

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Failure to Communicate

Dr Elaine Lally, Professor David Rowe and Professor Ien Ang from the Centre for Cultural Research are collaborating with Communications Alliance Ltd., to explore cultural shifts and changing community attitudes to the provision of telecommunications services.

'Communication systems as a whole have become enormously complex, presenting major challenges for service providers and consumers alike,' says Dr Lally. 'Service providers want to stay ahead of the game by delivering a large range of services to meet all customer needs, but this proliferation of choice can be difficult for users to navigate. Despite concerted efforts by internet, broadband, mobile phone, and other digital service providers to satisfy consumer needs, a recent consumer satisfaction survey commissioned by Communications Alliance Ltd., found that at least 20% of those surveyed were dissatisfied with the way their problem was handled. Our research will explore what is happening at a cultural level that may assist or hinder the provision of communications technologies. We'll explore patterns of consumption, the capacity to adapt to changing cultural circumstances, and how the culture of communication is shifting. One of the innovative aspects of this research is that it will analyse these factors in their socio-cultural context, exploring the implications for democracy, social cohesion, relations between different age groups, and the role of communications technology in everyday life.'

The research team will work closely with Communications Alliance to conduct an investigation of various complexities in the current communications industry, and how these interlock with service provision, consumer usage and satisfaction, and government policies and



regulations. All of this will be underpinned by an analysis of official reports and statistics, academic literature and a service profile of Communications Alliance members.

The research will reveal the underlying assumptions and unquestioned foundations of current approaches assisting the industry partner to help its members thrive in a new telecommunications culture, and will identify the impacts of their services on consumer needs and practices. In the longer-term, the research will identify areas where policy may need to be changed, and, therefore, provide consumers with improved services for internet and other digital communication media.

Project Title: The changing communications service delivery paradigm

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