

Hon David Cunliffe
MP for New Lynn
Minister of Health
Minister for Communications and Information Technology

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29 JUL 2008

Mingus Casey
email: baboeska@gmail.com

Dear Mingus Casey

Thank you for your emailed letter of 10 July 2008 in which you argue for a decentralized and open Internet free of government or corporate control.

I can assure you that your sentiments as expressed in your letter are completely in accord with the Government's thinking. An open Internet is essential to the development of the information-rich society envisaged in the Government's Digital Strategy launched in 2005 and reiterated in the new Digital Strategy 2.0 which will be released shortly.

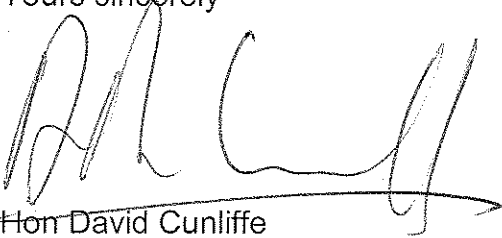
As you point out, the Internet is a vehicle for freeing information from centralized control and for supporting an open society. Equally, or perhaps even more importantly, it provides opportunities for everyone to express and promulgate their own opinions and creative work. The Internet is a powerful tool for guaranteeing freedom of expression as well as providing unprecedented opportunities for access to information. The Government recognises that the Internet is essential for our continued economic, social and cultural development.

You imply that the emergence of pay-per-view services on the Internet may be a threat to the free exchange of information on the Internet. New services will continue to emerge alongside the Internet as we know it today, especially driven by the digital convergence of broadcasting and telecommunications. Some of these will be available on a subscription-only or pay-per-view basis. However, they will have to compete with other services and will be commercially viable only if they can attract an audience willing to meet the costs of these services. We are already seeing new business models emerging in the music and news industries where there is a blend of different commercial arrangements, some free, some by subscription, some by pay by download. These are adding to the richness and variety of services available on the Internet.

I hope this reassures you that I share your vision of an open Internet and a concern that it continues to develop and grow without endangering those values. I am confident that it will.

Thank again for your letter and for your interest in this important issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Cunliffe', written over a horizontal line.

Hon David Cunliffe

Minister for Communications and Information Technology