

Fifth of all TV viewers have been offended by violence and sex on their screens in the past year

- **About a quarter of all people felt there was 'too much' sex on TV**

By Paul Revoir

A fifth of viewers said they had been offended by something on TV last year, new research from the media regulator has revealed.

The study into 'UK audience attitudes' to broadcasting also revealed this figure hit more than a quarter when it came to the older members of the audience.

The research into the public's view of what is on screen revealed that many people are still upset at the levels of sex, violence and swearing on our screens.



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Often people were also annoyed when shocking content appeared on screen when they were least expecting it. A significant number also felt that the quality of programmes had got worse last year with complaints about repeats and a lack of choice.

But the report did say British people have become more tolerant of nudity and also that when something offends them they are less likely than they used to be to turn over.

About a quarter of all people felt there was 'too much' sex on TV, while nearly 40 per cent thought there was too much violence and the same figure for swearing.

Ofcom's study said among those offended in the last year, 18 per cent of those surveyed, almost half cited bad language and about a third pointed to violence and the same amount to sexual content. However those offended by nudity dropped to 10 per cent in 2012 from 16 per cent in the previous year. People prepared to persevere with a programme, even after it had upset them, had tripled to 15 per cent last year from the figure of five per cent in 2008.



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A significant number of viewers also admitted they were fed-up with the number of adverts on TV, with 40 per cent saying there was 'already more than I am really happy with'.

People have become much more aware of issues like product placement and programme sponsorship, the report found.

Just under a third of people felt the quality of TV programmes had got worse, while a bit more than half felt the level had stayed the same. Only 13 per cent felt TV shows had improved. For people who did feel that programming had got worse, nearly 70 per cent of them blamed repeats, an increase of almost 10 per cent from two years earlier.

The tough economic climate has seen both the BBC and commercial broadcasters cut costs which has resulted in more old shows being aired.

Another reason for a perceived dip in quality was the 'lack of variety', which was mentioned by about half of those who felt standards in TV programmes had slipped.

The research also looked at people's use of technology, including how more than a third of internet users say they use it to watch TV programmes.

There is a debate at the moment about how the BBC can carry on charging for a TV licence when some viewers are simply using their computers to watch programmes.

It was also revealed that seven in ten people now use their mobile telephone while watching TV and 41 per cent do so every day.

Of those people offended by TV shows, four in ten of them felt that the thing that upset them should have only have been shown when viewers would have expected it. A further 20 per cent felt it should not have been shown at all. The report pointed out that overall concerns about issues such as sex, violence and swearing had fallen in 2012 from previous years.

On the issue of the watershed half of people felt that upholding the 9pm dividing line was the joint responsibility of parents and broadcasters, while 45 per cent said it should mainly be down to the parents. There was a growing consensus that the time of the watershed was about right.

