

BBC gets bold on trust


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After a year of fakery and phone poll fiddling the BBC has come out fighting on trust. In a lucid, intelligent and relatively bold [speech](#), Director General Mark Thompson outlined how the corporation will seek to re-establish its place at the heart of British public life.

Some of it was very practical. He wants to set up a network for secondary schools which will give them an online portal on British democracy. He wants to work with organisations like Polis to open up the BBC to the public. And he wants to shift BBC journalism output towards a more in-depth and considered take on public events. They will do a number of massive cross-platform specials on big issues, for example. Interestingly, he paid un-named tribute to a previous (and now unloved) DG John Birt who first sent the BBC down a similar more serious path.

I asked Mark Thompson whether he trusted the public and how far he was prepared to let the citizen contribute to the production of journalism at the BBC, especially in the light of Peter Horrocks' [speech](#) expressing reservations about interactivity. His answer was that he accepted that the BBC had to give a platform for more diverse views and for debates and opinions that 'challenged' the BBC. But cleverly, he argued that this could take place in 'zones' that were separate from core BBC journalism. I can see his logic, but I am not sure that is sustainable. But at least he is engaging with the issues with what sounds like an open-ish mind.

After a year of caution and masochistic introspection this was a more expansive and visionary speech from Mark Thompson. 

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