

The converged business model

The first ICE Conference session looked at how old-style media are diversifying to include other methods of earning revenue or increasing market share.

This session examined the converged business model and what it means for some of Australia's largest media players. Moderated by Derek Francis of UBS Investment Bank, the aim of the session was to discuss new business opportunities for old business with the heads of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Macquarie Radio Network, ninemsn and Sensis Interactive.

As one of Australia's most recognised brands, the ABC provides viewers and listeners with the technology to watch and listen to their favourite program online or download it to a portable device such as an iPod. With two million podcasts downloaded each month, ABC Managing Director Mark Scott told the conference that, according to Apple, the ABC is a world leader in providing podcasted content. One example was an episode of *The Chaser*—800,000 people watched it on television in five capital cities, 200,000 watched it online and 60,000 downloaded it to an iPod.

Mark Scott firmly believes the delivery of local content and news remains one of the biggest attractions for consumers, especially in rural and regional areas, where the backyard sites linked to local radio networks have recorded the strongest online growth.

Members of the panel told the conference, businesses are already diversifying to reach consumers and ensure they remain relevant in a constantly changing business environment.

Chris Smith of Sensis Interactive talked of the diversity of his company, with products ranging from the White and Yellow pages, through to the Trading Post, whereis.com and an accommodation guide. In addition to a diversification of content, Sensis Interactive is looking at ways to

deliver content such as maps via mobile phones; providing multi channel access to customers and advertisements.

Speaking as a representative of the oldest broadcasting medium and an AM broadcaster, the chief executive of Macquarie Radio Network, Angela Clarke, told the conference there is evidence of an increasing audience, not a decline in numbers. She said traditional media companies are moving into areas that were once the domain of radio, with television and newspapers moving into platforms that provide immediate and constant information. Radio too is moving out of its traditional domain, with all Macquarie Radio Network studios fitted with cameras enabling staff to produce and broadcast quality video at a low cost. She said that radio is a complement—a lot of people listen to radio and audio while using the

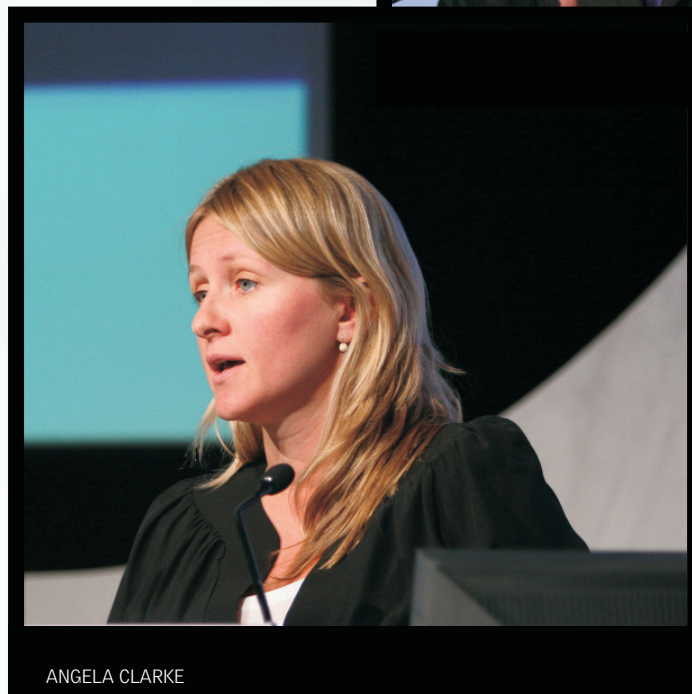
internet—adding that Macquarie was the first to make news available on iTunes.

With the leading market position of any msn in any country around the

world, ninemsn chief executive Mark Britt is focused on providing great content and great services to an engaged audience. An example of a converged business model for



MARK SCOTT



ANGELA CLARKE

ninemsn is its successful Dolly virtual site, based around the success of the teenage magazine and building on new technology such as an SMS mobile club, mobile site, online messaging theme and a blog—currently the number one girls' site. The success of ninemsn is also an example of the power of technology and content coming together. In Mark's opinion, television will in time become another website on the internet.