

3. Convergence of Communications and Broadcasting

Digital broadcasting, which is highly compatible with the Internet, allows easier distribution of conventional broadcast contents on various media other than broadcasting, particularly through a combination with the IPv6 Internet, expanding the possibilities for new services that converge communications and broadcasting.

On the basis of the “Law Concerning Promotion of Development of Technologies for Communications and Broadcasting Convergence”, which went into effect in November 2001, the MPHPT grants subsidies to private developers of technologies used for services that converge communications and broadcasting and establishes telecommunications systems for the common use of such

developers, thereby supporting the developers of such technologies and accelerating and promoting the development of services that converge communications and broadcasting.

In fiscal 2003, in response to the start of terrestrial digital broadcasting in the three major metropolitan areas, the MPHPT increased the construction of equipment compatible with terrestrial digital broadcasting in the test-bed systems for the development of communications-broadcasting convergence technologies so as to promote the early participation of broadcasting stations and related companies and to contribute toward accelerating and promoting the creation of new business models through terrestrial digital broadcasting.

Section 4

Promoting IT in Private Companies

1. Establishment of Environment for Promoting the Creation and Growth of IT Venture Companies

Because many IT venture companies face such problems as a lack of credit capability immediately after founding, they have difficulty in procuring funds, securing human resources, and finding clients, which makes it hard for them to turn an excellent technology into a new business. Therefore, in order to promote the startup and growth of IT venture companies, the MPHPT provides various support measures in the areas of fund supply, human resources and know-how, taxation, and so on. In addition, a subsidy scheme involving cooperation between the public and private sectors was established in fiscal 2004, whereby the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) grants subsidies to IT venture companies that have investment from private venture capital.

2. Diffusing and Promoting Electronic Signatures and Certification Services

The MPHPT is reviewing the standards relating to the accreditation of designated certification services and is making efforts to ensure the safety of electronic signatures and security relating to certification services. Also,

in order to make it possible for anyone to make easy use of strict certification functions using electronic certificates and to enable the safe supply and use of network services, the MPHPT from fiscal 2004 is implementing research and development relating to the establishment of an advanced network certification infrastructure.

Furthermore, a list of recommendable cryptographic techniques for e-government procurement activities was decided in February 2003. Bearing this list in mind, when using a code for the building of an information system, ministries as far as possible make efforts to use a code that is included in the e-government recommendable cryptographic list. At present, in response to the further upgrading of offensive techniques against cryptography, the Cryptographic Technique Monitoring Subcommittee is conducting surveillance activities, such as gathering information on technological trends relating to cryptography, so as to maintain the safety of the codes included in the e-government recommendable cryptographic list.