

Digital convergence beyond technology: socio-economic benefits, SMEs & public policy

Internet Governance Forum (IGF) - Hyderabad, India
Friday 5 December, 9:30-11:00, Workshop Room 1

An interactive workshop to discuss digital convergence, the benefits and opportunities to key stakeholders - with a special focus on SMEs.

Digital convergence is the evolution of previously distinguishable digitalized information formats, services, applications, networks, and business models in ways that reduce or blend the distinctions. Convergence is driven by the rapid development of digital technology and new Internet-enabled business models.

As convergence has evolved, the idea of globally distributed and networked business has too. These developments have significantly expanded where and how customer services and support are provided. In turn, it has generated overall cost savings for companies and consumers, and provided employment, skills transfer and capacity building for less developed economies.

Convergence also has implications for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the developing world, and has social and cultural aspects. Thanks to Internet-driven innovation and evolution, businesses previously constrained by local markets have the cost-effective means to compete globally and draw revenue from outside the domestic economy. These developments impact the use and evolution of the Internet, and policy choices.

This workshop will focus on information and skills various stakeholders must have to address digital convergence issues and the implications for the policy environment, users and enterprises of all sizes. Panellists and the audience will have an open discussion on questions like:

- What are the implications of convergence and Internet governance issues for the future?
- What kind of human and institutional capacity building can help policymakers, regulators, business and users develop appropriate policy approaches, and effectively address training and qualifications?
- What conditions are conducive to entrepreneurship in this era?
- What attracts investment in the converged environment?
- What are the cultural and social dimensions?

The interactive discussion will also highlight policy framework models that are working well, the challenges faced in putting them in place, and how those challenges were overcome

Moderator

Herbert Heitmann, Chair, ICC Commission on E-Business, IT and Telecoms; Head of global communications, SAP, Germany

Panellists

Natarajan Sivasamban, Vice President and Deputy Head -Telecom ISU, Tata Consultancy Services, India
Jyrki Kasvi, Member of Parliament and Vice Chair Committee for the Future, Finnish Parliament, Finland
Helani Galpaya, Director Research and COO, LIRNEasia, Sri Lanka

Rapporteurs

Elizabeth Thomas-Raynaud, Policy Manager, ICC Secretariat, Paris