



**Information Policy & Compliance**

[bbc.co.uk/foi](http://bbc.co.uk/foi)

Mr Barry Tebbs

By email: Barry Tebbs [[request-929-a6f5bee1@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-929-a6f5bee1@whatdotheyknow.com)]

25 July 2008

Dear Mr Tebbs

**Freedom of information request – RFI20080694**

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Act") dated 27 June 2008. The reference number for your request is RFI20080694.

You requested:

*"What is the total expenditure into the research and development of visual subtitling on Internet provided Video information and programs"*

In answer to your request, there are two broad processes involved in providing visual subtitling on [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk): subtitling programme content and displaying the programmes with subtitles on the BBC iPlayer.

The provision of subtitles for the BBC's iPlayer system is predicated on the subtitle files being produced for linear channels. No subtitles are produced specifically for BBC iPlayer. Where a subtitle file exists for a programme transmitted on a BBC channel and the file is available in the timescales required to be delivered with the media file used by the BBC iPlayer system this is done using an automated system that converts the file and uses the programme identifier to match the file to the media. Apart from a small amount of internal bandwidth within the delivery systems and a small element of the quality assurance process that checks the presence of the correct file there have, therefore, been no specific costs for the current subtitle preparation and delivery process in the last twelve months to July 2008.

From the time of launch in December 2007, and to date, only those programmes available for capture off tape pre-transmission and delivered to the transmission area in sufficient time to have pre-prepared subtitles produced were technically deliverable. Red Bee Media is currently looking at ways



in which those programmes that are either live or delivered close to transmission can have the live subtitles captured from the transmission stream and delivered in the same way as pre-delivered content. The costs for improved workflow and delivery have already been funded. These are in the region of £25,000. In addition, it is proposed to embed subtitles in the files delivered for the mediated platforms and this requires the licensing of additional software in the transcoders to perform this task. The cost for this element of the roadmap is estimated to be in the order of £40,000.

From January 2008 to date, the cost of the development of the BBC iPlayer to display subtitles is £8,013.

We hope you find this information useful.

### **Appeal Rights**

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager or legal adviser. Please contact us at the address above, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01 625 545 700 or see <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely

**L. Stiller**  
Legal and Business Affairs Manager  
Future Media & Technology