

**The Future Digital Economy
Digital Content – Creation, Distribution and Access**

**Organised jointly by the Italian Minister for Innovation and Technologies and the
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**

30-31 January 2006, Rome, Italy

**Key Messages from Fabio Colasanti, Director-General, Information Society & Media,
European Commission**

31 January 2006

**Session 9: Policy Roundtable: Identifying priority issues, tools and policy challenges:
Moving forward**

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- Content should not be considered only in a traditional way (e.g. music, cinematographic works) but it should be also be conceived as everything that is transmitted through delivery platforms which technological progress and entrepreneurs have put at our disposal.
- Content is important for governments for 2 main reasons:
 - Positive effects it produces on our everyday day life (e.g. enhanced learning, better security).
 - Main growth driver of the electronic communications sector, with an enormous potential in terms of growth and employment.
- Governments support digital content through three main instruments;
 - Regulation; creating systems of rules to enable a positive framework for the development of content,
 - financial support, where there is perceived market failures and,
 - as an actor for the provision of on-line services (e.g. eHealth, eGovernment).
- The EU is active in these 3 areas;
 - a) **Legislation.** There is limited action in this area due to the reduced responsibilities at Community level and the difficulties in regulating promptly and efficiently in this highly dynamic environment. However, the EU is active in trying to establish the appropriate framework for actors by being as technologically neutral as possible and by facilitating work for striking the right balance between service providers and content holders.(e.g. High Level groups on DRMs and Film on-line)
 - b) **Financial Support.** Financial support is provided through the Information Society and Media Programmes.
 - ICT Research. Circa €1 billion per year is invested in research, part of which is dedicated to content technologies.
 - Media Programme. Investment addresses, among other areas, the lack of distribution channels of cinematographic works in Europe
 - c) **Services.** Although the EU does not provide services directly, it has an active role in promoting for example eHealth or eGovernment initiatives. This is performed by bringing together relevant stakeholders to exchange views of the main issues, to encourage best practice and to develop common frameworks and guidelines. The activities in this area are important vis a vis citizens to illustrate the fact that the ICT (Digital Content) sector not only contributes to growth and employment opportunities but improves the quality of life of citizens.