

Content needs self-regulation

May 6 2011

A new report by UNSW's Journalism and Media Research Centre argues that Australia's media content regulation system is broken and that it is time for a full review to manage content in the 21st century.

[The report](#), *The Adaptive Moment: A Fresh Approach to Convergent Media in Australia*, was launched in Sydney.

Authors, Associate Professor Kate Crawford and Professor Catharine Lumby, say Australia is lagging behind other Western democracies and that we need to move away from a top-down approach to a much stronger focus on self-regulation.

A key recommendation of the report is that media users should have much stronger input into media governance. It recommends the establishment of a Convergent Media Board to allow users to work with industry and government to provide a national forum for dialogue on policy issues.

"The Convergent Media Board would give users an opportunity to work with industry and government to balance the risks and opportunities of the convergent media era. Media users are now increasingly media producers and they need to have a say in how content is managed both at the industry and government level," says Professor Lumby.

The Board would not be a complaints-based body. It would work co-operatively with the Australian Communications and Media Authority and act as a point of liaison with international organisations and bodies

working on [media content](#) governance.

Associate Professor Crawford noted that Australian approaches to content management are still grounded in an era when media was produced by professionals in discreet silos – such as print, radio, and TV.

“The internet is not a new medium,” she said. “It is a new media environment, where all forms of content circulate and are recirculated, marked by an unprecedented diversity of users and producers. We need a fresh and adaptive approach.”

The report also argues that industry needs to commit to monitored and robust codes of practice and that they need to ensure users have the tools to notify inappropriate content and a say in how platforms are developed and data is managed.

A cornerstone of ensuring user agency, according to the report, is a clear commitment by industry and government to funding lifelong education around digital literacy, security and the ethics of media use and production. They argue that both government and industry have a role in resourcing this education and that we need a national curriculum which focuses on these issues.

“We no longer live in a time where governments can exercise a top-down approach to pre-vetting all [media](#) content and acting as all-seeing gatekeepers,” said Professor Lumby. “We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the Federal Government’s Convergence Review.”

Provided by University of New South Wales

Citation: Content needs self-regulation (2011, May 6) retrieved 10 April 2024 from

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