grand Designs* on More4. There was a particular emphasis on aspects of health, sexual health and the body, encompassing *The Sex Education Show*, *Embarrassing Bodies* and Dawn Porter's self-titled investigations into different sexual practices. Food was another area of strong programming, within which *The Big Food Fight* season and *Jamie's Ministry of Food* (both described above) were especially successful. Family life was yet another theme, producing the exceptional documentary *The Family* and drama-documentary *The Shooting of Thomas Hurndall*.

In music, Channel 4 continued to support new and interesting musical talent through interviews, competitions and live performances in ventures such as *T-Mobile Transmission*, *Orange unsignedAct*, *Nokia Green Room* and new channel *4Music*.

Come Dine with Me moved into an hour-long peak-time slot for the first time and proved a big hit. Terry Wogan joined the Channel 4 daytime line-up for a four-week pilot series *Terry Wogan's Total Recall* which performed well and was recommissioned for 2009. *Deal or No Deal* played an important role in bringing diversity to Channel 4 daytime by featuring contestants from many different backgrounds and ethnicities, as well as those with disabilities in an inclusive and normalising way.

Richard Madeley and Judy Finnegan left Channel 4 after an enormously successful seven-year partnership. Budget constraints and declining ratings meant that £2 million had to be lost from the *Countdown* budget. In the context of the financial pressures that Channel 4 faces, this unfortunately meant having to lose the two main presenters, but this provided the welcome opportunity to refresh its longest-running show.

OTHER CHANNELS

MORE4

The highlight of More4 in 2008 was *True Stories*, with 40 of the best feature-length documentaries from around the world. These included Dave Gorman's road trip in search of the liberal spirit of 1970s America (*America Unchained*), French actress Sandrine Bonnaire's account of her sister's struggle with autism (*Her Name is Sabine*), an examination of the beauty of the Golden Gate Bridge (*The Bridge*) and Brian Woods' *Chosen* (described above). More4 also commissioned the feature-length documentary *Thriller in Manila*, in which former boxer 'Smokin' Joe Frazier looks back at his legendary clash with Muhammad Ali in the Philippines in 1975.

More4 was the only channel to show all the US Presidential debates in their entirety as the highlight of an *American Election* season. Also featured were the multi-E Emmy award-winning HBO drama series *John Adams* and *Recount*, Kevin Spacey's film about the Florida elections of 2000.

The Kubrick season highlighted the work of the acclaimed director, and featured a newly-commissioned film about his life.

For Christmas, More4 offered the *Ian McKellen in Shakespeare* season. The highlights included Trevor Nunn's production of *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Richard III* – as well as a wealth of UK acting talent in a specially commissioned documentary *To Be or Not to Be in Shakespeare*.

The news hour continued to offer audiences *More4 News* at 8pm and Jon Stewart's irreverent *The Daily Show* at 8.30pm, featuring his journalistic coup of an interview with Tony Blair in September 2008.

E4

E4 has consistently punched above its weight this year. Highlights of 2008 included the second series of *Skins* and *Fonejacker*, and new features *The Inbetweeners* and *Dead Set*. These all demonstrated E4's knack for developing breakthrough hits that strike a chord with audiences and critics alike, as well as winning major awards.

In 2008 E4 broadcast its first ever sitcom, *The Inbetweeners*, to great critical and audience acclaim, with relatively new independent company Bwark and a brand-new cast of actors. Continuing E4's desire to keep stretching the channel into new areas, *Dead Set* was broadcast in the autumn, a genre-defying youth drama written by Charlie Brooker.

The end of the year saw a group of women, nearly all of whom were new to television, write and perform their own material in sketch show, *Beehive*. Six-part factual entertainment series *Rude Tube* explored the best of the clips from the internet presented by new comedy talent, Matt Kirshen. The *Hollyoaks* spin-off *Late Night Hollyoaks* was broadcast in order to superserve its young and loyal audience.

Allied to all of this was E4's strategy of aligning www.e4.com with the TV channel in an interesting way that added value to the TV shows. E4 worked more closely and earlier than ever with its website to create a multiplatform world for the TV programmes. *Big Brother's Big Mouth* tried out a lot of new comedy and presenting new talent this year, while *Big Brother's Little Brother* brought another face to a bigger audience in George Lamb.

FILM4

The Film4 channel continued to showcase British films, and weekly strand *The British Connection* took over the entire Film4 schedule for two weeks in March 2008, in which every film shown was of British origin.

The films highlighted the depth and range of Film4's commitment to home-grown cinema. The afternoon slots featured classic cinema of the past, while contemporary favourites played in peak-time, along with acclaimed films from directors Shane Meadows, Mike Leigh and Jonathan Glazer. The season gave audiences a rare chance to see *Resurrected*, director Paul Greengrass' first feature, and Alan Clarke's last production, *The Firm*.

The British Connection season was timed to celebrate the theatrical release of a wave of major indigenous films, including Mike Leigh's Film4 production *Happy-Go-Lucky*. The season reinforced Film4's reputation for making and showing films, promoting the new theatrical releases with features, exclusive clips and interviews with key talent, with bespoke trails and special stings before each film.

To accompany Channel 4's new talent season *Generation Next* in August, Film4 screened a season of short films highlighting new directors, particularly those identified with the 'mumblecore' movement. The films, most of which had never been seen on TV in this country, included Andrew Bujalski's *Mutual Appreciation* and Jay Duplass' *The Puffy Chair*.

The channel remains committed to showing the best of international cinema. In July, the anniversary of the death of great Swedish director Ingmar Bergman was marked with a season of his films, including *The Seventh Seal*, *Wild Strawberries* and *Smiles of a Summer Night*. This was complemented by an even wider selection of his films available on 4oD. Notable foreign-language films *Silent Light*, *KM31*, *9th Company*, *Black Book*, *Taxidermia* and *I'm a Cyborg but That's OK* were all premiered. Towards the end of the year a season of films from Argentina – currently one of the world's cinematic hotspots – was programmed.

ONLINE

Channel 4's online strategy for 2008 was to build and improve supporting sites for programmes, while redeveloping key programmes where online activities could significantly enhance the viewer's experience.

In particular, there was a drive to create a more video-rich suite of services. This entailed:

- More video content available overall.
- More types of video content available – clips as well as catch-up and archive.
- More places to watch – 4oD, www.channel4.com/watchonline as well as syndication on third-party sites such as Bebo.

These initiatives were a key source of growth, with video views multiplying substantially. There was a 51 per cent increase in usage of programme clips, and a 75 per cent increase in the use of catch-up on full-length shows online and on-demand – 136 million views across the year. Catch-up was launched this year on www.channel4.com as well as on 4oD.

The main focus has been the key channel destination sites for www.channel4.com and www.e4.com. Commercial destinations www.aplaceinthesun.com and www.4music.com were also launched, and the planning process for the new *Channel 4 News* site (which will be relaunched in 2009) got underway.

The main Channel 4 and E4 sites attracted an average of 175 million visits across the year, representing a four per cent year on year increase. Page views, however, have been down year on year by around nine per cent, mostly due to lower viewing statistics for *Big Brother* and related forums.

Top online programme features relative to their TV performance were *Skins*, *Big Brother*, *Cook Yourself Thin* and Gordon Ramsay's *Cookalong*. The top programmes viewed online (both through 4oD and www.channel4.com/watchonline) relative to their TV performance were *Skins*, *Peep Show*, *Big Brother Celebrity Hijack*, *Dirty Sexy Money* and *Shameless*.

October 2008 saw the roll-out of an automated system to produce websites to support all of Channel 4's output including features such as synopses, cast information and catch-up facilities. From December updated homepages and listings services improved the accessibility and user experience of all programmes, allowing the audience to interact with and comment on every show.

As a result of the enhanced video performance, more time is spent online per visit every month with the Channel 4 sites than with any other UK broadcaster – between six and seven minutes, according to June-July Comscore figures. With the relaunch of the main Channel 4 site (www.channel4.com), it is hoped that these figures will increase again.

In the *Disarming Britain* season, the ambition was to engage a younger audience online and to trial a networked journalism model for youth news. The *Disarming Britain* blog was set up, along with social network profiles on Bebo, MySpace and Facebook, as well as a comprehensive campaign site on www.channel4.com. The blog and Bebo profile had strong engagement ratings – comments per user were relatively high and the quality of those comments was very good, yielding a lot of crucial information about how to reach young audiences with a single issue.

A new way of measuring engagement beyond page views and unique users was trialled for this project to show where the online initiatives had had qualitative and quantitative impact.¹

The TV Show was relaunched as a blog with contributions from *Channel 4 News* presenter Krishnan Guru-Murthy, Viewers' Editor Paula Carter, commissioning editors and site producers. The site received a good quality of user comments from launch, and more clips and web-only video packages of audience vox-pops have been made available.

Additional Matters

NEW TALENT

A commitment to nurturing talent lies at the heart of Channel 4's ethos, and informed one of the core purposes set out in *Next on 4*. Channel 4's commitment in this area was showcased with the *Generation Next* season in August and other ring-fenced new talent strands (described above in the 'Innovation, Experiment and Creativity' section).

Channel 4 supported new talent across the UK with 4Talent, a website and regional hubs encouraging the advancement of new talent in a range of creative industries. 4Talent also brokers partnerships to encourage charities and Regional Development Agencies to commission work from newcomers.

¹ Full analysis available at <http://channel4.icrossing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/channel-4-disarming-britain-measuring-online-engagement-final.ppt>

The pilot scheme culminated in 30-minute drama *Stacked*, broadcast on Channel 4 during new talent month *Generation Next*, following a nationwide search for new writers and placements with top Scottish independent production companies.

Raw Cuts was a partnership with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in which teenagers from across the UK were asked to submit their ideas for short films on the theme of 'identity'. Four teenagers were awarded a *3 Minute Wonder* commission, broadcast in February 2008.

Breathe was a partnership with Cancer Research UK which invited 13- to 18-year-olds to submit ideas for short, virally distributed films that demonstrate the dangers of smoking to their peers. Four ideas were selected for production and one film was reversioned for a cinematic release. *A Pitch in Time* at the Screenwriters Festival in Cheltenham resulted in three finalists having development discussions with film studio executives and producers.

Eighty aspiring creatives attended 4Talent's *Inspiration* sessions in Birmingham, developing ideas for innovative digital projects and building relationships with key staff at Pixar, Flickr, Bebo, Aardman and Channel 4.

The 4Talent Awards 2008 recognised the most talented young creatives under 30 across 20 categories spanning the multi-platform broadcast industry. Twenty winners featured in the 4Talent magazine and benefited from a nationwide press push on their behalf.

DISABILITY

In 2008 a disabled audience research project investigated views on disability portrayal and media accessibility on behalf of Channel 4 and the BBC. The primary message to come out of this research in September was a strong desire for more normalisation: more portrayal of disabled people in everyday situations in shows that are not solely about disability. This and another strong message – that programme-makers should not be afraid to show warts-and-all representations of disabled people (77 per cent of respondents thought this important) – are key to Channel 4's strategy on disability portrayal.

The best example of Channel 4's forward-thinking attitude to disability in 2008 was the inclusion of a blind housemate (Mikey) and a visually impaired housemate (Darnell) in *Big Brother*, both of whom made it to the final night of the series. Research among *Big Brother* viewers showed a significant shift in attitudes to and understanding of blindness. Of these, 66 per cent said watching Mikey made them realise blind people can lead independent lives and 62 per cent agreed that during the series they stopped seeing Mikey as blind and saw him as just another housemate.

Other good examples of everyday portrayal of disabled people include *Wife Swap*, *The F Word*, *Grand Designs*, *Location Location Location*, *The Home Show*, *The Secret Millionaire*, *The Charlotte Church Show*, *Cutting Edge: My Street*, *The Human Spider* and *Channel 4 News*. *Stephen Hawking: Master of the Universe* successfully combined exploration of cutting-edge physics with the story of his life with motor neurone disease.

Of the more disability-focused shows, 2008 highlights were *A Boy Called Alex*, which followed a talented teenage conductor in his attempt to conduct Bach's *Magnificat* while fighting the effects of cystic fibrosis, and two critically acclaimed films about mental health – *The Doctor Who Hears Voices* and *Poppy Shakespeare*.

The Shooting Party followed nine disabled filmmakers as they each made a short film (www.channel4.com/4talent/shootingparty) and the series ended with a screening and awards event at BAFTA.

The 2008 campaign by broadcasters and the Royal National Institute of Blind People to raise awareness of audio description was a huge success. Trails were broadcast over six weeks on over 70 channels whilst off-air activity was coordinated by the RNIB. The results were published by Ofcom in July and showed that awareness of audio description – what it is and how to get it – rose from 37 per cent to 60 per cent in the general population and from 43 per cent to 72 per cent amongst all visually impaired people. Among those with severe or profound visual impairment, awareness rose from 61 per cent to 82 per cent.

2008 saw Channel 4 fulfilling its requirement for in-vision signing, subtitling and audio description across its portfolio:

	Subtitling		Audio Description		Signing	
	Annual quota	Achieved	Annual quota	Achieved	Annual quota	Achieved
Channel 4	88%	90.4%	10%	10.8%	5%	5.3%
E4	35%	63.3%	8%	15.5%	2%	3.4%
More4	10%	85.2%	4.5%	5.1%	1.3%	1.3%
Film4	10%	76.1%	2%	10.7%	1%	1.1%

MULTICULTURAL

In 2008 a variety of programmes served to strengthen Channel 4's record of high-quality multicultural broadcasting. *Dispatches* films addressing aspects of multicultural Britain included *Immigration – the Inconvenient Truth*, *Undercover Mosque – the Return* and *It Shouldn't Happen to a Muslim* (synopses given above). In *Car Bomb*, Robert Baer investigated the history of this form of terrorism.

Osama Bin Everywhere was an original idea, seeking out people with the name Osama across the world in order to illustrate diversity within Islamic communities. Another fresh concept was *Meet the Natives*, in which the anthropological stereotype of Westerners examining people from other parts of the world was reversed so that five Vanuatu tribesmen conducted an exploration of the UK.

The *Islam Unveiled* season was a week of powerful and thoughtful programmes (see above for more detail). Equally, Channel 4 was not afraid to shine a light on uncomfortable areas, examining tensions in society in the drama *Fallout*, written by black playwright Roy Williams.

To celebrate Black History Month 4oD brought together a selection of drama, documentary and comedy from its extensive archive about the range of experiences of black people through history and today. Programmes available to view for free included: *Desmonds*, *Empire's Children*, *Fallout*, *White Teeth* and *Born with Two Mothers*.

Channel 4 consistently addresses multicultural issues, and does so not in graveyard slots, but at the heart of the schedule. Channel 4 reflected the rich mix of cultures, lifestyles and ethnicities in Britain today in the casting of mainstream programmes such as *Big Brother*, *The Secret*

Millionaire, Deal or No Deal, How to Look Good Naked, Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares, Make me a Christian and Year Dot – to name but a few.

There remained a diverse mix of on-screen authors and presenters, including Gok Wan, Tazeen Ahmad, Alexa Chung, Miquita Oliver, Robert Beckford and *Channel 4 News'* Samira Ahmed and Krishnan Guru-Murthy.

Channel 4 encouraged a range of new diverse talent. Roy Williams had his first major television commission with *Fallout* (described above). Andi Osho had her first TV break with a *Funny Cut* on E4, after which she went on to author *The Andi Osho Show*.

A major research project and analysis of multicultural Britain was commissioned, as well as a report from Trevor Phillips in which he outlined a broad range of practical suggestions to improve diversity in the television industry. Published in July, the research showed that minorities wanted to see ethnic characters in leading roles across all genres and more emphasis on the quality of representation, which needs to be credible but not stereotypical. Through dramas like *Poppa Shakespeare*, starring Naomi Harris, and *Skins*, and factual series like *Make Me a Christian* and *How to Look Good Naked*, and even comedies such as *The IT Crowd*, Channel 4 endeavoured to achieve this in 2008.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCER AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2008 Channel 4 invested £350,000 in the development of 17 small- to medium-sized independent production companies. The money has been used to help the companies develop focused and successful relationships with the commissioning department through supporting general ideas development or enabling the hire of key talent. This investment forms a key part of Channel 4's commitment to champion the creativity of the small independent companies and to maintain a diversity of supply.

In addition, many of Channel 4's most successful productions are made outside the capital. Among these are *Shameless, Skins, How to Look Good Naked* and the *Location Location Location* franchise – based in Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham and Glasgow respectively.

Channel 4 does more than any other broadcaster to support and develop regional independent production. It exceeds its requirement of making 30 per cent of productions outside London and invests up to £125 million annually in original production and related creative activities.

Channel 4 offers a ring-fenced development fund, a dedicated support centre (TRC Media) in its Glasgow office, and a range of programmes aimed at cultivating the business development of smaller independent production companies including a very successful international market awareness programme.

Channel 4 makes returning investment in its key cities across the UK and is a major creative catalyst in Manchester, Bristol and Glasgow, where it invests more in small companies than any broadcaster.

REPEATS

Channel 4 minimised the number of repeats in peak in line with its overall editorial strategy and its licence commitments relating to the volume of originated programming.

MEDIA LITERACY

Channel 4 was an active member of the Media Literacy Task Force in 2008. The group has entered a more productive phase with a new Chair and participation from Channel 4 new media specialists as well as television. Channel 4 has also been working with Ofcom to scope the 'TV Clubs' project.

Channel 4's Education department contributed to digital media literacy with the *Year Dot* project addressing issues such as online privacy and cyber-bullying, and the *Battlefront* project helping teenagers to understand the potential of digital media to advance their campaigns and causes. *Picture This* was another major media literacy project encouraging the public to self publish photos on the web. (See above for synopses.)

The off-air resource 4Talent also contributed to media literacy with regional and online opportunities for people wanting to know more about the creative industries.

Channel 4 provided viewers with clear information in listings and other media, on the Electronic Programme Guide, with additional information on the website, and backed up with an established system of on-air and text announcements and warnings.

PUBLIC INPUT

The TV Show brought viewers and programme-makers face to face throughout the year and included live-on air discussions about *The Big Food Fight* season, how Channel 4's property shows should take account of the rapidly changing property market, the portrayal of different strands of Muslim faith in *The Qur'an*, and the scheduling of *The Sex Education Show*.

The TV Show upheld Channel 4's commitment to serving audiences outside London, visiting Cardiff, Brighton, Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham and Exeter in order to allow viewers to record their opinions. These were posted for viewing and comments alongside blogs and chat forums on *The TV Show* website (www.channel4.com/thetvshow).

The Research and Insight Department carried out a number of special reviews during 2008, reflecting Channel 4's desire to attract a culturally diverse community and produce challenging and innovative programmes. Research project *Race, Representation and the Media* explored expectations and views amongst a wide range of different audiences representing modern Britain and another, similar project looked at how the media portrays the ten million people in Britain who currently have disabilities.

Through Channel 4's bold step of putting all its Education investment into cross-platform projects, audiences were given new opportunities to create content and influence how it is consumed. Via projects such as *Year Dot* and *Battlefront*, teenage audiences were encouraged to help create the content in the first place, then engage with it and finally, assess its value.

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