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Broadband Content Policy

The UK's Approach



The Importance Of Content Industries

- Sector is an increasingly major part of the UK economy, shifting from manufacture of physical items to high value intangibles.
£57bn p.a.
- Huge opportunity for the digital content industries to help make a step change difference in productivity across the economy.
- Increasing convergence between sectors creates new revenue streams and distribution channels with a wider range of products.

Broadband is the key enabler with compelling content & applications.



The Importance of Broadband Content

In a letter from the Chairman of the Broadband Stakeholder Group, Keith Todd, to the **British Prime Minister Tony Blair** in **April 2004**, he writes that broadband:

‘will be the cause of profound economic and social change through the rest of this decade and will impact on all aspects of the economy, affecting growth, productivity and competitiveness;’ and

‘has the potential to equal the advent of the railways, the passenger jet or even domestic electricity in terms of its impact.’



Evidence-based Policy Making for Intervention in Broadband Content

- To justify intervention, market failure is a necessary condition but it's not sufficient.
- Intervention must add value in terms of productivity and competitiveness.
- Evidence is important but not always easy to find.
- Broadband is big.....very big, but not easy to quantify.



Partnership Approach

Over the past 12 months, Ministerial buy-in to multi-layered partnerships involved:

- DTI
- England's 9 Regional Development Agencies
- 3 Devolved Administrations (Nations)
- Industry

Process

- Press Release
- 4 National Broadband Content Workshops
- 'Task and Finish' Group worked up a Business Case for investment in broadband content by Regions/Nations



Business Case for Investment in Broadband Content

DTI influencing regions and nations to position broadband content and applications initiatives as part of their economic development.

Four policy outcomes:

- Business
- Learning
- Public Sector
- Community

http://www.dti.gov.uk/industries/digital_content/broadband-content-businesscase.pdf



Business

Broadband content and applications produce step changes in productivity by:

- encouraging innovation
- raising the level of skills
- opening up new markets
- addressing existing ones in a fresh way

Business will need to exploit the full potential of broadband content and applications to remain competitive.

Business continued

Key challenges for UK regions and nations:

- Encouraging marketing and business planning support for the exploitation of rich media content.
- Promoting knowledge sharing and the introduction of new digital technologies.
- Exploiting the strengths of UK's creative media and software industry.
- Emphasis on raising the productivity of SMEs to compete more effectively with larger organisations.



Business continued

Broadbandshow in South-West of England
(www.broadbandshow.org)

- Funded by DTI.
- Commissioned broadband content in tourism and advanced engineering sectors.
- Stimulated the market, for example, tourism case studies show how richer content and the use of broadband applications result in business growth.
- Developed skills in creative media.



Learning

Broadband content has the potential to:

- Transform the learning experience.
- Widen access to education.
- Improve cooperation between educational institutions, and the service they offer to students.

Actions

- Work with local public sector partners to influence e-learning providers.
- Widen participation in basic skills development programmes by looking at new career models.



Learning continued

Regional Broadband Consortia are key players in the procurement of internet services, broadband infrastructure and content for Local Education Authorities and schools.

For example, London Grid For Learning
(<http://www.lgfl.net>)

has a well developed content strategy, using its considerable aggregation powers to develop personalised learning and virtual environments that meet the needs of both pupils and teachers.

Public Sector

- The public sector has a major role, both as a customer and as a channel for aggregation of broadband demand, to push broadband usage and capacity to new levels.
- Partnership with the private sector provides huge opportunities in areas such as eHealth and eGovernment to
 - drive up the efficiency of the public sector
 - improve service to citizens

Public Sector continued

The widespread use of broadband in public sector delivery requires:

- A continuing improvement in broadband infrastructure.
- A mindset change in the public sector to commission more engaging content and applications.
- The raising of ICT skills.
- Encouraging the private sector to add value to the delivery of public services.



Community

- Inclusion and empowerment of communities can be achieved through broadband content.
- This includes promoting opportunities in remote rural areas.
- Broadband content in the community context could be a major lever towards getting people signed up and participating.
- Citizens as creators and consumers of content.

Community continued

Examples of Community-focused broadband content activities:

Alston Cybermoor (www.cybermoor.org) has addressed issues of economic regeneration, lifelong learning and take-up of e-Government services, as well as low cost broadband provision.

Home2Home and Carpenters Connect on the Carpenters Estate in Newham (www.newham.org.uk/wired/) addresses challenges of getting disadvantaged communities on-line and encouraging community activity and participation.



Work taken forward

Where we are heading in 2005

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Devolved Administrations (DAs) are engaging with the Broadband Content Business Case.

DTI will support the work of the RDAs and DAs with individual partnership meetings on the whole broadband policy agenda.



Work taken forward

Where we are heading in 2005 (continued)

Emphasis has switched to action rather than mapping activities and studies.

DTI actively working on facilitating more effective procurement of Broadband Content by the public sector.



Conclusion

The most promising approach to help the UK exploit the potential for broadband is:

- Continued, sustained partnership at all levels between Central Government, Regions, Nations and industry.
- High level buy-in at all stages from Ministers.

With the objective of:

- Making broadband integral to socio-economic development.
- Moving the UK towards a vibrant and diverse knowledge-based economy.

This is the model that the UK has adopted and is working well.



The Prizes To Be Won

Increase levels of innovation, enterprise, competitiveness and productivity.

Transform delivery of public services.

Boost education and the ICT skills base.

Make regions more attractive for inward investment.

Applies to every country in the OECD

