MEDIA REVOLUTIONARY ACTION CAPACITY IN THE ERA OF CONVERGED NETWORKING

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ABSTRACT

Commercial developments, innovative initiatives plus new technologies are affecting the future of public broadcast monopolies as well as the new businesses in the field of media. Earlier even a decade back situation, media were in a state of flux and uncertainty especially in developing countries. Now media landscapes appear on the brink of radical transformations. It's been an apprehension about the role of the media in the democratic political as well as international political processes. Media is going through a consolidation and adaptation phase for devising new structures of competitive media. Alternative available distribution channels are mushrooming sideways. Changing economies and technologies are finding expression in relative abundance, more consumer choices and changes of audiovisual culture. Still there is an extensive capacity existing as an open gap to be filled by the media. Certain media consumer products are the need of the time for the media market that are though addressed in the charters and policies for media, but still are lagging behind the practical action steps for their implementation. This concept paper explores the media logic in the domains Content Provision, Service provision technologies and the Regulations impacting media. This paper focuses mainly on above mentioned domains of media in the developing countries while putting up some recommendations for the performance of the media's revolutionary action capacity in ICT converged networking era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Commercial developments, innovative initiatives plus new technologies are affecting the future of public broadcast monopolies as well as the new businesses in the field of media. Since the de-regularization of media in some developing countries the flux and uncertain states of media have been evolved and are now heading towards the brink of radical transformations. New yet competitive media structures are going through consolidation and adaptation phase. Alternative available distribution channels are mushrooming sideways.

Changing economies and technologies are finding expression in relative abundance, more consumer choices and changes of audiovisual culture. Still there is an extensive capacity existing as an open gap to be filled by the media. Certain media consumer products are the need of the time for the media market that are though addressed in the charters and policies for media, but still are lagging behind the practical action steps for their implementation. The communication innovative technologies are evolving by changing their existing nature in the digital media ecologies though embedded in an indigenous yet creative sphere of reality. It is the best occasion to understand the emerging capabilities, governing patterns and functionality of the media; by understanding its revolutionary action capacity to get maximum benefits by the digital economies for the prosperity of the humanity.

This concept paper explores the media logic in the domains Content Provision, Service provision technologies and the Regulations impacting media. This paper focuses mainly on above mentioned domains of media in the developing countries while putting up some recommendations for the performance of the media's revolutionary action capacity in ICT converged networking era. The first domain conceptualized here is of content provision.

2. CONTENT PROVISION

Developing countries are although rich in their indigenous powerful content yet their presence on the media is in huge missing state. For Improving the standards and quality of education, information and entertainment, it requires a pivotal role of the public as audience of the media, in the form their decisive feedback that supplements the media (by their criticism, appreciation and suggestions). Identifying the audience potential as per their age, language and education level, rural or urban residence, comes first. Then come devising target oriented programs with local language content for peculiar folks e.g. for children, for senior citizens, for a fairly un-educated housewives group etc. Excellence can only be achieved when the content is delivered after authentic research plus a properly formulized content with special focus on the understanding of the general public.

Within certain developing societies, there is a great concern by politicians to maintain some control over the conditions of media operations. Still the lacking concern is about the cultural quality of the media and what is being published or broadcasted and disseminated, although questions of privacy, decency and the harmful effects of the media are hotly debated in public arenas.

Prevalence of the connected devices with the connected content that is local in nature yet connected with the global is required. Whereby the citizens can focus on the participatory

approach for generating and giving feedbacks for the media. Such connectivity focusing on billons of native connected data sources, leading towards zeetabytes of info demands for development of a personalized content by using data mining and data journalism techniques to be developed and controlled by indigenous media market. The next domain discussed here is of service provision technologies.

3. SERVICE PROVISION TECHNOLOGIES

Communications and Media service providers of all types and in all markets are facing increasing business and operational complexity as they embark on transformation initiatives necessary to prepare themselves for effective competitive differentiation and profitability in the convergent Next Generation (NGN) environments in the developing countries. Until now technology integration challenges in the field of media have not been adequately met, particularly with regard to the availability of consistently appropriate, affordable and effective business transformation methodologies. There are some recommendations for technological avenue for media services provision.

- Not only must service providers address significant time-to-market pressures in the launch of new services, they must also manage the balancing act of achieving revenue growth and high scalability in both service usage and subscriber numbers. Mean while retaining tight control of both expenditures capital expense (Capex) and operating expense (Opex) for a running product, business or system) has also to be maintained.

- Technologies like networked Digital satellite news gathering (DSNG) that are based on geographical information systems and satellite remote sensing can act as a centralized hub for providing regional and global connectivity. Adoption of Fiber to home (FTTH) can revolutionize the speed and flexibility with which communication service providers can bring new services to market by offering a blended, layered approach to support media business services. This will not only eliminate the long development cycle of configuration and implementation; whilst at the same time it endows media industry with scope, for customization to meet the unique market and eco-system needs of each service provider.

- For addressing the integration challenges created by the proliferation of multiple applications, there is an urgent requirement for a flexible framework that can support rapid delivery of converged services. E.g. in this era of convergence TV and radio programs are coming in the handy mobiles of the target audience, where old telecom services providers are bound to innovate the media services to their already subscribed telephony subscribers.

- There is a pivotal need for incorporating platforms that can not only cater for telecom functional capabilities but sideways are also able to implement media services in their customer lifecycle management plan. Therefore, this multi-channel integration of both voice and data paves for a revolutionary capacity of media, which can provide efficient and cost effective customization of the media content for the developing areas with low socioeconomic statuses as well.

All too often, we forget that the inevitable betterment of technology is driven by continuous change and evolution. Change starts with being able to see that the present is not perfect and that innovation and change are strong tools to make a better future in whatever domain we exist. With the evolution of changing requirements in multiple domains in media industry, media technology requires a pivotal up gradation. It's now an intersection of domains for providing best quality programs that are in easy access and reach of the common community. Technology is not for the sake of mere technology, it's for the society development. It's been a problem especially in the developing world that whenever some latest technology emerges e.g. Direct to Home (DTH), (High Definition Television (HDTV), Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) and Direct Audio Broadcast (DAB) etc.; it's out of the reach and access of community specially the rural society segment. There are lot many reasons for this low penetration and proliferation of

media technologies; amongst them low buying capacity and costly access modes stay at the front line. It appears now the challenge for the media industry in order to flourish and groom its capacity. It could be interplay of a set of media technologies that are in easy reach and access of the rural and far flung society segments rather than dependent on a single technology. Such single products really addressing the convergent scenarios for a set of issues are the need of the time. Media industry has significant change in front of us. For addressing this changing reality communication technologies for media must focus on the intersection and interplay of different domains. The major domains of concern are as follows:

- Wireless (mobile WiMAX a cheaper yet efficient giant leap than GSM and other cellular technologies and satellite communications, wireless cable TV i.e. Local channel Multipoint Distribution Service (LMDS) and Multichannel Multi-Point Distribution Service (MMDS);

- Converged Wire line (Cable TV, Terrestrial Radio and TV Stations) with centralized hubs;

- Smart next generation Applications like Over the Top (OTT), smart customizable media streaming, multiple screen main-streaming, (besides basic service applications value added services like Pay TV, video on demand, interactive TV) with high speed broadband connectivity;

- Infrastructure (set up like Studio Transmitter Links (STL), up linking and down linking ports, services landing teleport stations, radio access, transmission, switching and network equipment, receiving/ terminal equipment like Scrambler/Decoder, Set-top boxes, propriety radio and TV sets).

Whatever the technologies are chosen for the provision of media services principle features like digital transmission standards, high spectrum efficiency, and high sound quality even in densely populated urban areas should be adequately addressed. For making the access of such media communication services user friendly mobile, portable and fixed reception with flexible coverage area (local, regional, national and international) is the flagging need of this convergent era of media landscapes.

4. REGULATIONS IMPACTING MEDIA

Firstly, regulation is a means of directing certain processes and may be introduced as a temporary measure until the political goal sought, e.g. the transition to an actual authoritative pressure free competitive market, is achieved. Regulation may also be an inevitable, more permanent necessity for as long as an undesirable situation continues. Secondly, regulation and supervision can also be a way of guaranteeing basic social or political conditions and standards. In such situations, they are not compulsory, but are meant to be relatively permanent.

Regulatory mechanisms and the intensity of regulation are variable and dynamic, depending on the political and social consensus. Whatever form regulation may take, the primary aim is to achieve certain (possibly sector-specific) interests, set out in the state's Constitution, in the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors. The main areas concerned are

- Competition,

- Access to the networks of large companies,

- Rules governing access to limited resources (e.g. spectrum),

- Protection of minors and data, and the universal service.

Although the world of media seems to be inevitably moving towards open markets, the premise that provides the implementation of even the existing regulations is far from being widely accepted by the main media players like certain TV channels and cable TV operators. Traditional electronic media policies and regulations regarding networks and transmission systems are affected by convergence in the following arenas.

- Universal v. selective service regulations: legislation is required to ensure general availability of content as well as basic infrastructure access for all households at a fixed economical cost. This issue is challenged by the multitude of channels and access modes.

- Regulation for diversity: broad access to media i.e. non-discriminatory tariff rates.

- Regulation for competition: forcing de facto monopolies to provide cost-based services at affordable rates to smaller competitors i.e. inter-connect agreements.

- Regulation of content: protection of national identity yet expansion with regional as well as global diversification, democratic processes via language requirements, censorship in terms of preserving the roots of society by carrying out fair implementation of the accordingly devised rules in this regard.

Digitalizing transmission system increases transmission capacity many fold and allows new forms of digitalized communication to take place. From a regulatory point of view, therefore, it will become harder to distinguish between broadcast services with an interactive component, and telecommunication services with a broadcast or video-based component. The business ramifications of this technological development indicate a horizontal expansion. As far as the commercial control of the converged media is concerned, heavy commercial players want to control the whole electronic distribution chain from the development of concepts (original content ideas), production of content, distribution and customer handling (creating consumer product options and billing individual usage).

Audiovisual media continue to merge together, thus creating new legal challenges. The task is therefore, to define the content-related objectives of regulation. As an increasing number of regulatory authorities introduce instruments that give them greater powers of intervention, but still problem lies where even the main goals have already been defined and mandates to guide the actions of the regulators, still regulators being under the government pressures fail to implement the actual essence of the regulations. For example there is a trend seen in the developing countries media that they tend to copy the styles and content of the modern developed countries even if the content so copied in not in harmony with their own country's ideology, way of living and culture. In copying so they have developed a habit to practice how to lose their cultural identity. Even after adopting modern countries customs and contents they can still not be called a modern country's media as well as they don't even gratify their audience. In the broadcasting sector, diversity of opinion and minimum journalistic standards for the opinion-forming media are also relevant considerations. Therefore, they follow a dwindling slope in terms of fulfilling their social responsibility. It is therefore recommended that the regulation commission should be divided in three main streams as follows:

Media Regulation Commission: The media commission is intended to award broadcasting licenses, deal with complaints about Program content, penalize broadcasters who commit administrative infringements, and monitor communication e-commerce, *i.e.* information society services.

Infrastructure Regulation Commission: The infrastructure commission has to be responsible for awarding telecommunications licenses, carrying out the tasks set out for the provision of telecom infrastructure required for the communications. It should also be positioned for enforcing conditions for nondiscriminatory access to communications services and transmission channels.

Competition Matters Commission: Enlarging the program choices available to the people by local content development with respect to the audience choices and their varied categories without losing the essence of cultural identity.

In this scenario the diverse communication platforms that are catering the rising macro trends of interactive media, with creation and distribution of the media audience personalized

content with niche markets in the real time spheres of reality; demands the innovative and diverse media platforms including mobile yet virtual reality based setups.

As no road tells us where to go rather we decide where to go. Therefore, the media industry should take initiatives along the rationale to lead over a highway with a vision to bridge up the open gaps, by putting up its revolutionary action capacity for the society development in current ICT based convergent networking era.

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