

NZ On Air Digital Strategy

2012-2015



Defining digital

“**Digital**” has various meanings that originate from different sources. In its purest sense it is simply the distinction from analogue. Broadcast content has been **produced** digitally for over a decade; it will be **broadcast** exclusively by digital means after Digital Switchover (‘DSO’).

In other fora, ‘digital’ is the distinction between broadcast content and that made for online/mobile audiences.

In this paper when we refer to **digital content** we mean broadcast content. When we refer to **digital media** we mean content created specifically for audience consumption via online channels.

Digital media can be broken into two categories:

- **Basic** - simple websites, streaming or viewing broadcast content online, ‘web 1.0 applications’
- **Rich** - ‘web 2.0 applications’, immersive or interactive websites, mobile applications / content, content or applications that involve user interaction or influence on outcomes through online media

The following definitions apply to other terms used in this document:

- **Channel** - delivery channel for content. e.g. a broadcast TV or radio channel, a website, a mobile app, an online portal
- **Platform** - the software infrastructure which underpins a content delivery channel
- **Device** - the thing used to access content e.g. a phone, a television, an ipad, a computer

In describing rich content, particularly in defining the types of projects NZ On Air is looking to support, it is also worth distinguishing between those that are available on, or utilise multiple media channels, and those which take a transmedia approach.

- **Multi-channel or Cross-channel** - using multiple channels to tell one story, similar to websites promoting or adding to a TV series, or branding a programme or product.
- **Transmedia** - building a multi-dimensional experience for users. Engaging the user in a story-telling experience across multiple forms of media, with each element making distinctive contributions to the overall story or project.

Introduction

There are several over-arching principles that shape the overall NZ On Air funding strategy.

Our values are:

Innovation - encouraging new ideas, creativity, and quality production standards

Diversity - (in projects, people and platforms) - promoting difference and competition to support the best ideas for the widest range of New Zealanders

Value for money - making sure cost-effective projects are enjoyed by significant numbers of relevant people

Almost all the content and services funded by NZ On Air are digitally produced and available online. The focus is on professionally-produced material made for specific audiences who can access it through multiple channels and from multiple devices. We invest in content and services that the market will not or cannot provide, aimed at specific audiences of reasonable size.

Where technology is an issue we tend to follow, not lead, so the market bears the primary risk and public funding is not wasted on unsuccessful platforms or technology approaches.

But we should also foster creative innovation and experimentation. This is getting more difficult in the mainstream broadcast world – a challenging economic climate can lead to risk aversion - so the online world can provide new opportunities.

Above all, we follow the audience. The internet can help us to reach previously hard-to-access audiences. The audience is increasingly online.

Introduction

The first NZ On Air digital strategy was developed in 2007. This was in response to a change in the Broadcasting Act which empowered NZ On Air to consider funding for 'transmission on demand', in essence online and mobile initiatives. The inaugural strategy focused on enabling better access to existing content; and encouraged some experimentation with content and platforms through the creation of a special fund with relatively few boundaries.

Since 2007 there have been significant changes to the digital landscape. From a technical point of view, infrastructure has been strengthened both globally and in New Zealand and the technology of digital access has progressed. From a social point of view, the culture of digital access has become more pervasive, collaborative and social. The impending arrival of ultrafast broadband will further enhance New Zealanders' online access in an expanded number of regions.

It is also instructive that, to date, 'old' media has continued to provide the big primary audiences and that the online and mobile platforms generally add new segments of viewers and listeners. The advent of ultrafast broadband will enhance not only the audience reach for broadcast and digital content, but also the context in which content is created and the type of content produced.

At its core NZ On Air is focused on telling our stories. Digital media provides almost endless opportunity for enriching these stories. For example, television works best by delivering content to a mass audience at a single moment in time. Digital provides the extension and expansion of that moment in time, allowing stories to evolve, expand and develop in new directions.

This refreshed digital strategy builds on the groundwork established in 2007. Two main activities have been developed since then: NZ On Screen and the contestable Digital Content Production Fund (DCPF). Both these initiatives worked primarily with television and online media. Music and radio were not specifically incorporated in the initial phase but it was possible for music and radio-related projects to secure DCPF funding. Music video also became an important part of NZ On Screen. See the recent review of the Digital Content Partnership Fund on [the NZ On Air website](#) for a full discussion of projects funded to date.

Over this period there have also been additional strategies and plans made for music within NZ On Air. It is time now for a more cohesive organisational approach to digital issues and opportunities.

Current initiatives

NZ On Screen

NZ On Screen launched in 2009 and rapidly became the 'go to' site for curated screen content. The site launched shortly after TVNZ On Demand and, despite initial concerns the two might overlap, they have settled easily into a widely accessed catch-up and preview service for recently broadcast TVNZ content (TVNZ On Demand, later joined by tv3.co.nz and maoritelevision.com); and a heavily referenced site for screen production overall with a bias towards television (NZ On Screen).

The site will seek additional funding partners but its success in providing an informative and wide-ranging place for existing local content, particularly in strong partnering and an efficient rights clearance process, means it will remain an integral part of NZ On Air's digital strategy for the foreseeable future.

Digital Content Partnership Fund

The **Digital Content Partnership Fund** was created in 2008 and its outputs were reviewed in early 2012. In four years the fund supported 16 diverse projects with some significant success (e.g. New Zealand's first International Digital Emmy awarded to *Reservoir Hill*) and no major failures, namely projects not being completed.

Funded projects can be categorised as:

- New audiovisual content (*Reservoir Hill*, *Reservoir Hill 2: Everyone Lies*, *Auckland Daze*, *I Am Simon Peter*, *Mash Pit*, *Rattle Ya Dags*, *Make My Movie*, *The Pod*).
- An aggregator for existing content (*Mixtape*, *Snort*)
- Additional web content supporting broadcast (*AEF360*, *The Hub.tv*)
- Streamed content for specialist audiences (*The Big Sing*, *Lois Vuitton Pacific series*)
- Gaming (*Music Manager*)

The results of the review were positive, particularly given the experimental nature of this type of activity. The most successful projects were tightly targeted and enjoyed the support of a sizeable local platform. Others were creatively innovative but struggled to find a significant audience; some due to lack of effective promotion, others because they may have been ahead of their time. It is gratifying that, given the 'green fields' nature of this initiative, no project failed to launch.

The review concluded the fund should continue but with the processes being refined. In particular NZ On Air should consider:

- Splitting the fund into two streams. A low budget fund (projects up to \$50k) for small projects like *The Big Sing* that deliver content to special interest audiences; plus a fund for larger, more complex projects.
- Ensuring all projects supported give adequate consideration to marketing and audience interaction.
- Committing more administrative resources than NZ On Air has been able to deliver to date to develop more focused RFPs, improve application templates, support applicants, and standardise reporting requirements to get better evaluation and analysis across projects.

Thinking digital: overall aim

Diverse NZ content is discovered, enjoyed, and valued by audiences through multiple channels

All funding strategies must reinforce the core mission and values of NZ On Air:

- NZ On Air’s Statement of Intent describes the agency as a champion of local content - an informed and stable contributor in the midst of significant environmental change. The organisation-wide mission is:

“ We champion local content through skilful investment in quality New Zealand broadcasting”

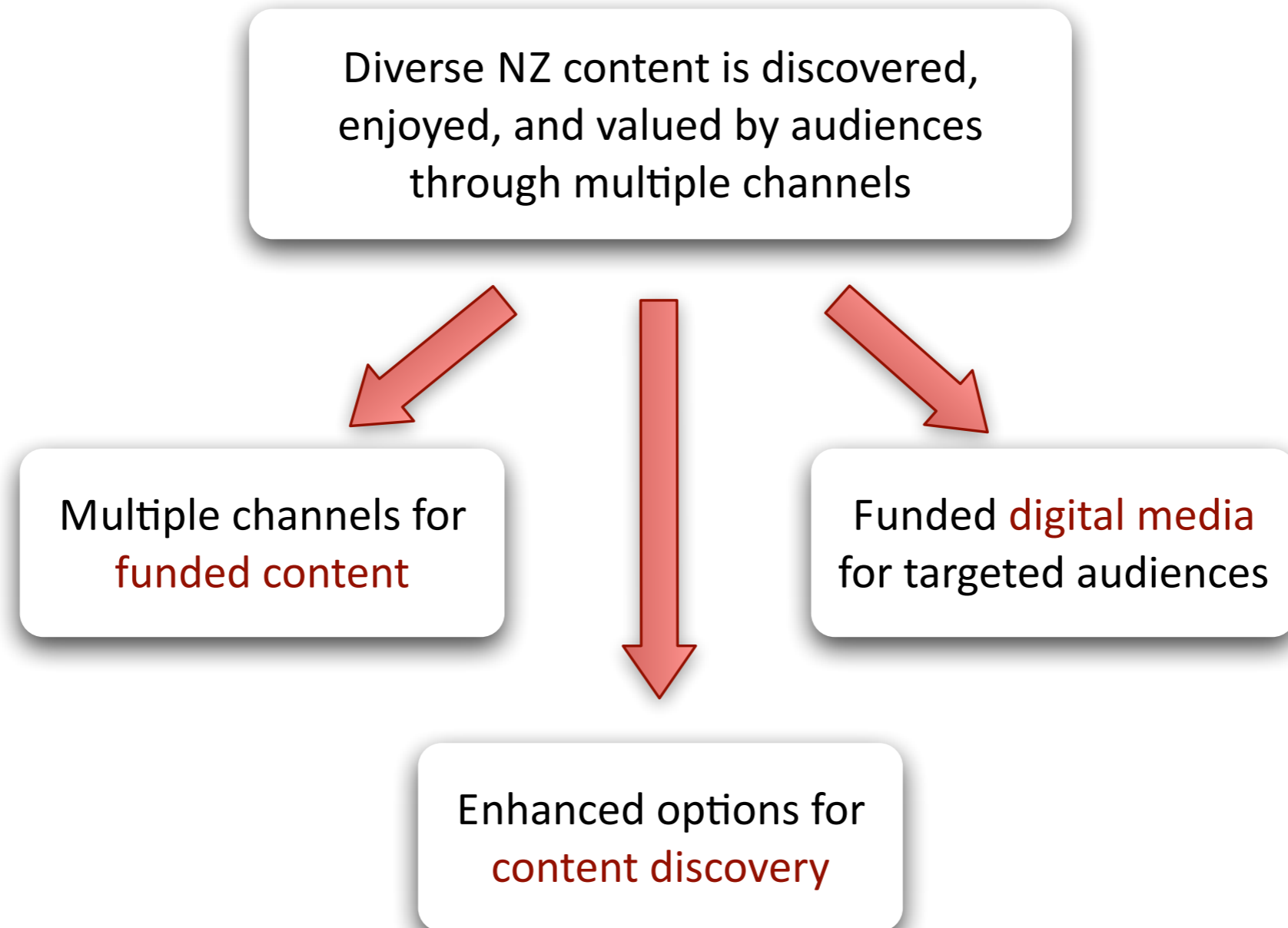
In a digital context, this means –

- Local content that is publicly funded must be enjoyed and valued by its audiences using whichever technology they choose
- Local content must be discoverable
- Digital technologies provide opportunity for more diverse content options

If we achieve this aim

- More audiences will be served by funded local content
- More people can access local content when and where they wish to
- Funded content has a longer life
- Discussion of the range of funded local content in public fora will increase

Strategic Goals



strategic goal

Multiple channels for funded content

All content receiving NZ On Air funding should play on at least two channels to maximise value.

- Commonly this will be traditional broadcast; streaming or podcasting for a period, or on an aggregator site; with at least one permanent home online when initial rights expire.
- There will be other combinations considered on a case by case basis.

actions

Define guidelines

Establish sector agreements

Rethink kiwihits.co.nz

rationale

- Funded content to play on at least two channels. If one is broadcast (television, radio) the other options that will be considered valid must be clarified. This will relate, in part, to known audience reach compared to the amount of funding sought.
- Streaming or podcasting options and associated timeframes should be clarified.
- Parameters around 'permanent home online' (NZ On Screen, YouTube, KiwiHits) need to be defined.
- Rights positions need to be agreed between rights holders and broadcasters.
- Clarify when the two channel requirement will not be applied

- Develop a home for all funded NZ On Air music videos
- Establish appropriate solution for music videos
- Develop an online repository for funded music

measures

Measures to be developed by 2013

outcomes

Content persists beyond initial play or screening

Greater audience reach for all funded content

strategic goal

Enhanced options for content discovery

- Local content must be discoverable amidst the plethora of content options.
- The audience should be able to find and access content when they want to, through whichever channel they choose.

actions

Support discovery of existing content

Support new discovery initiatives

Endorse promotion and marketing

rationale

- Continue to support NZ On Screen (digital)
- Continue to fund access internet radio (community broadcasting)
- Encourage all funded content to be streamed and/or added to an on demand site (TV, radio)
- Continue to support kiwihits.co.nz or its successor (music)

- Fund and support theaudience.co.nz to help new artists get discovered (music)
- Invest in well-supported apps that promote new content discovery (music)
- Augment existing broadcaster promotions for funded content (television, radio)
- Develop a consistent social media strategy for general promotion of funded content

- Digital media funded without broadcaster support must have viable promotions plan
- Grow partnerships for funded content to maximise audience awareness: repertoire owners, platforms, networks, digital partners, other funding bodies (TV, radio, music, digital)

measures

- All funded projects (without broadcaster support) have provided a marketing and/or promotional plan
- NZ On Air documented requirements improved and published
- Potential audience targets are defined and consistently reported

outcomes

More people discover and enjoy a wider variety of content

strategic goal

Funded **digital media** for targeted audiences

Funded digital media should be made for audiences specifically cited in the Broadcasting Act with a bias towards special interest. These are important audiences that are not always well served by mainstream media.

actions

Focus digital media funding on target audiences

Establish funding criteria

rationale

- A Digital Media Fund will replace the Digital Content Partnership Fund
- Funding criteria will prioritise special interest audiences: children and youth, ethnic and other minorities in the community, arts and Māori.
- The fund will not be used for basic digital media projects that augment broadcast content, or to create platforms; it will be used to create new digital content
- Create funding policy based on the principles discussed in the DCPF review
- Base criteria on support for smart, innovative, experimental or educational projects that embrace the special opportunities offered by digital media, including transmedia or multi-channel projects
- The key criteria that applies to all NZ On Air funding will also be included: reflecting and developing NZ identity and culture, likely potential audience, other sources of funding or co-investment, appropriate platform
- Launch new fund based on that policy with two funding streams: higher and lower cost

measures

- Digital media funding supports projects that are valued by their audiences
- Criteria are clear and well-understood
- Hard to serve audiences are targeted

outcomes

Improved content options for specific audiences