# Preface

In 2005 our jointly authored volume *Globalisation, Convergence and European Telecommunications Regulation*, also published by Edward Elgar, explored the transformation of the telecommunications regulatory regime in Europe that had occurred over the previous two decades or so. As the title announced, 'convergence' was already very much a theme in policy discourse. However, as our volume showed, real convergence of telecommunications, electronic media and the emerging online services did not feature in the European Union's framework for the regulation of electronic communications (EUFREC), which we then referred to as the Electronic Communications Regulatory Framework, (ECRF). Among other things, that volume showed how strong demands for the separate regulatory treatment of broadcasting content, as well as a decision to exempt so-called 'information society' or online services from any new regulatory framework resulted in a very modest convergence regulatory framework being agreed by EU Member States in 2002. The EUFREC was convergent only to the extent that it dealt commonly with all network infrastructures and associated services across which electronic content was transmitted. In retrospect, as far as media convergence is concerned, the story we told in that book about emerging convergence policy showed the latter to be more significant for what it omitted than what it included. It essentially remained about telecommunications regulation.

Since that time, our communication research interests have diverged somewhat, whilst at the same time we have both kept our interest in the theme of convergence alive. As this later volume shows, convergence is still elusive to a degree, though it is certainly very much more a practical reality than it was nearly 20 years ago. To be specific, Seamus Simpson's research since 2005 has focused largely on regulatory institutional and infrastructural communications issues, which relate more closely to our earlier work on telecommunications, whilst Peter Humphreys' research has focused on media policy issues, with an emphasis on policy and regulation of media markets (television, the press) and on journalism. Both of us have found these research directions impacted by the new media technologies which provide a context for media convergence in its different forms, in particular, the Internet. This explains the structure of

the book. Part I, written by Seamus Simpson, introduces the historical context within which convergence has developed, thereby setting out the core themes of the book. Part II, also written by Seamus Simpson, deals with the governance of three key infrastructural issues: the development of next generation networks, the debate on re-allocating spectrum freed up by digitalisation, and the question of Internet neutrality. Part III, written by Peter Humphreys, looks at three key issues that have to do with media content in a converging communication environment: the controversy and conflicts over copyright enforcement, media concentration, and subsidies for journalism and media content. The Conclusion is co-authored.

The approach of the book is thematic, rather than country-specific or comparative. All chapters cover developments in the USA and Europe, but beyond that our approach ranges over a number of countries. This is partly because of the nature of the themes. Thus, the chapter on next generation networks finds it useful to explore the different approaches taken in the USA, Europe, Australia and South Korea. The chapter on spectrum, because of the importance of the International Telecommunication Union as a forum, contains a global sweep in its discussion. Partly, it reflects the boundaries of our research activity and experience. Thus, the chapters in Part III focus entirely on developments in the USA and Europe. Chapter 7's close attention to the UK case reflects both rationales: the UK policy debate has produced some promising policy proposals on the theme of subsidising public service media in the digital era; and this has been a particular focus of Peter Humphreys' work in recent years. Overall, the book aims to highlight and explain the contradictions, conflicts, and challenges that surround the governance of digital convergence, thereby providing a better understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon, and also to contribute suggestions for the further development of media policy to deal with the challenges of convergence.

Peter Humphreys was Professor of Politics in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Manchester University until January 2017. He would like to acknowledge the support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) during his academic career, most notably for three substantial grants enabling his research in the communication policy field. Between 1996 and 1999 he was Principal Investigator on a research award (ESRC Ref: L 12625109) for a three-year project 'Regulating for Media Pluralism: Issues in Competition and Ownership', which looked at policies for media ownership regulation in Germany, the UK, and at the EC level. Between 2000 and 2003, he was Co-Investigator on a three-year project, 'European Union as a Medium of Policy

Transfer: Case Studies in Utility Regulation' (ESRC Ref: L 216252001-A). On this project, he was responsible for researching telecommunications, one of the three sectors under investigation. Between 2005 (February) and 2008 (March) he was Principal Investigator on a research project, 'Globalization, Regulatory Competition and Audiovisual Regulation in Five Countries', these being Canada, France, Germany, UK and USA (ESRC Ref: 000 23 0966). Mainly, this project looked at policies for public service television and other television subsidies, but it included a study of the regulation of media concentration in the television sector. The ideas for policy expressed in Part III of this volume represent the culmination of Peter Humphreys' thinking on how the media policy issues identified herein might be addressed, drawing on over three decades of research in the field made possible by this ESRC support.

Seamus Simpson is Professor of Media Policy in the School of Arts and Media at the University of Salford. At the time of writing, he is Co-Investigator on the three-year (September 2015 to August 2018) ESRC-funded project, 'International Professional Fora: A Study of Civil Society Participation in Internet Governance' (Grant no: ES/M00953X/1). Part of the research conducted in this project contributed to the writing of this volume. He would like to acknowledge the support of the Council and express gratitude to project collaborators, Alison Harcourt (University of Exeter – Principal Investigator), George Christou (University of Warwick – Co-Investigator), and Imir Rashid (University of Exeter, Associate Research Fellow).

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