

SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIAL

Digital convergence has finally become a fact of life. It has been discussed since the 1980s as a vision for the development of ICT. We now see a variety of convergence services offered to ordinary people, such as mobile banking, digital multimedia broadcasting (DMB), and the iPhone, to name only a few. Its concept also lies behind the evolution of network infrastructures, which progresses toward fixed and mobile convergence (FMC) and the next generation network (NGN). In the age of digital economy, convergence is one of the key drivers for economic, social and industrial transformations, and as such it poses both challenges and opportunities for businesses and individuals as users/consumers.

This special collection on ‘Digital convergence’ was initiated with a view to creating a venue for integrated discourse on convergence. Convergence is, by nature, an interdisciplinary subject. It has been studied in a variety of disciplines including economics, law, communication studies, telecommunications, marketing, and so on. As a collection of digital convergence research in several disciplines, this special collection offers those working in the area of convergence, both in practice and in academia, an opportunity to learn where the convergence research is and where further research is needed.

Three papers are included in this special collection. The first paper reviews digital convergence research. The other two papers are concerned with telecommunications, which is at the centre of the convergence phenomenon. They deal with applications/services and networks of convergence in the USA and Korea: FMC (fixed and mobile convergence) in the USA and DMB (digital multimedia broadcasting). The USA is the country where most of the discourse on convergence originated from the 1996 Telecommunications Act, and in Korea convergence services are being offered to ordinary people, based on the advanced broadband and mobile infrastructure.

The first paper (‘Research in Convergence: A Literature Analysis’) offers a bird’s-eye view of convergence research in the past and current. After reviewing studies of convergence from managerial, business, industrial and regulatory perspectives, it suggests that more empirical research is required at the levels of firms and users/consumers. The second paper (‘Adoption of Fixed-mobile Convergence in the U.S. Telecommunication Industry’) tries to examine the extent to which telecommunication companies are leveraging FMC to transform their business practices. The last paper deals with convergence between telecommunications and broadcasting (DMB). By a survey of potential users of satellite DMB, it (‘Discontinuous Innovation and Market Chasm: The Case of Digital Convergence Services’) develops strategies to overcome the chasm facing the marketers of novel high-tech services.

We hope that the papers in this special collection will stimulate further research on digital convergence from various perspectives.

Heejin Lee is Professor Global IT Management at the Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University. Before joining Yonsei, he was at the University of Melbourne, Australia and Brunel University, United Kingdom. He has written extensively on the impact of broadband and the relationship between time and IT. He is currently working on IT for development and IT standards policy in China. His work has been published in a variety of international journals including The Information Society, Time and Society, Information and Management and The Journal of Information Technology.



Heejin Lee