

The home entertainment hub

This conference session asked the questions ‘What will win as the digital home entertainment hub? Is it a contest between the set-top box and broadband internet for delivery of programming? What about the role of games consoles, TiVo boxes and portable iPod-style devices, perhaps connected to wireless broadband via 3G or WiMAX as the primary media console for consumers? Can any one device own the consumer in a world of competing convergent devices?’

With Christmas just weeks away, the panel had plenty to discuss. On The Home Entertainment Hub had plenty to discuss. What are the must-have gadgets in this technology savvy society and what will the home of digitally enabled children look like? Moderated by Bruce Meagher of SBS, the panel focused on what our living rooms and houses will look like as home entertainment technology continues to evolve.

Gary Hayes of the Australian Film Television and Radio School told attendees that two things are certain as technology improves—while the environment will change, human behaviour will not. ‘People want to be told stories, share stories, be part of a community and have an identity,’ he said. Like many of the conference panellists, he confirmed that consumers aren’t concerned with media format and how content reaches them—they just want content.

For Alcatel’s Geof Haydon, the focus was on IPTV and the inevitability of constant change for the future. He likened the change in technology to the progression from the use of horses to motor vehicles. ‘We are at a point where we are busy describing faster horses, before we understand the car of convergence ...We are very bad at describing the future set of cars and trucks,’ he said. It was staggering that 12.5 per cent of global television downloads flow into Australia. Geof predicted that by 2020 broadband speeds will be at one gigabyte per second and it still won’t be fast enough for consumer needs.

Presenting an exciting look into the future of home entertainment, Simon Curry from Intel drew the audience in as he shared the new Intel Viiv product, which is based on the concept of enabling consumers to watch what they want when they want, by watching live or on demand. He told conference that it was his belief the future of home entertainment will be in the empowerment of the consumer. The consumer of the future will have ‘access to more devices to provide more access to more content’.

Matthew Purcell, also known as The Silicon Kid from The Canberra Times, provided the view of not only a consumer of new technology, but a consumer adviser. His role requires him to stay on top of the latest technologies, providing him with the opportunity to research and trial

technology before adopted by the general public. He identified some challenges the industry faces in the steps towards adoption of digital technology. ‘Technological jargon

does not help with consumer understanding ... and consumers want technology with longevity, not dud technology.’ His vision of home entertainment in the future is where



GEOF HAYDON



BRUCE MEAGHER, MATTHEW PURCELL AND GARY HAYES

most media is delivered via the internet, with television shows downloaded from websites, enabling people to ‘watch what they want when they want’.