



TelSoc

Telecommunications & the Digital Economy

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Editorial

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Market Upheaval, Fires and What's Next for the NBN

Abstract

Papers in the December 2019 issue of the Journal include discussion on the future of the \$51 billion National Broadband Network (NBN), Benefiting from Asia's Technology Revolution and the relationship between the use of the Darwin-based coastal High Frequency radio service and the development of social capital in the Northern Territory. The Telecommunications Association is hosting public forums on the future of the NBN in 2020 at RMIT University in Melbourne. A recent decision by the Federal Court has cleared the way for the merger of Vodafone Hutchison and TPG to proceed. It is time for more robust telecommunications infrastructure as the recent devastating bushfires found telecommunications services wanting. The Journal welcomes contributions on telecommunications and the digital economy.

In This Issue

In this issue of the *Journal* papers cover public policy related to the National Broadband Network (NBN), Asia's technology revolution, HF radio inspired social capital and a historical look at a digital radio concentrator system.

The NBN Futures Forum: Realising the User Potential of the NBN presents a summary of the second NBN Futures Forum.

Promoting Digital Inclusion Through the NBN provides a guide on how to include all Australians with access to the NBN through more affordable pricing and improved reliability of access.

Competition and Mobile Network Operator's Investment Relationship: A Firm Level Empirical Evidence for Developing Countries investigates the effect of competition on investment and how this indicates the existence of a competition intensity that maximises mobile network operator investment.

The NBN Futures Project background and aims are explained in this paper. Building consensus and common ground are the basis for the public policy discussion on the future of the NBN.

Benefiting from Asia's Technology Revolution is an invited paper, the Charles Todd Oration 2019, that covers how Australia might benefit from Asia's technology revolution.

'This is VJY, Over' provides a discussion on how the Darwin-based HF coastal radio service was instrumental in the development of social capital in the Northern Territory.

The Digital Radio Concentrator System provides a historical look at the design and development of the digital radio concentrator system deployed by Telstra to provide automatic telephone services through regional and remote Australia.

Market Upheaval, Fires and What's Next for the NBN

The recent decision by the Federal Court to overturn the 2019 decision by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to block the merger of Vodafone Hutchison and TPG will have major ramifications for the Australian telecommunications market, albeit slowly and initially with a stronger entrant moving into the 5G market.

For regional and remote Australians, a larger third carrier should be expected to turn its attention to competing with Telstra and Optus outside the major urban centres. Whilst this is not anticipated to be a panacea for competition in the bush, it could see a changing dynamic that improves access and pricing over time.

The ongoing debate about infrastructure competition is likely to return to prominence as the ACCC considers whether to require that all carriers declare and provide the details of all publicly co-funded or fully funded infrastructure. There should be no hesitation for this to occur: it is time that all publicly co-funded or fully funded infrastructure be identified and a publicly accessible register made available.

The devastating 2019/2020 bushfire season has raised several issues regarding telecommunications infrastructure resilience and the robustness of telecommunication networks in regional and remote Australia. It is vital that a review be carried out from technical, social and business perspectives to identify ways to improve telecommunications resilience when confronted by unexpected fires and floods.

The Telecommunications Association is hosting forums on the future of the NBN at RMIT University in Melbourne throughout 2020. More details can be found on the telsoc.org website.

The NBN is Australia's largest Government-funded infrastructure project that is anticipated to cost the taxpayer about \$51 billion by the time it is built and fully operational in 2022. The NBN is about the future, vital infrastructure that will underpin the nation's future participation in the global digital economy. For the younger generations, the NBN is a key Government contribution towards successful careers, innovation and wealth creation.

Get involved, learn about the potential future for the NBN and have your say on this vital national project.

The *Journal*, Looking Forward

The *Journal* welcomes papers on telecommunications and the digital economy, including, theory, public policy and case studies.

Technological change is happening at a rapid rate and consumers anticipate that governments and industry will keep pace to ensure that the benefits can be fully utilised. The *Journal* is calling for papers on how new technologies will affect Australian telecommunications consumers.

The topics of *International Telecommunications Legislation and Regulations* and *International Mobile Cellular Regulation and Competition* are set to continue for some time, as the opportunity to attract papers from around the globe continues. We encourage papers that reflect on where the global telecommunications market is now, how it got to where it is, and what is going to happen next.

Papers are invited for upcoming issues. With your contributions, the *Journal* will continue to provide readers with exciting and informative papers covering a range of local and international topics. The Editorial Advisory Board also values input from our readership, so please let us know what themes you would like to see in the coming year.

All papers related to telecommunications and the digital economy are welcome and will be considered for publication after the double-blind peer-review process.

Mark A. Gregory

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