I remember the disappointment I felt when the PAG public meeting - ‘The Case for Manx TV’ - witnessed the majority express a ‘what is the BBC going to do for us’ attitude.

What I really wanted the meeting to discuss was what our Island Community was going to do for itself in fostering the emergence of a more substantial media on the Isle of Man, and what a Manx TV station might look like.

So three cheers for Paul Moulton who has pioneered the introduction of the Island’s first major TV/internet news station through Manx Telecom TV (MTTV). News items viewed at your convenience with 3-5 minute news clips, has changed the face of Manx based media in a profound way.

Firstly, it has provided people with the ability to obtain Manx news as it happens, and witness it in a more immediate manner than what radio and other internet news sites can offer.

Secondly, it has enabled the public to observe the calibre of Manx politicians, witnessing how
they present and conduct themselves during an interview.

Thirdly, it allows the public to place a face to the name of our politicians, something that radio is unable to achieve.

In short, the presence of a Manx TV/Internet station on the island will force our politicians to become more professional in how they present and articulate themselves. Those who believe I am overstating my case may remember how the famous TV debate in 1960 between Kennedy and Nixon transformed how politicians viewed television in the years that followed. Those listening to radio felt that Nixon had won, but those watching TV felt that Kennedy had won the debate.

In other words, the power of the moving image will force Manx politicians to think about their body language, clothing, and the way they communicate. These areas will become more important to our politicians as the small acorn of Manx TV begins to grow and embed itself over the coming years. Those MHKs who will change and adapt to this new Manx media age will survive, but those who cannot adapt will be superseded by a new generation of Manx politicians; namely the more articulate, the more groomed, and the more presentable.

However, while I praise MTTV for its positive impact in the world of Manx media coverage over a very short space of time, some questions still remain.
Who funds MTTV?

Does the majority of funding come from external advertising or is Manx Telecom the main investor?

Will journalistic independence be maintained should a negative story about Manx Telecom arise?

Why was the report into telecommunications regulation on the island, commissioned by Cable and Wireless, not covered by MTTV?

Furthermore, MTTV will face additional challenges in the years to come. Currently it has the Manx TV/Internet channel market to itself. This will soon change with 3FM already rumoured to be looking into bringing out their own channel; and I suspect they will not be the only ones. So just as our politicians will have to think about the manner in which they present themselves, so too will MTTV if it wishes to survive in what is going to be an exciting time in Manx based media.
For example, as Internet channels increasingly become accessible through digital boxes or TV sets, the public will expect the same professionalism and production standards from their Manx based TV stations as they obtain from any other TV channel. As a result of this, sporting an MTTV polo shirt and fleece jacket will not present the same authority that some other roaming reporters might exhibit through the professionalism of wearing a suit, shirt and tie.

Therefore, if other Manx channels emerge and are able to present themselves in a more traditional televisual manner, introducing with them higher production values, a more aggressive interview technique, even an app for the iPhone or iPad, then MTTV may be superseded in the coming years.

Consequently, just as our politicians will evolve into TV savvy individuals, so too will the Manx TV/Internet stations that wish to obtain the status and accolade of becoming the number one Manx news channel for our Island Community.