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BT calls for BBC to contribute to ISP iPlayer costs

Says BBC "can't expect to continue to get a free ride"

by Duncan Geere published on 10 June 2009

Phone company and ISP BT has called on the BBC to contribute to the costs that ISPs incur due to its iPlayer, saying that the Beeb "can't expect to continue to get a free ride".

Many ISPs have complained in the past about the bandwidth that iPlayer uses. Streaming video takes up a lot of network traffic, and the popularity of iPlayer has seen ISPs struggle to cope, with many limiting the traffic available for video streaming.

In fact, BT got into trouble recently over reports that it was throttling connections to iPlayer at peak times. Pocket-lint commenters expressed considerable distaste at the idea that BT wasn't acting like the "dumb pipe" that ISPs often claim they are when it comes to acting on file-sharing.

Ofcom has stood behind the BBC in saying that it doesn't believe the Corporation should foot the cost of updating the nation's broadband connections. At a hearing before the Commons culture and business select committees in April 2008, Ofcom chief executive Ed Richards told politicians that forcing the BBC to pay for network updates is simply not going to work.

It seems unlikely that the BBC will be forced into contributing to ISP costs, at least in the short term, but if iPlayer usage continues to rise and becomes available in more living rooms, then that may change. We'll keep you posted of developments.

