

News Release

Industry-led Panel submits study and policy recommendations on media convergence to Government

Singapore, 28 November 2012 – The Media Convergence Review Panel has studied the wide-ranging impact of media convergence on consumers, industry and society, and submitted to the Government their recommendations for addressing the policy and regulatory challenges in a converged media environment.

The 12-member Panel¹ helmed by Nanyang Technological University's chairman of its Board of Trustees Mr Koh Boon Hwee was appointed by the Minister of the former Ministry of Communications, Information and the Arts (MICA, current Ministry of Communications and Information) in March 2012. Made up of distinguished members with diverse expertise and interests, the Panel was tasked to study the issues impacting Singapore as media content and services increasingly converge in the wake of rapid technology advancements.

The digitisation of media content, coupled with pervasive high-speed broadband connectivity and the proliferation of Internet-enabled devices are transforming the way content is distributed and consumed globally. The impact on Singapore is particularly pronounced as more than 80 per cent of local households are connected to broadband. At 74 per cent, Singapore has the highest smart phone penetration rate in the world, while tablet ownership² is expected to surge from 31 per cent to 60 per cent by the end of 2012.

“In approaching this study, the Panel was guided by three overarching values. The first is the need for media regulation to continue to reflect societal values and community standards. The second is to continue to ensure that local content is encouraged and promoted to bond people and build a cohesive and resilient society. Lastly, to strike a

¹ **Annex A** - List of Media Convergence Review Panel members

² Source: Ericsson ConsumerLab 2012.

balance between commercial and public interests so that none are compromised in favour of the other,” said Mr Koh.

The Panel reviewed the impact of media convergence in four key areas:

- (i) Update Singapore's content regulatory framework to spur industry growth, while empowering consumers and safeguarding the interests of society;
- (ii) Find ways to enhance the vibrancy of local content to build shared experiences and strengthen communities in the age of convergence;
- (iii) Develop a policy and regulatory response to address copyright and digital piracy challenges; and
- (iv) Update Singapore's media licensing framework for greater clarity and consistency in a converged media environment.

In the area of content regulation, the Panel's key recommendations included the harmonisation of classification frameworks across different media platforms – both traditional and online, as well as a greater emphasis on industry co-regulation and community outreach, given the practical challenges of regulating an ever-growing volume of content unhindered by physical and geographic boundaries.

To encourage the creation of more local content, the Panel advocated measures such as mandatory investment or contribution to a common content production fund by nationwide broadcasters; and the development of a tax incentive. The Panel also recommended that designated local content be profiled on the landing page of connected television sets to facilitate easy access by viewers.

In responding to copyright and digital piracy challenges, the Panel advocated adopting a three-pronged approach of encouraging greater public education, the provision of more legitimate content sources, and site blocking.

To achieve greater transparency and clarity on how media services are licensed in a converged media environment, the Panel's key recommendations included streamlining

licensing of all online content services under Singapore’s Broadcasting Act and better defining audio-visual services that are licensable.

“The recommendations by the Panel aim to have regulation applied in a more consistent manner across different platforms. They are also meant to be pragmatic by allowing for ease of compliance by the industry, and most importantly, the recommendations recognise the importance of partnering people and private sectors because it is not feasible for the government to regulate all content in the age of convergence. Regulation cannot, and should not be the default solution,” said Mr Koh.

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For more information, please contact the Media Development Authority, the secretariat of the Media Convergence Review Panel, or visit <http://www.mda.gov.sg>.

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List of members of the Media Convergence Review Panel

The Panel comprised:

- a) Mr Koh Boon Hwee, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Nanyang Technological University – Chairman of Media Convergence Review Panel;
- b) Mr Chang Long Jong, Deputy CEO, MediaCorp Pte Ltd;
- c) Mr Patrick Daniel, Editor-in-Chief, English & Malay Newspapers, Singapore Press Holdings Ltd;
- d) Mr Goh Seow Eng, Managing Director, NextGen TV, Singapore Telecommunications Ltd;
- e) Dr Bruno Lanvin, Executive Director, INSEAD eLab;
- f) Ms Ann Lavin, Head, Policy & Government Affairs, Google Southeast Asia;
- g) Mr Gregory Lee, President & CEO, Samsung Asia Pte Ltd;
- h) Mr Gilbert Leong, Partner, Intellectual Property & Technology, Rodyk & Davidson LLP;
- i) Mr Charles Lim Aeng Cheng, Parliamentary Counsel, Legislation and Law Reform Division, Attorney-General's Chambers;
- j) Mr Ganesh Rajaram, Senior Vice President, Asia, International Distribution and Home Entertainment, FremantleMedia Enterprises;
- k) Mr Viswa Sadasivan, CEO, Strategic Moves Pte Ltd; and
- l) Mr Tan Tong Hai, COO, StarHub Ltd.