

Do you agree with the way this paper defines convergence? Why/why not?

Convergence as described is more about the technology than the content and definitely not about content providers. Whilst free to air broadcasting and copper wire are making way for mobile and fibre delivery mechanisms content is being snapped up by a proliferation of providers (divergence?) purchasing exclusive rights to content and making that content available on a subscription basis. Fees are based on volume available, not volume used, with the result that it is necessary to choose a limited number of providers and, for most, only one. That choice limits the breadth of content available. For those consumers not interested in volume, the cost per hour of viewing is extortionate.

This paper seems to be driven by the demands of the providers and does not seem to consider the needs of consumers. These providers are focused on volume, and pander to the lowest common denominator. Entertainment is more important than information, High-level light-weight news is more prevalent than in-depth content.

Do New Zealand's current regulations and policies need to change to account for convergence? Why/why not?

Yes, but they need to be focused on ensuring that a variety of types and styles of information and entertainment are available, by a variety of means, and at an affordable price. This includes local, national and overseas content, not a flood of trivial, artificial and unbelievable American drama and "reality" shows.

Do you agree with the proposed convergence work programme?

I have difficulty seeing the documentation provided as a work programme at all.

Should the Government be doing anything else to address convergence?

Turn the "programme on it's head. Find out what people want, then ask what is needed to ensure that this happens, rather than being driven by the vested interests of providers.

Key to this should be flexibility, choice and affordability for all sectors of the community; young and old; rich and poor; urban and rural.

By the way, has anybody thought about that other well known medium - books? I spend much more time reading books, both on paper and electronically, than I spend listening to music or watching TV.

What barriers are you aware of that prevent you from benefiting from, or responding to, convergence?

Cost of connection, cost of subscription, lack of variety of content except by signing multiple subscriptions that I will seldom use.

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