

RTÉ

## **RTÉ rejects newspaper industry claims of unfair online trading, Oireachtas Committee told**

RTÉ's Online services to the public are provided properly and fairly under Broadcasting law and do not represent unfair competition to the newspaper industry, a Dáil Committee was told today.

The national broadcaster told the Joint Committee on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources that lobbying by the National Newspapers of Ireland against RTÉ's online activity was wrong on the key issues and unfair to RTE.

RTÉ's chief financial officer Conor Hayes stated that RTÉ is fully transparent and legally compliant in all its online activities. He said that the RTÉ.ie website is one of Ireland's most popular services because of the breadth of service and quality of service provided.

RTE properly observes European policy and Irish broadcasting law by ensuring that all content produced by the broadcaster is available to the public on all media platforms. RTÉ is not only entitled to do this but obliged in law to do it, he told the Committee.

The service, like all RTÉ's services, is broad and of a public service nature and is required to trade commercially in order to pay its way.

The Oireachtas Joint Committee was told that no licence fee funding is used in the operation of RTÉ's Online service. Where News and other content is provided through the service, this has already been paid for by the Irish public through their licence fees and RTÉ does not seek to charge the public again for this service. However all the work of adapting this content for web use, and the extensive origination and transmission of other content on the site, is supported exclusively by RTÉ's own commercial income both from the site and from other commercial activity.

The RTÉ presentation also seriously questioned the newspaper lobby assertions, made at the Committee recently and in presentation to the Minister Eamon Ryan, that RTÉ's activity prevents the newspapers from earning a fair share of the available advertising market.

Mr Hayes told the Committee: "Contrary to what has been suggested by NNI, RTÉ is not a dominant player in the online revenue and advertising market in Ireland.

"In fact, of a reported total Irish on-line advertising spend of €97 million in 2009, as estimated in the IAB Adspend Study of April 2010, RTÉ's share was just €2½ million or less than 3% of the market. The RTÉ figure is specifically disclosed in our annual report should you wish to check the figures for yourself. The assertion made by NNI is therefore wrong."

He added that the real challenge to both RTÉ and the newspapers in the Irish online market was the presence of very large operators such as Google, Facebook, Yahoo and others, alongside newly-established advertising networks and media distributors such as Sky and UPC.

"Within the limits of its resources, RTE has prudently sought to be cost-effective, innovative, pro-active, fast-moving and dynamic in response to the technological challenges and opportunities brought about by a rapidly changing and increasingly fragmented media landscape," he said.

"RTÉ pursues commercial activities online and does so in a fair and transparent manner that complies with all relevant codes and practices.

"RTÉ.ie does not use TV Licence Fee money.

"It is essential for RTÉ to drive revenue from other sources and to act commercially so that it can fulfil its public service remit.

"The Irish online advertising market is tough, competitive and is populated with very strong global competitors.

"New" media is no longer "New", it is here to stay - the clock can't be turned back."

*(ends)*

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Additional information:

[http://www.rte.ie/about/oireachtas\\_coms.html](http://www.rte.ie/about/oireachtas_coms.html)

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