



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

**ITU NEW INITIATIVES WORKSHOP ON
THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT
FOR FUTURE MOBILE MULTIMEDIA
SERVICES**

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Mainz, 21-23 June 2006

Opening Remarks

Dr Tim Kelly, Head, Strategy and Policy Unit, ITU

On behalf of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, Mr. Yoshio UTSUMI, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this ITU New Initiatives Workshop, which is being hosted by the German Federal Network Agency, on the regulatory environment for future mobile multimedia services.

The city of Mainz is a very appropriate venue to host this workshop, and not just because Germany is currently hosting the FIFA World Cup! Mainz was the birthplace of Johannes Gutenberg, who was the Father of the Printing Press, and more specifically of the development of moveable type.

Gutenberg's invention played a critical role in the first "digital transformation". The printing press was a key process in the "democratization" of information. Prior to the development of mechanized printing, the "bandwidth" with which information could flow was limited to the speed of a monk's pen, in copying out received wisdom. A bible would typically take up to 20 years to transcribe. As a consequence, information was scarce, and scarcity, in almost every society, is a source of power.

The printing press made information much more widely available, at a lower price. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to claim that the printing press gave birth to the flowering of the Renaissance, to the Reformation, and is a direct antecedent to the creation of today's Information Society. The printing press was followed by the telegraph, the telephone and latterly the internet, which have all helped to reduce the unit cost of accessing and utilising information.

We are now in the midst of a second "digital transformation", but this time not so much concerned with access to information, but rather with the creation of information. The development of printing, and the development of mass media which followed, was characterized by a *few* producers of information, but *many* consumers. The changes taking place in our industry are now making it possible for almost anyone to be a creator of information; whether via a personal website, a blog, a podcast or simply by making a phone call. We are moving from mass media to personalized media.

The development of third generation, or 3G, mobile phones is an important part of this new digital transformation. The new generation of mobile phones can be used to take photos, make short movies, record sound clips, send SMS and MMS, download information, and of course, make phone calls. New 3G handsets are therefore extremely powerful multimedia devices for the creation and dissemination of information. We will carry them around with us, like a wristwatch, which means that any of us can now be potential journalists, wherever "news" is happening. The current World Cup will be the most reported ever, with literally thousands of people creating real-time information, not just about the matches, but also about life around the games. The "professional" journalists are outnumbered by private citizens who are posting their own views and experiences.

The *Geneva Declaration of Principles* of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) defines the Information Society as an environment in which "everyone can create, access, utilize and share information". These four words—create, access, utilize and share—are of equal importance.

By combining the “access and utilization” of information from the first digital transformation with the ability to “create and share” it from the second digital transformation, we are setting in motion a revolution that will be equally as profound as the invention of the printing press in the 15th Century. The Information Society is about the “democratization” of information; making it available to everyone, everywhere. We are entering a new age in which small and medium-sized enterprises are on a level playing field with large multinational enterprises, and where individuals have equivalent rights to create, access, utilize and share information as governments.

During this workshop, over the next two and a half days, we will be examining some of these issues related to the regulatory environment for future mobile multimedia services. Later today, we have a presentation of the background paper as well case studies of China, Hong Kong, Germany and Japan. This afternoon, we will be looking at spectrum, which is one of the essential platforms for mobile services. Tomorrow morning, we will be examining consumer issues related to mobile use and tomorrow afternoon we will be discussing regulatory and competition policy issues.

This particular workshop is part of the ITU New Initiatives series, which was launched in 1999. Earlier this year, ITU held a workshop on “What rules for IP-Based Next Generation Networks?” and the next event, in January 2007, will be on “The Future of Voice”. The aim of these workshops is to bring together experts to discuss issues of high current policy interest. The new initiatives workshops are intended to be forward-looking, based on presentation of original research supported by a resources-website, and above all, interactive. I would like to thank our hosts for making this event possible, and I look forward to some lively discussions.

In order to guide our discussions over the next two and a half days, we will need an experienced chairman. It is my pleasure to propose Prof. Pascal Verhoest who is chair of Political Economy of Communication at the Free University of Brussels. He is also managing director of DISC (Decisionmaking, Innovation, Science and Communication). DISC is a coordination and support centre for ICT research and economic development financed by the Brussels-Capital Regional government. Pascal is also an expert adviser of TNO Information and Communication Technology (TNO-ICT) in Delft (the Netherlands) and chairman of the European Network for Communication and Information Perspectives (ENCIP), a collaborative research network.