



Convergence in the digital world


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Convergence: main elements

1. **Transformation of data:** digitalisation
2. **The integration of information systems**
3. **User friendly approach:** data to be used with increasing ease
4. **The global reach** of data, devices, content, communication and customers.



Technological convergence

- Single device, communication infrastructure or software capable to perform multiple functions on multiple platforms
 - e.g. mobile phone with camera, music player...
 - enables new innovations (e.g. Skype)
- Interoperability a challenge



Media convergence

1. **the convergence of cultural forms**
(e.g. internet)
2. **the convergence of communications systems** (based on technological convergence, especially digitalization)
3. **the convergence of corporate ownership**
(corporate mergers)

(Murdock Graham, 2000. "Digital futures: the age of convergence" in Wieten, J., Murdock, G., Dahlgren, P. (eds). Television Across Europe, A Comparative Introduction. London: Sage



Why convergence?

- Exponential rise of new data and information
 - Information asymmetries (technical incompatibility)
- Competitive advantage and wealth creation
 - Use a wide range of data as easily, quickly, cheaply, safely and securely as possible



Some challenges

- Convergence – a threat to diversity?
- E-participation or E-lite?
- Converged devices are often less reliable than their component parts
 - Single device – multiple problem
 - Increased dependency on a single device
 - Privacy & data protection



What can the Union do?

- Policy convergence – i2010
 1. Regulatory framework
 2. R&D, innovation
 3. inclusive European Information Society



Regulatory framework

- Regulatory framework must be adapted to wide availability, multi-functionality and global reach of networks
 - Taking into account the rapid pace of new developments
 - Global reach of media and technology: accordingly European regulation proposed as a basis for international co-operation and legal framework;
 - any one-sided attempt to control critical resources or services should be consistently opposed (e.g Microsoft)



R&D, innovation

- Barcelona target – 3 % not met
- Gap between Europe US and Japan
- More funding is needed
- It is time to start implementing – for everyone



Inclusive Information Society

- The regulatory environment itself must not create unequalities but opportunities
- Technology must not lead the society; it must be adapted to the needs of the citizens
- Participation in the information society is a citizen right



Concrete policy actions

- Standardisation
- Support for regional, national and EU –wide technological centers (e.g. EIT, Living Labs network)
- Intellectual property rights
- Privacy & data protection
- E-inclusion, E-accessibility



Finally...

- Social convergence does not necessarily follow technological convergence
- Education is the key
- But information alone is not enough.
- A civilized information society allows participation by all
- There is no information society without a welfare society.