



**Radio**

Australia

Level 5  
75 Hindmarsh Square  
Adelaide SA 5000

T: 61 8 8419 5000

F: 61 8 8419 5062

24 May 2006

Senator The Hon. Helen Coonan  
Minister for Communications, Information Technology  
and the Arts  
Department of Communications, Information Technology  
and the Arts  
GPO Box 2154  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
**By Email: [trish.barnes@dcita.gov.au](mailto:trish.barnes@dcita.gov.au)**

Copy To:

The General Manager  
Digital Broadcasting and Spectrum Management  
Department of Communications, Information Technology  
and the Arts  
GPO Box 2154  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Senator Coonan,

**Discussion Paper on Media Reform Options  
Addendum to Submission**

We refer to the Discussion Paper on Media Reform Options released by you on 14 March 2006 and to the Submission lodged by us with you on 13 April 2006.

**Survey**

Paragraph 4.4 of our Submission made reference to the undertaking of a survey to identify whether and, if so, which internet based news and current affairs services, are used by media consumers today.

We suggested that a very large number of media consumers use internet based news and current affairs services today. We also suggested that an overwhelming majority of those consumers use internet services that are owned and controlled by the major traditional media companies.

We were concerned that this pattern might mean that the development and take up of new media assets and, in particular, internet services, might not have the positive impact on diversity that some claim.

The survey commissioned by us was designed to test these things.

## **Survey Methodology**

The survey has now been completed and the results have been provided to us.

Those results confirm the suggestions made by us in paragraph 4.4 of our Submission.

The survey was undertaken by Third Wave Media Pty Ltd.

Third Wave Media conducted a random telephone callout in accordance with IQCA Standards. The random callout was to more than 500 people in each of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. The 500 people in each city comprised a comparable number of both males and females, and the age group was set at 18-54.

The people sampled were asked questions designed to ascertain, first, whether, on an average weekday, those people went to the internet (either alone, or together with, television, radio, newspapers or magazines) to get their news and, secondly, if so, which websites were most commonly used for that purpose by those people.

## **Survey Conclusions**

The conclusions are contained in a report from Third Wave Media dated 4 May 2006.

We can provide you with a copy of the report if you wish.

The main conclusions are as follows:

- *“The Internet is used by 50% of Sydney people to obtain some or all of their weekly news requirements, and ranges from 36% to 40% in the other cities”.*
- *“The same traditional media companies that control television and newspapers, also clearly dominate the major internet news websites”; and*
- *“With the high level of multiple news media usage and correlation between news media, the average news consumer is often exposed to the same original source of news, only in different delivery systems.”.*

## **Executive Summary**

We have formed the following firm views based on the conclusions of this survey:

1. The development and use of internet news and current affairs services has not resulted in any meaningful increase in the diversity of media ownership or of the sources of news and current affairs, because the most used services are owned and controlled by the major traditional media companies.

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2. The ownership and control of internet news and current affairs services must be taken into account in the operation of any new cross media ownership rules, first, because those internet services are used by millions of people today and, secondly, because the most used internet services are owned and controlled by the major traditional media companies.

### **Further Observations**

Third Wave Media was able to tabulate the results of the survey and those results demonstrate the following instructive statistics:

- 50% of those aged 18-54 in Sydney (and 40% in Melbourne, 36% in Brisbane, 37% in Perth and 39% in Adelaide) obtained all or at least some of their news and current affairs information from the internet and that number is as high as 56% for those aged 25-34 in Sydney (45% in Melbourne, 40% in Brisbane, 44% in Perth and 45% in Adelaide) and is at 45% even for those aged 45-54 in Sydney (37% in Melbourne, 28% in Brisbane, 36% in Perth and 27% in Adelaide);
- 57% of those aged 18-54 in Sydney (and 52% in Melbourne, 57% in Brisbane, 56% in Perth and 62% in Adelaide) who obtain news and current affairs information from the internet obtained all or some of that information from Nine MSN, with 58% in Sydney (61% in Melbourne, 27% in Brisbane, 21% in Perth and 16% in Adelaide) obtaining all or some of that information from Fairfax owned sites and 31% in Sydney (33% in Melbourne, 38% in Brisbane, 43% in Perth and 44% in Adelaide) from News Corporation owned sites;
- Nine MSN is the most used news and current affairs website across all these capital cities;
- The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age websites are also used to a very large extent in Sydney and Melbourne, and those websites are even used (to varying lesser extents) in their non home cities of Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide;
- News Corporation websites are also used widely across all these capital cities and, in fact, their use is even greater in Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide, than in Sydney and Melbourne;
- ABC Online is the only website used to any significant extent in any of these capital cities that is not owned or controlled by Nine Network, Fairfax or News Corporation.

We attach copies of the relevant tables prepared by Third Wave Media.

**Conclusion**

We submit that the results of this survey are very clear and they demonstrate that:

- internet news and current affairs services are used by millions of people today;
- those internet services in most use are owned and controlled by the same companies that own and control our traditional newspapers, television stations and radio stations;
- the development and use of those internet services has not given rise to any meaningful increase in diversity; and
- the ownership and control of those internet services should therefore be taken into account in the operation of any new cross media ownership rules.

We further submit that these principles are likely to apply over time in respect of other categories of new media assets.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any further information or if there is any other assistance we can provide.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Thompson', written in a cursive style.

**PAUL THOMPSON**  
Chief Executive

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## Third Wave Media: Research Report

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### National News Source Survey: 29 March-24 April 2006

SYDNEY NEWS SOURCE RESEARCH					
<i>Total Sample = 535</i>					
NEWS MEDIA SOURCED MONDAY-FRIDAY					
	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet	Magazines
Total 18-54M/F	87%	80%	62%	50%	25%
18-34M/F	90%	74%	61%	54%	26%
35-54M/F	84%	85%	62%	47%	23%
18-24M/F	93%	64%	61%	51%	24%
25-34M/F	88%	81%	61%	56%	27%
35-44M/F	82%	80%	62%	48%	24%
45-54M/F	87%	91%	61%	45%	22%
IF INTERNET USER ...					
<i>Which websites are usually used for news?</i>					
	<b>Total 18-54 M/F</b>				
NineMSN	57%				
SMH	51%				
News.com.au	15%				
ABC Online	14%				
The Australian	9%				
Yahoo/7	9%				
Daily Telegraph	7%				
The Age	6%				
CNN	6%				
BBC	4%				
Google	2%				
OptusNet	2%				
Crikey	2%				
Aust. Financial Review	2%				
New York Times	1%				
Bigpond	1%				
NZ Herald	1%				
Bureau Of Meteorology	1%				

<b>MELBOURNE NEWS SOURCE RESEARCH</b>					
<i>Total Sample = 529</i>					
<b>NEWS MEDIA SOURCED MONDAY-FRIDAY</b>					
	<b>TV</b>	<b>Radio</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Magazines</b>
<b>Total 18-54M/F</b>	83%	82%	68%	40%	22%
<b>18-34M/F</b>	83%	78%	65%	44%	21%
<b>35-54M/F</b>	83%	86%	70%	37%	24%
<b>18-24M/F</b>	85%	76%	70%	42%	26%
<b>25-34M/F</b>	82%	80%	62%	45%	18%
<b>35-44M/F</b>	84%	89%	70%	37%	23%
<b>45-54M/F</b>	82%	82%	70%	37%	24%
<b>IF INTERNET USER ...</b>					
<i>Which websites are usually used for news?</i>					
	<b>Total 18-54 M/F</b>				
<b>NineMSN</b>	52%				
<b>The Age</b>	51%				
<b>ABC Online</b>	27%				
<b>News.com.au</b>	12%				
<b>The Australian</b>	11%				
<b>SMH</b>	10%				
<b>HeraldSun</b>	10%				
<b>BBC</b>	9%				
<b>CNN</b>	8%				
<b>Crikey</b>	4%				
<b>OptusNet</b>	4%				
<b>Google</b>	3%				
<b>Yahoo/7</b>	3%				
<b>SBS</b>	2%				
<b>Guardian</b>	2%				
<b>Reuters</b>	1%				
<b>PBS</b>	1%				
<b>Sportal</b>	1%				

<b>BRISBANE NEWS SOURCE RESEARCH</b>					
<i>Total Sample = 535</i>					
<b>NEWS MEDIA SOURCED MONDAY-FRIDAY</b>					
	<b>TV</b>	<b>Radio</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Magazines</b>
<b>Total 18-54M/F</b>	88%	85%	55%	36%	20%
<b>18-34M/F</b>	88%	82%	56%	39%	27%
<b>35-54M/F</b>	88%	87%	54%	33%	15%
<b>18-24M/F</b>	86%	79%	54%	39%	33%
<b>25-34M/F</b>	90%	85%	58%	40%	22%
<b>35-44M/F</b>	88%	86%	54%	38%	14%
<b>45-54M/F</b>	88%	87%	53%	28%	16%
<b>IF INTERNET USER ...</b>					
<i>Which websites are usually used for news?</i>					
	<b>Total 18-54 M/F</b>				
<b>NineMSN</b>	57%				
<b>ABC Online</b>	26%				
<b>News.com.au</b>	18%				
<b>SMH</b>	12%				
<b>The Australian</b>	11%				
<b>CNN</b>	9%				
<b>BBC</b>	8%				
<b>Courier Mail</b>	8%				
<b>OptusNet</b>	7%				
<b>Yahoo/7</b>	7%				
<b>The Age</b>	6%				
<b>Google</b>	2%				
<b>Guardian</b>	1%				
<b>Daily Telegraph</b>	1%				
<b>Bigpond</b>	1%				
<b>Aust. Financial Review</b>	1%				
<b>Fox Sports</b>	1%				
<b>stuff.co.nz</b>	1%				

<b>ADELAIDE NEWS SOURCE RESEARCH</b>					
<i>Total Sample = 514</i>					
<b>NEWS MEDIA SOURCED MONDAY-FRIDAY</b>					
	<b>TV</b>	<b>Radio</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Magazines</b>
<b>Total 18-54M/F</b>	89%	79%	61%	39%	20%
<b>18-34M/F</b>	87%	76%	63%	45%	22%
<b>35-54M/F</b>	91%	82%	59%	33%	18%
<b>18-24M/F</b>	84%	68%	73%	45%	24%
<b>25-34M/F</b>	89%	81%	56%	45%	20%
<b>35-44M/F</b>	91%	81%	55%	38%	14%
<b>45-54M/F</b>	91%	84%	64%	27%	23%
<b>IF INTERNET USER ...</b>					
<i>Which websites are usually used for news?</i>					
	<b>Total 18-54 M/F</b>				
<b>NineMSN</b>	62%				
<b>ABC Online</b>	24%				
<b>News.com.au</b>	23%				
<b>The Australian</b>	16%				
<b>CNN</b>	14%				
<b>SMH</b>	9%				
<b>The Age</b>	7%				
<b>Yahoo/7</b>	7%				
<b>BBC</b>	6%				
<b>The Advertiser</b>	5%				
<b>Google</b>	3%				
<b>OptusNet</b>	2%				
<b>Adel Independent</b>	1%				
<b>Bureau Of Meteorology</b>	1%				
<b>Washington Post</b>	1%				

<b>PERTH NEWS SOURCE RESEARCH</b>					
<i>Total Sample = 538</i>					
<b>NEWS MEDIA SOURCED MONDAY-FRIDAY</b>					
	<b>TV</b>	<b>Radio</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Magazines</b>
<b>Total 18-54M/F</b>	83%	86%	58%	37%	24%
<b>18-34M/F</b>	82%	82%	59%	39%	23%
<b>35-54M/F</b>	85%	91%	56%	35%	25%
<b>18-24M/F</b>	74%	83%	64%	32%	26%
<b>25-34M/F</b>	87%	81%	55%	44%	21%
<b>35-44M/F</b>	84%	90%	49%	35%	27%
<b>45-54M/F</b>	85%	92%	64%	36%	23%
<b>IF INTERNET USER ...</b>					
<i>Which websites are usually used for news?</i>					
	<b>Total 18-54M/F</b>				
<b>NineMSN</b>	56%				
<b>ABC Online</b>	34%				
<b>News.com.au</b>	25%				
<b>The Australian</b>	18%				
<b>CNN</b>	12%				
<b>The Age</b>	11%				
<b>SMH</b>	10%				
<b>BBC</b>	10%				
<b>Yahoo/7</b>	6%				
<b>Google</b>	3%				
<b>Western Australian</b>	2%				
<b>OptusNet</b>	2%				
<b>Guardian</b>	1%				
<b>New York Times</b>	1%				
<b>Washington Post</b>	1%				