



Your third email, sent on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 asked:

- i) *why a simple request like this has taken so long ...*
- ii) *what information is at hand so far, and why you have failed to release it to me;*
- iii) *what resources you are using to complete the request;*
- iv) *when you expect the request to be completed;*
- v) *... the name and position of the person to whom the head of Editorial Compliance reports.*

Please note that your request is outside the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”) but we are happy to provide you with information about these seminars and the role of the Cambridge Environment and Media Programme.

Over the past twelve years groups of BBC managers and editors have met other broadcasters and specialist contributors, mainly in Cambridge, in order to participate in an on-going series known as the “Real World” seminars. They are designed to stimulate creative thinking amongst broadcasters and experts about world issues and how they are covered in the media, and support the BBC’s Charter commitment to bring “the UK to the world and the world to the UK”.

Diverse discussion topics under the broad heading of “making sense of an interconnected world” have included: ageing, food, risk, future superpowers, technology, climate change, business investment, biodiversity, entrepreneurialism, public health, population, migration, investment flows and innovation.

Participation is diverse in terms of opinions and background. In order to facilitate frank discussions the meetings are run according to the Chatham House Rule so that individuals’ comments cannot be reproduced in such a way as to allow attribution. The idea is to create the setting for interesting and wide ranging conversations.

Recent seminars have included experts from multi-national business and SMEs; think-tanks such as the Institute for Economic Affairs and Overseas Development Institute; academics and researchers from many universities and specialisms (science, technology, economic and social sciences, and history); and policy experts on and field workers from the developing world.

The seminars are organised by a partnership comprising the BBC, the International Broadcasting Trust and Dr Joe Smith, a senior geography lecturer at the Open University. (You may be interested in the references to the seminars in the IBT's-most recent report, "The Great Global Switch-Off", which is attached.)

The first of the series of seminars was devised by Dr Smith during his time as Director of Programmes for the University of Cambridge Committee for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies (CIES), in conjunction with Roger Harrabin, then a *Today* programme reporter on sabbatical at Wolfson College, Cambridge.

Roger's sabbatical research investigated the challenges for news journalists of reporting on long-term, slow-moving systemic trends like environmental change. Roger and Dr Smith were asked by the then head of BBC News, Tony Hall, to engage senior managers and editors in discussion on how to improve broadcast debate of long-term issues which do not always offer ready news "pegs", such as environmental change, development and societal risk in areas like health and transport.

The early seminars were run under the aegis of the CIES but when the Committee closed Dr Smith continued his work on the seminars with Roger under the organisational tag, the "Cambridge Media and Environment Programme". Roger and Dr Smith co-directed the early seminars. Roger undertook this entirely as part of his BBC work. He has been made an honorary Associate Press Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge, in recognition of his work.

The only purpose of the CMEP is to research and plan these seminars. The CMEP is an informal partnership. Roger Harrabin, who is now BBC Environment Analyst, is paid for by the BBC and receives no other remuneration and Dr Smith's time in planning these seminars is funded separately and arranged by him from a variety of donors offering small sums. The BBC News and Vision divisions help to plan the seminars, ensure they fulfil BBC requirements and pay for the costs of facilitating them, e.g. hiring of the venue. This partnership has been approved by the BBC's Controller of Editorial Policy.

The BBC is now an acknowledged global leader in bringing complex environmental news and debates to a world audience. The remit of the seminars broadened when the International Broadcasting Trust, joined the partnership in 2004. The current remit of the seminars is to illuminate the challenges and opportunities facing an increasingly inter-connected world.

We hope you find this helpful. I am sorry for the delay in replying to you but I wanted to give as full a picture as I could and needed to consult Roger Harrabin in order to do so. As has been explained to you, this was not possible until now. I do not think it appropriate to supply you with private correspondence between him and Dr Joe Smith but I have in any case given you a full account of the relationship between the BBC and the Cambridge Environment & Media Programme. With regard to your query about the person to whom I report, it is the Director of BBC News, Helen Boaden.

Your requests are outside the scope of the Act because the BBC and the other public service broadcasters are covered by the Act only in respect of information held for purposes “other than those of journalism, art or literature” (see Schedule I, Part VI of the Act). However, on this occasion we’re happy to respond to your request. For more information about how the Act applies to the BBC please see [www.bbc.co.uk/foi](http://www.bbc.co.uk/foi) Please note that this guidance is not intended to be a comprehensive legal interpretation of how the Act applies to the BBC.

The BBC does not offer an internal review when the information requested is not covered by the Act. If you disagree with our decision you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. Contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliff House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF telephone 01625 545 700. <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Harris

**Head of Editorial Compliance**

**BBC News**