

**Study Group for the Development of Digitization and Broadcasting Policy
(9th Meeting) Summary of Minutes (Draft)**

1 Date and Time:

(Tues.) January 25, 2005 16:00-17:40

2 Location:

First Special Conference Room, MIC (8th floor, Central Joint Government Building No. 2)

3 Attendees:

(1) Study Group members (Honorifics omitted; in order of the Japanese syllabary): Susumu Ito, Norio Kumabe, Hiroshi Shiono, Toshiyuki Shinohara, Atsuko Nomura, Yasuo Hasebe, Junichi Hamada, Jun Murai, Haruko Yamashita (9 members)

(2) Invited guests:

- Mito Broadcasting Station, Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK): Mr. Wakii, Deputy Director, Broadcasting Department
- Kitanihon Broadcasting Co., Ltd.: Mr. Doi, Deputy Director, Production Department, News Production Bureau

(3) MIC members: Horie, Director-General of the Information and Communications Policy Bureau; Fukuoka, Director, General Affairs Division, Information and Communications Policy Bureau; Ando, Director, Broadcasting Policy Division; Asami, Director, Broadcasting Technology Division; Minami, Director, Terrestrial Broadcasting Division; Imabayashi, Director, Satellite and International Broadcasting Division; Emura, Director, Regional Broadcasting Division; Ogasawara, Senior Planning Officer, Broadcasting Policy Division; Imaizumi, Assistant Director, Broadcasting Policy Division

4 Proceedings:

- (1) Opening
 - (2) Agenda
 - 1) Initiatives and Issues for Digitization (Hearing with Relevant Parties)
 - 2) Future Direction
 - (3) Closing
- 5 Outline of Proceedings:

(Text symbols represent the following: ● - Remarks of study group members, ○ - remarks of invited guests)

- (1) Initiatives and Issues for Digitization

Mr. Wakii, Deputy Director of the Broadcasting Department at NHK's Mito Broadcasting Station gave an overview of community-based broadcasting services and viewer participation and outlined the advantages of digital broadcasting as well as utilization of new technologies.

Mr. Doi, Deputy Director of the Production Department, News Production Bureau of Kitanihon Broadcasting Co., Ltd., explained initiatives for digital broadcasting, changes and possibilities of production with digital technology, issues for local broadcasters that have been raised through the launch of digital broadcasting, and the future outlook of local broadcasters in regard to digital broadcasting.

- (2) Q&A session

Key questions and answers were as follows:

- The festival, which you cited as a case where local community is linked to “High Vision” and surround broadcasting, is an example not universal but specific to a local broadcaster, and because of that reason, it is in a sense what commercial broadcasting or local broadcasting is about. Meanwhile, you have also said that you'd like to create something more universal. Is it for ratings or for your passion as a creator to produce programs other than community specific programs? Surely such programs would not have high ratings. What is your opinion on this?

- Programs created for the local community enjoy high ratings as they are based on deep understanding of the community. On the other hand, it is difficult to provide community-specific programs to a national audience that demands universal programming. For example, it is thought that programs that allow viewers to experience local festivals cannot have high ratings at this stage, and therefore they should not be easily included in popular programming. However, when ratings and broadcast programming become meaningless due to changes in viewing trends, it may become possible to offer various viewing experiences without thinking about ratings or broadcast time slots.

When it becomes necessary to measure how many people have stored the program and therefore you need to prepare spectacular software as much as possible, there will emerge a new way to supply software within an entire network.

- Regarding promotion activities and community contributions that use digital technologies, there seems to be a possibility that those who are participating in programs rather passively will be able to get involved in local broadcasting as actual production players. What is your opinion of public access, in other words, your thoughts on viewers or the local community as players in production?
- I don't have a strong understanding of what will actually happen. What I have described is how I feel now at the frontline of production.
- Regarding promotional activities and community contributions that use digital technologies, there seems to be a possibility that those who are participating in programs rather passively will be able to get involved in local broadcasting as actual production players. What is your opinion of public access, in other words, your thoughts on viewers or the local community as players in production?
- I think local broadcasters should enthusiastically promote public

access in the future, regardless of the digital era. I hope frank opinions of local people will revitalize local communities. I think local broadcasters can play a part in creating local culture by promoting the participation of local people in the media.

- We do not consider the mere appearance of a viewer in a program without any context viewer participation. When we were gathering information to cover an event, we received feedback from viewers about a separate program that have been broadcast, saying that they'd like to participate in the program next time. I think real viewer participation is achieved only in that way.

There is another story—When a family bought a digital TV set, the family members who used to watch TV separately in their own room get together again in front of the big TV set. I believe that it will become important to think about what kind of program the local community across generations wants to see in such a situation.

- From the perspective of competitiveness of content, please explain how digitization has influenced or will influence creation of good content.
- It is likely that high-definition High Vision will be more suitable for production of very simple local programs. Rather, by delivering the excitement of the scene with fewer cameras, it may become possible to create content that will be accepted by local people. Local broadcasters must be able to create software that is accepted by local people by experimenting with new approaches through local initiatives.

As for global competitiveness or competitiveness in the era of digitization, it seems that viewers are not yet allowed to directly compare analog broadcasting and digital broadcasting to understand and assess the difference.
- It is likely that program production with existing methods for ratings will become more and more meaningless and that people

will choose programs depending on the strength of content. If the stronger content we produce, the more people watch it I think the overall power of content will improve.

Especially in terms of cost, local directors can considerably restrain costs compared with their counterparts in Tokyo, even when they create programs of the same level, because local directors sometimes shoot and edit without assistance. The time will come when local directors who can create programs at a low cost will be in great demand if large quantities of excellent content are required.

- Although digitization makes in think of universality in general, digitization can create uniqueness within the local community. That seems to be a very important point from the perspective of broadcasting policy.

(3) Future Direction of the Study Group Meetings

Chair Shino sought the study group's opinion on the proposed structure of the working groups. Mr. Ogasawara, Senior Planning Officer of the Broadcasting Policy Division, elaborated and the study group then approved the establishment of the working groups.

Subsequently, Chair Shino nominated chairs of respective working groups as follows: Mr. Funada - "Working Group on Satellite/Cable Digital Broadcasting;" Mr. Hamada - "Working Group on Digitization and Public Broadcasting;" and Mr. Murai - "Working Group on Broadcast Content."

Other key opinions were as follows:

- Each working group should not narrow the scope but should direct discussions from a wide perspective while gaining various kinds of information at the plenary meetings.
- The study group meeting (parent meeting) expects each working group to be held once in every six weeks, or at least once every two months.

- Coordinating the working groups at this study group meeting is very important, but I hope the secretariat will help communicate detailed information between the working groups. It may also be helpful if members of the respective working groups unofficially join meetings of the other groups.
- It is generally very welcome that respective members would exchange information and schedules so that they can participate in other group's meetings when they have time. It may sometimes be necessary to call a meeting of the working group chairs to better coordinate the groups. I appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Schedule of next meeting is to be decided.