

ITV announces 'on-demand first' strategy for our young audiences commissioning

Published Thu 22 Apr 2021 [Corporate](#)

ITV announces 'on-demand first' strategy for our young audiences commissioning

ITV commissioning seeks youth-skewing Scripted and Factual

Speaking at the Creative Cities Convention ITV's Head of Digital Channels and Acquisitions, Paul Mortimer, has today announced that he is looking for scripted titles and factual shows that appeal to young audiences, that he will commission for the ITV2 brand and ITV Hub.

Mortimer's role has adapted with the Media and Entertainment model coming in at ITV, and he now heads up commissioning for ITV Hub and for ITV's younger skewing brands, ITV2, ITVBe and CITV, with dual reporting to Rufus Radcliffe as Managing Director of the On Demand business unit, and Rosemary Newell, Content Director for Broadcast and On Demand divisions, under Kevin Lygo, Managing Director of Media and Entertainment.

Paul's area of responsibility is content commissioning for younger, lighter viewers. This means commissions that appeal to audiences who already do a large proportion of their viewing on demand and ITV will increasingly serve it to them in whatever way they want to access it, often premiering content on ITV Hub and making it available too via the ITV2/ITVBe/CITV channels.

On the effects of the pandemic, Mortimer said,

"The pandemic has fast tracked the behaviour of audiences, more people want content on their own terms and at their own convenience, and younger audiences always get there first with these behaviours."

We need to adapt the way we commission for them. What we're doing with CITV, ITVBe and ITV2 is focusing on their respective audiences' preference for on-demand content so in terms of commissioning its commissioning really for ITV Hub, under those brands.

Much of the content we commission and acquire for those brands will land on ITV Hub first. It's all about shifting the windowing pattern, making it more convenient for audiences. The channels aren't going anywhere by the way, they will still be around, and there will be exceptions to on-demand first, for example with shows like Love Island which is a daily update show, and one that is strong on both linear TV and Hub, or other entertainment shows, which don't lend themselves to boxsetting.

But more generally, once you are freed of the constraints of scheduling and programming a linear channel, it becomes really exciting in terms of the possibilities of the different genres we might venture into - such as factual programmes.

On ITV2, we have been very successful in becoming the No1 destination for young adults and we did that by really targeting them and focussing on funny, often irreverent, entertainment programming with a tone that ran through all the content. We prided ourselves that as a viewer you come in, lean back, have fun, and we programmed it so every programme led neatly into the next, it's all about inheritance, it's about 9pm junctions and watersheds. But guess what, on demand it's not...and when you're free of those linear channel constraints there's other things you can do in programming terms..."

One of the reasons we feel with ITV2 we can move into factual is you don't need to have a line up of programmes that all share the same DNA, because the experience of going into a space like ITV Hub is one of exploration for the viewer...so you go in and search, it's not down to what the scheduler thinks you should be watching. We're doing it because we have the creative freedom to, but also in catering to the audiences' current tastes. We know that what the streamers have been providing, what YouTube provides, is a bit of everything, and in that the trick for us will be to also offer factual programming that deals with subjects that include and appeal to a younger audience".

Mortimer explained that he is working Sue Murphy, Head of Factual Entertainment at ITV and her team, to develop the new commissioning strategy.

Sue Murphy, ITV's Head of Factual Entertainment said:

" It's an exciting time to be commissioning brand new, younger-skewing factual for ITV2 and Hub. A great opportunity for us and for Producers to find compelling stories that really matter to younger, light audiences. We want to encourage bold and innovative approaches to factual storytelling to satisfy the appetite for

dramatic and visceral documentary."

Mortimer also revealed that they are looking at a true crime anthology series for this Autumn, with the spotlight on online crime, saying "there are some fascinating stories that we have got or are seeking access to. We are looking to tell fresh and interesting stories not least as a means of raising a warning flag for younger audiences to some of the things that can happen in this space."

Paul also described how "We're expanding what we are doing, we're investing a bit more, in terms of scripted, in drama and comedy for young audiences.

For the ITV2 brand, we're actually in pre-production with a drama which will land next January, which is really exciting as we haven't done an original fully funded UK drama in a while."

An announcement will be issued later this spring on ITV2's first new drama commission in nearly a decade, a brand new series aimed at teenagers.

Press Contacts

jenny.cummins@itv.com

Viewer enquiries

<https://www.itv.com/contact/how-to-get-in-touch>