

ATUG Future Forums 2009

Infrastructure and Access Services:
Regional issues, ubiquity,
and the big policy issues

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5 May 2009



A funny thing happened on the way to the forum ...

- The Digital Economy originally featured in the 2020 Summit workstreams, and got supplanted
- But NBN ≠ DE

- Some DBCDE staff think the DE has already arrived
- But DE is a lot more than just a lot of online services



The concept of a general purpose technology ...

- GPTs are technology changes that not only improve productivity but that transform the economy
- Earlier examples have been the steam engine and the internal combustion engine – is there any part of the economy that has not been affected by these?
- They not only affect how things are produced, but where they are produced
- Communications technologies have historically been centralizing rather than decentralizing influences

A DE definition

- The “digital economy” refers to the transformation of economic and social transactions, organisation and relations enabled by the combined use of information processing and telecommunications technologies, such as the Internet and mobile communications. It includes commercial transactions, personal dialogue, and machine-to-machine communications for the delivery of information, entertainment and services. The term includes concepts referred to as ‘internet economy’ and ‘information society’.

Regional issues

- The RTR (Glasson) had a simple task – report on the adequacy of services with regard to whether people in regional areas had equitable access to those in metropolitan areas. The answer is no, but will always be so.
- Committee had as its focus getting the 2% up to 12Mbps – but now the new divide is between 100 for 90 and 12 for 10. Does this matter?
- In a DE conversation rather than an infrastructure discussion we turn that around – what is the DE opportunity in regional Australia.
 - Not tree changers
 - The Flynn ideal – livability and services
 - The productivity goals – primary production and transport

Big policy issues

- Band wagon effects and Black Swans
- Public good, club good, private good
- Sub-additive cost functions
- Sorting the hype from the op