

Regulation revisited

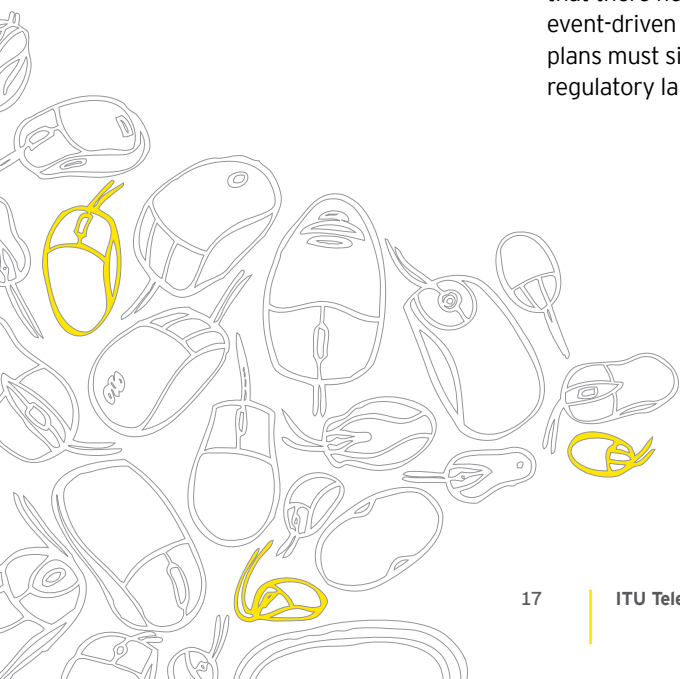
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“People have achieved almost kind of a religious fervor when it comes to regulation and deregulation but let's look at it pragmatically.”

Forum speaker

Finally, it is worth considering the role of regulation as ICT continues to evolve rapidly. As users generate their own content, as media and telecommunications sectors continue to converge and as governments look to ICT to underpin economic growth, traditional regulatory approaches need to be updated. For a start, pro-investment policies are needed – this is all the more crucial when you consider that total investment in the EU telecoms sector fell 1% in 2008 compared to the previous year.¹⁰ Another challenge, highlighted in the *Rethinking regulation* session, is that there needs to be policy continuity: event-driven initiatives such as stimulus plans must sit productively within existing regulatory landscapes.

Historic approaches have been driven by the concept of deregulation, yet this may not be achievable when consolidation is a route to the scale economies the industry so clearly prizes. Fewer players will require greater levels of scrutiny, while regulatory approaches such as equality of access may need to be transposed from the network level to the world of content. At the same time, the need to bridge the digital divide may require mobile networks to come under universal service remits.



¹⁰ European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association Facts and Figures 2009. 7 October 2009