

DEPARTMENT OF BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY PAPER: 'ABC AND SBS: TOWARDS A DIGITAL FUTURE'

Reply from Carol O'Donnell

Questions: Harnessing new technologies to deliver services (p.13)

What is appropriate role of national broadcaster? A. To educate, entertain and encourage further communication and sustainable development.

Can archives be more effectively used and accessed? Yes. Decide your education development direction and ask the Prime Minister (PM), other ministers and premiers for help with the related agenda for sustainable and fair development which is justified briefly below. The direction is developed in the attached discussions of carbon pollution reduction, healthy development and financial management in Australia and beyond.

Is there a role for the national broadcasters to be early adopters? Yes. On clearly justified environmental, social or related economic development grounds.

Questions: Education, skills and productivity (p. 26)

Will there be a role for extended national broadcasting in education and training and particularly in the vocational education and training environment? Yes! You may start with the development of greenhouse gas audit and related green education and employment development strategies, with health and related environment development strategies – or with different development strategies that you like better, such as language and cultural teaching through entertainment. See attached directions and proceed as you consider best. (I would personally like to see Marx, Freud and Dylan recognized as the great modern Jewish prophets of the world's historical materialist and related democratic development traditions. Their legacies shine strongly through much high quality US entertainment culture but have been lost from much US professional discourse, which is collegiate, faux-scientific and ultimately feudal, like the US financial system it drives.)

Questions: Social inclusion and cultural diversity (p. 31)

Are there ways of enhancing the value of the national broadcasters' services to migrant groups? Yes - by assisting skills development and education for sustainable development strategies to meet identified and prioritized industry and related community need. (See attached discussion. Mining, construction and agriculture are three of many related areas of concern.)

Questions: Presenting Australia to the world (p. 36)

Should consideration be given to expanding or enhancing services with other countries? Yes! Inform the Premiers the Prime Minister and relevant Ministers that you would like to begin developments, if possible, with the Open University at Milton-Keynes

in England, with appropriate production sources in China, (which has the second most common language of the world), and with those anywhere else deemed relevant. Ask for their advice and assistance. (See attached related policy discussion and direction.)

Questions: Efficient delivery of services (p. 41)

Is there an optimal mix of in-house and outsourced production? No. However, there is always a great need to access and develop a wider range of talent on one hand, and to empower the powerless on the other. Though their use of technology is terrific, many Australian films would be much better if more attention was given to script, in my view. When people actually know what they are talking about it really shows! That is what makes the Black Balloon, the Final Winter and the film about the singing Chinese mother so good, in my view. Give me words and genuine cultural understanding over technology any time. The range of talent is currently too narrow. Sony Tropfest is a fabulous opportunity which deserves to be developed, rather than captured. I guess it's teetering on the edge of domination by industry based mateship. (Underbelly was terrific, obviously.)

TAKE THE OPEN UNIVERSITY APPROACH. ADDRESS THE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, WORK AND RELATED FINANCIAL NEEDS OF INDUSTRIAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES. LEAD IN CO-OPERATION WITH INTERESTED OTHERS.

The internet, computers, TV, radio and videos provide the most amazing potential for fast and effective skills development and related education since books escaped monasteries. The 20th century technologies mean a massive reduction in the need for constantly re-inventing the wheel, as is normally done by teachers talking in classrooms which are often far away, and to which students drag themselves, often at exorbitant cost and inconveniently. Ideally, all teaching staff and students could co-ordinate through Australian communications and technology services to develop a better grounding for work in industries or for service in any community but especially those which are poorest.

Part of the answer to developing a globally innovative and competitive Australia also lies in analysing and meeting the education and entertainment needs of Australians and others together. The service and productivity gains which could be derived from more effectively coordinated education, related communication and information technology management systems would be great. Yet there is huge resistance to better management from many collegiate teaching cultures. They are dysfunctional for all. They do not want to be effectively Green, Global and Connected. Act to break their feudal fiefdoms.

In general, academic and other teachers appear to support the combination of narrowly regulated professional requirements and skill shortages, which reflect and support their industrial interests, regardless of the wider impact of this on industry and international society as a whole. Such teachers normally appear to do all within their power to design the student educational experience in the interests of their particular teaching body, to protect the level of status and control of those currently teaching. If one felt this was also done to protect the standard of services their particular brand of students will deliver to the

public one would not mind so much. However, if teachers are so concerned about professional standards, why do they resist their curriculum being open, so that it can be judged by anyone? One is not forced to buy a car unseen, on the basis of ratings provided by groups of self-interested car makers. One should be able to see the curriculum product so as to judge it, whether or not one decides to buy the process of teaching support and assessment which leads to certification. ABC and SBS should lead more open education.

From the historical perspective of the normal product development chain and from the related democratic perspective which seeks to meet the broadest possible need for high quality and rapid skills and education development, the Australian online education production process appears to be totally and determinedly irrational. (One person, the teacher, does almost everything herself, but her work can only reach a comparatively few people.) One may wonder why the apparently normal way of providing the most effective production and related economies of scale have apparently been ignored in regard to on-line teaching. I guess that the big US money behind IT development is strong enough to drive everything else in its own interests, and that these dominating interests have allied themselves with universities and technical colleges against the broader public interest, for related development purposes. On the other hand, the powers of Google, email, TV, radio and videos in providing information are enormous and the Sony Tropfest approach to the image has wonderful democratic development potential.

I have normally found that students who hate writing and teachers who hate constantly replying to individual students' questions and marking individuals' voluminous projects, often agree strongly about the desirability of multiple-choice exams and the related utility of tick the box questionnaires. Students are also less likely to feel that they can argue with a numerical score than with others' opinions, which is relaxing for all involved. (It's the number, stupid?) I think such pressure for numerical scores often create bad education, with little teacher and student feedback along the way. Students are instead encouraged to become rote learners, who may think that numbers and objectivity are identical. They may also avoid any broader learning and application of knowledge and related critical analysis in potentially useful ways to help regional or related workplace communities, while they gain the certificates which supposedly prove their proficiency. What good is education without a related demonstration by the student of the facility to critically analyse information, apply the results of gathered knowledge and express the outcome of having apparently gained it? The essence of scientific development is the capacity for evidence based activity. An Open University approach is recommended.

An Open University (OU) meeting I attended in Milton Keynes in England (29.5.08) first stressed the importance of QUALITY, ACCESS and SCALE in OU curriculum production and dissemination. The reason for the establishment of the OU is to make higher education available to many more people. All registered OU students have access to a tutor – local or online. I assume that all education provision should also aim to be in line with the Australian government commitment to AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, HIGH QUALITY and GREENER services. I have argued for many years, (using some of the current best evidence about on-line learning difficulties in Australia) that it is impossible to meet the above education service goals without an OU-style open model of

education curriculum and delivery rather than closed, collegiate, discipline driven and related silo based production of education materials. Who know what they are doing?

The OU usually requires no entry qualifications for undergraduates studying for degrees or at lower certificate levels and regards student exit levels as more important than entry levels. This approach seems completely reasonable. One often meets people with comparatively little formal education, who nevertheless appear extremely clever, either in some particular area of expertise, or generally. If such people at last are given the opportunity to shine through being able to gain relevant certificates of qualification for higher activity, society will benefit. However, the approach of welcoming all to learning means that considerable thought must also be given to the aims of any subject, the curriculum content necessary to support the aims, as well as the assessments given to students who want to demonstrate their attainment of the requisite knowledge, in order to apply it. Ideally, the comparative quality of the students' test outcomes should be judged as consistently as possible by all those most concerned. We all need be able to see and comment on teacher and student product for best results.

I think that subject aims, the education content to meet those aims, and the assessment related requirements for knowledge attainment and certification of proficiency in practice, are the primary issues that should concern a teacher. Otherwise, she may appear to be a law unto herself, who operates with insufficient justification for what she decides to teach and for its related certification. This has been a recognized problem in university research. For example, the elite Group of 8 Universities Response to the Expert Advisory Group's Preferred Model paper for the Research Quality Framework (RQF 2005) identified the need for a clear statement of research purpose in relation to application of the RQF. The first two points of the Group of 8 proposed purpose for the RQF were:

1. To provide governments and business with the additional information they need to assess the value of their investments in research
2. To provide researchers and institutions with the additional information they need to plan future research strategies.

Students and potential students, as well as the above stakeholders would benefit from the provision of freely available UG or related content which meets the identified needs of industry and regional communities better. This could provide baseline information upon which training for research might normally be expected to develop.

The Sydney University Business Liaison Office currently appears obsessed with patents as the only legitimate form of commercialisation. The organization seems to have gone backwards since 2002 when Kevin Croft offered a definition of commercialisation as:

‘Maximising the process of transferring outcomes to the community in a manner which optimises the chances of their successful implementation, encourages their use, accelerates their introduction and shares the benefits among the contributing parties’

He offered this to the Medical Foundation and the College of Health Sciences Conference in Leura. It has no contractual or legislative backing but seems good to me.