


Book Review

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drawn to the not uncommon failure on the part of Congress to distinguish between children appearing in pornography, children accessing pornographic images and children being recruited to pornography through the Internet.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the book displays a number of the characteris-

tics of the Internet. Insufficient distinction seems to be made between anecdote and fact, a problem when the subject being discussed relates to detailed legal argument. I also found that the material was presented in a rather circular manner, as if cobbled together from a number of sources, which resulted in some repetition. Where the book distinguished itself, however, was in its provision of an excellent index which more than made up for its shortcomings.

The entertaining "Boy's Own Adventure" approach does require some effort on the part of the reader to untangle principles from hyperbole and tends to detract from the profound issues covered in the book. Certainly worth a read but bear in mind cultural differences - between Australia and the U.S. and, I suspect, between the culture of the Internet and all that predates it. 

Kate MacNeill

From The Archives

Public television or pay television?

A battle is heating up over access to a sixth metropolitan television channel. All the major contenders - community groups, educational institutions and pay television entrepreneurs - surfaced in Sydney in one form or another during November.

The minister has decided only one more high power UHF channel will be made available in the major capital cities. At issue is whether this will be sold off by tender to the highest corporate pay television bidder or whether it will be handed over free to educational and community interests for public television.

Community TV lobby

The metropolitan-based public TV lobby has its roots in the community video centres established during the heady reform days of the Whitlam government.

PBAA executive director Ada Hulshoff says submissions to the government arguing for public television licences are now about "a foot high".

Successive ministers have managed to ignore the lobby, partly because it was far from organised, and partly

because it doesn't wield too much clout. But early this year, Senator Evans announced that aspirant public telecasters could conduct test transmissions for three periods of one week over 12 months. Melbourne and Adelaide groups were the first to take advantage of these limited Broadcasting Tribunal permits.

In November, Sydney groups stepped up the pressure when two different types of public services took over the airwaves. This meant that at certain times of the day, in certain locations, viewers with UHF capacity and a good antenna could choose from seven different TV channels.

Pay TV lobby

The corporate pay TV lobby surfaced at an expensive seminar in Sydney on November 14 attended by Minister Ralph Willis and major industry groups.


The commercial network owners have already moved to dominate the most successful pay menus - news, sports, music videos and movies. Bond Media is leading the push with Sky Sport (including ESPN from the U.S.). Network Nine music TV (Including U.S. MTV) and Sky movies are planned.

The recent deal between Skase's Network Seven and the U.S. NBC network includes rights to NBC's forthcoming Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC). Skase has also secured exclusive rights to Disney; it is not known whether these cover pay TV and the Disney channel.

Frank Lowy's Ten Network has grabbed exclusive rights to the 24-hour Cable News network. Again, it is not known if these include pay or satellite rights.

Among other corporate groups preparing for pay TV are movie distributors and exhibitors Hoyts and Village Roadshow. Since pay movie channels feature the same or similar movies seen in cinemas and available for VCR rental, Hoyts and Village see pay TV as another "window".

The seminar focused on the size of the domestic market (five million homes and 20 per cent penetration in three years), costs and the availability of good programs.

At the end of the day, the industry jury was still out on whether pay TV services would succeed in the Australian market. No one spoke from a viewer's perspective. 

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