

= Wank Week =

Wank Week was a controversial season of television programming that was due to be broadcast in the United Kingdom by Channel 4 , expected to consist of a series of three documentary programmes about masturbation . However , plans to broadcast it in March 2007 came under public attack from senior television figures , and the planned broadcasts were pulled amid claims of declining editorial standards and controversy over the channel 's public service broadcasting credentials . While Wank Week itself was cancelled , the films it was meant to showcase may yet be broadcast by the channel at a later date .

= = Commissioning and programming = =

The season was commissioned by James Hindle , the channel 's factual entertainment commissioning editor , and announced in July 2006 . It was to consist of three films broadcast in the 11pm slot , headlined by a documentary on mass public masturbation . This kind of programming was not unprecedented : the Channel had previously screened a ' Penis Week ' , reportedly described by MacKenzie as a " success " in a Guardian article . He continued on the subject of Wank Week , " we feel this is exactly the type of provocative and mischievous programming that Channel 4 should be covering in the 11pm slot " In the United Kingdom , the 11pm slot is considered post @-@ watershed , defined by the regulator Ofcom in the Broadcasting Code as later than 9pm (although transition to more adult material " must not be unduly abrupt at the watershed or after the time when children are particularly likely to be listening " according to section 1 @.@ 6) . This allows the broadcasting of more sexually explicit content .

The first show to be announced centred on a Masturbate @-@ a @-@ thon held in Clerkenwell , London in August 2006 . This was a public mass masturbation event organised to raise money for the sexual health charity Marie Stopes International . A press release from Zig @-@ Zag , the independent production company behind the recording of the event , promised that the film would reveal " if the only things allowed to be stiff in Britain are upper lips " . The programme 's working title was Wank @-@ a @-@ thon .

A week later , plans for an as yet unnamed second documentary about compulsive male masturbators were announced , to be produced by the independent company Spun Gold . The film was to be an hour long and focus on men trying to cut down excessive masturbatory habits of up to twenty times a day , using methods developed in the United States . In September 2006 , the final film in the series was announced . Entitled Masturbation For Girls , it was also to be produced by Spun Gold , and focus on female masturbation . It was to feature the sex educationalist Dr Betty Dodson , although the format had yet not been finalised . It was reported after the postponement of their airing that the second and third films were to be entitled I Can 't Stop Wanking and Masturbation for Women respectively .

= = Controversy and cancellation = =

Wank Week was criticised in the prestigious James MacTaggart Memorial Lecture at the 2006 Edinburgh International Television Festival on 25 August , only a month after Channel 4 's initial announcement . Charles Allen , the outgoing Chief Executive of Channel 4 's commercial rival ITV , attacked Channel 4 for deterioration of output and adopting a " begging " approach to finances in the run @-@ up to terrestrial digital switchover (requesting subsidies for public service output while pursuing a path of commercialism) . Wank Week 's mention came as part of a critique of programming that Channel 4 was counting towards its " educational " content . Allen joked that he was expecting Wank Week to be included , " but that could be a hard one to pull off even for Channel 4 . " The pun was subsequently repeated in the press .

Criticisms of Wank Week were echoed later in 2006 by Sir Jeremy Isaacs , the first Chief Executive of Channel 4 , in an article for Prospect magazine . Isaacs argued that Channel 4 's increased commercialisation led to a targeting of the 16- to 34 @-@ year @-@ old audience , and the

subsequent " obsession with adolescent transgression and sex " could be seen in programming such as Designer Vaginas , The World 's Biggest Penis and Wank Week .

Although these public attacks led to reports of concern in Channel 4 management , postponement of Wank Week did not take place until early February 2007 , only a month before its planned screening . There had been a major racism controversy during January 's Celebrity Big Brother contest , and the launch of Wank Week raised the prospect of further embarrassment at a critical time : Ofcom was reviewing the channel 's finances ahead of the digital switchover , with the continued nature of Channel 4 's existence as a state @-@ owned but advertisement @-@ funded public service broadcaster at stake . Broadcast magazine reported that several senior figures at Channel 4 had felt uncomfortable about Wank Week , including deputy chairman David Puttnam and chairman Luke Johnson , although they had originally not intended to formally object . The atmosphere following the Celebrity Big Brother racism row was suggested to have influenced the decision .

According to the media section of The Guardian , the films commissioned for Wank Week are likely to be broadcast at a later date , but probably not as part of a dedicated season of programming , and certainly not under the Wank Week banner . Dan Wootton , senior reporter at Broadcast , criticised the decision , calling it " wimpy " . Contrasting it with the way that Channel 4 executives had been prepared to defend Celebrity Big Brother , he concluded they had acted hypocritically .