Human Kinetics
BOOK REVIEW

Regulation, Governance and Convergence in the Media

By Peter Humphreys and Seamus Simpson. Published 2018 by Edward Elgar, Northampton, MA. $130.00. 263 pp. ISBN: 9781781008980

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Understanding the contemporary salient issues of media convergence is important for all sport organizations to successfully maneuver in the global media convergence landscape. Peter Humphreys and Seamus Simpson build on their last work, *Globalisation, Convergence and European Telecommunications Regulation,* by providing a thorough and insightful overview of the evolving context, regulation, and governance of media convergence in *Regulation, Governance, and Convergence in the Media,* which consists of seven chapters organized into three parts. They provide a logical analysis from infrastructure to media content, and then to the challenges that impede regulation, governance, and media convergence that have important implications for sport organizations in the digital era.

Media convergence occurs when mass-communication mediums gradually merge to become one medium as a result of new technologies. The literature on media convergence has a broad scope, encompassing the production, distribution, and use processes of digital-media services, including content production to service delivery through a variety of channels. While media convergence is assumed by many to be inevitable with series of technological and service-based developments, the process of media convergence has been fragmented, disparate, and drawn out. The challenges, disruptions, threats, and opportunities that have arisen with media convergence have led to questions about the role of governments and the effectiveness of existing governing structures in regulating media activities. Humphreys and Simpson provide strong evidence that a new governance framework is necessary for the media-convergence environment.

In Part I, Simpson provides a historical view of the evolving context and fragmented nature of media convergence. He highlights the key developments in information and communication technologies and services that gradually brought together different fragments of the communication landscape. Computer-based communication technologies, or digitization, represent the first significant developments that set the stage for media convergence and transformed telecommunications. The technological advances led to practical efficiencies and opportunities, but also increased costs due to the growth in demand for extra transmission capacity. The problem of capacity was met with the development and growth of fiber-optics cable technology and the digitization of the airwaves in the mobile-communications sector. The developments in telecommunications raised important implications for enhanced transmission of audiovisual content in broadcasting. The digitization of broadcasting fueled the trend toward network capacity expansion, and this had far-reaching impacts on cable, satellite, and terrestrial networks. These technological developments in communications technologies occurred separately from the

development of the Internet. The Internet became the most critical technological development that enabled media convergence. It broke down the distinction between telecommunication, radio, broadcasting, and journalism and provided a convergence landscape that has fostered the development of new and innovative forms of communication. The Internet has developed social, economic, commercial, cultural, and political importance, and this has sparked debate over how it should be governed and regulated. In this section, Simpson emphasizes the importance of self-regulation and private interests to fueling new technological developments and the benefits that result from these developments. This section provides a broad historical perspective of media convergence's trajectory and impact on society.

Part II explores key features of the broad governance of communications infrastructures in the converging media landscape. Simpson addresses three core infrastructural issues: the development of next-generation networks, the reallocation of spectrum that became available with digitization, and the debate of Internet neutrality. To understand the development of next-generation networks, Simpson explores a wide range of policy efforts to develop high-speed broadband network environments, or next-generation networks (NGNs), and the role of the state in supporting network refurbishment and upgrading. He examines the different approaches used in the United States, Europe, Australia, and South Korea to support the development of NGNs and found that each country had a unique approach that relied on the assumption that investment in NGNs would lead to economic growth and renewal.

Next, Simpson turns his analysis to the global implications of the reallocation of spectrum. The spectrum debate is characterized by the struggle over scarce and collectively valued communication resources. The increased demand for audio-visually based mobile communication has led to conflict over spectrum capacity, with commercial interests in mobile communication seeking to increase their share of spectrum capacity at the expense of broadcasting interests. This tension ultimately resulted in spectrum policies designed to increase capacity and reallocate it. However, the media policy decisions regarding reallocation have led to tension between public interests and the marketization of communication. Based on Simpson's analysis, it is clear that spectrum policy is likely to evolve, as spectrum will remain a key infrastructure concern in the converging communications landscape.

The third infrastructural challenge that Simpson explores in the context of media convergence is the controversy over Internet neutrality. Simpson describes the net-neutrality debate as being about the conditions according to which users are afforded access to infrastructures of information and communication on one hand and how users are treated in their use of the infrastructure on the other. Simpson highlights the persistent interference of Internet service providers with the flow of Internet traffic and the debate over whether certain websites and content should be prioritized. He argues that the net-neutrality debate will continue as media convergence proceeds because it centers on the complex issue of balancing individual rights with public interests.

In Part III, Peter Humphreys carries the discussion forward from infrastructural issues to examining three key issues involving media content in the converging communications environment: the debate over copyright enforcement,