

Task and Finish Group on the future outlook for the media in Wales

Response from Euryng Ogwen Williams

Three fundamental realities:

1. The digital world is not a development or supplement to the analogue world.
2. Technology is only the catalyst for change. People make the changes when they adopt the technology.
3. A devolved Wales is directly affected, both culturally and economically, by the digital revolution.

The current change to people's ways of communicating is fundamental and is gathering pace.

Essentially, it is as much a philosophical challenge it is political and technological. It raises issues of privacy, and individual rights as well as economic issues.

Institutions isolate themselves from the change by concentrating on protecting their status or economic power. Few analogue institutions will survive in the digital world.

In the analogue world there were readers, listeners and viewers. In the digital world it's about participation and everyone is a stakeholder.

Devolution demands that the National Assembly engages fully in the digital change and takes responsibility.

Media culture must be both innovative and responsive. The mature independent production sector in Wales is a good base on which to build to meet the challenge. Investment in digital companies needs to be bold.

There are three elements in the digital chain

1. Content. Based on the creativity and effectiveness of the production system.
2. Distribution. What broadcasters and publishers have traditionally done and now includes all platforms, since consumers and citizens control the use of content.
3. Carriage. Universal broadband and wireless access in towns and cities are essential elements of digital communication. The Welsh government needs

to oversee this.

Funding S4C: It is perfectly reasonable to fund S4C from the proceeds of the licence fee. It was funded by the IBA from Net Advertising Revenue of ITV for the first ten years with the Secretary of State as arbitrator in any dispute. There were none. The principle is that the funding source does not impinge on creative freedom and editorial control.

Public service radio and television have been at the centre of Wales' identity, social cohesion and creative ambition for over 50 years. New legislation should define the role of the National Assembly in overseeing its development in the future in both languages.

The digital world is personal, local and global at the same time and an economic force. Government engagement should be about encouraging and developing creativity and not control.