

## **Communications and IT Report – March 2007 – Board of Trustees Meeting**

Submitted by Mark Thalhimer and Peter Godwin

### **Summary:**

We begin the analysis of Communications and IT at the Internet Society by asking the question: What can Communications and IT do to support the overall goals and objectives of the Internet Society - at the macro level; and address the daily operational needs of individual staff and specific request from members, journalists and the general public - at the micro-level. In addition, we note that the activities of Communications and IT are intertwined in many areas and specifically come together through the organization's website.

Communications and Public Relations as a specifically-managed activity is a new area for the Internet Society. The director of communications and public relations joined the organization at the beginning of 2007. Initial efforts have focused on understanding the organization, community and operating environment. Projects have been started to improve the ISOC website, rationalize the press and communication procedures, develop templates for organizational documents, develop communications assistance for chapters, hire additional communications staff and consultants, write and edit daily materials, begin the 2006 annual report, and upgrade the overall level of communications for the organization.

The Internet Society has a range of important programs and activities and we are working to highlight and communicate them better. This includes improving the resources and processes for internal communications as well as increasing our engagement with chapters and members. Making these changes is a two part task involving both technology and people. New IT tools are being put in place and staff is being asked to make changes in the ways they conduct their daily activities in an effort to improve communications. The Bureaus are also expected to make a significant contribution to our local communications efforts and to assisting the chapters build their communications efforts. We will work with the Bureaus and individual chapters to develop examples and suggestions for their efforts. In addition, we are working with the Bureaus to make sections of the ISOC website available in French for Africa and Spanish for Latin America, with continued evaluation of other languages. The chapters will also be able to make contributions to this effort.

The process of gathering, editing and publishing information about ISOC activities will require input from all staff, chapters and members – in particular, those in the field working on programs, holding seminars, working in or with chapters and working with the membership. The major areas of focus for ISOC, including issues in public policy, education and training, standards, and individual and organizational membership all have unique and interesting content. The challenge going forward is for the organization to highlight and bring this information to the attention of its many potential audiences.

## **Major Activities:**

The Internet Society website is the organization's most important communications tool. The current website is the product of years of added pages and information. Improving the website will involve a large number of changes. Every pillar and participant in the organization – policy, membership, education, etc. – will benefit from improvements in the website. We will reach out to our chapters to seek their feedback on changes in the site and look for ways to profile their issues for the broader ISOC community.

We are approaching optimization of the site as a two-stage process. Stage I is a moderate simplification and rationalization of the existing site involving a greatly simplified homepage, and a cleanly organized template for interior pages with improvements in the edited content presented to the world. Much of our work involves simplifying site navigation to get users to useful content more quickly. Stage I has begun and will continue throughout the first half of 2007. (A graphic of the homepage prototype is at the end of this section.)

Stage II will involve the planning, design and creation of an entirely new website for the Internet Society. What would the ISOC site be if it were designed from scratch? Based on a new content management system to be selected in the second half of the year, the new site will be designed with input from staff, chapters and individual members to better serve the needs of the organization.

Other projects in progress include the development of templates for internal ISOC and chapter use; development of materials to assist chapters in their efforts to communicate about ISOC with local media and the public; development of an organizational communications plan; revamping of the press release process and updating the press release list. In addition, we are hiring two new staff: an International Events Manager to be based in Reston, and a Senior Communications Manager to be based in Geneva. And we have begun the Annual Report for 2006, which will include a focus on chapter activities, in addition to the highlights of the past year.

Finally, we would like to address the issue of multiple languages. While English is the official language of the Internet Society, we believe the organization should avail itself of specific opportunities to communicate in other languages when practical. This opportunistic approach will allow ISOC to reach out to new audiences in an effective manner. During the recent arrival of Khaled Koubaa, president of ISOC Tunisia, to the Reston office for a three-month internship, we drafted a news release in English and translated the release into French and Arabic. In addition, the sections of the ISOC website for the Africa and Latin America bureaus will have portions of their content translated into French and Spanish. We believe this opportunistic approach is the best use of limited resources and allows us to evaluate next steps.

**Other Initiatives:**

Communications has been assigned to look into the Internet Society involvement in the annual NDSS Conference. Mark Thalhimer attended the conference along with Terry Weigler, met the planning committee and sat in on the annual planning meeting. The conference has some top quality participants and serves a significant need to expand the discussion of network security at the nexus of research and practical application. Attendance for the conference has been diminishing in recent years and ISOC is working with the NDSS program committee to actively address this deficiency.

We have also been tasked to work with the WiWiW project and its founder and long-time ISOC member Andreu Vea. The project has significant potential as source material to memorialize the beginning of the Internet. 2007 should be a year to analyze the project with Andreu's help and determine what eventual outcome might come from ISOC's support of the project.

**IT Infrastructure:**

Following the implementation of the IP PBX in the Geneva office, the installation was completed by replacing all old analogue phones with IP units. Users are extremely satisfied with the new system which has been running smoothly with no downtime, and offers significant improvements in functionality (voicemail messages delivered in emails, etc.) It has proved to be particularly useful by extending use of the office phone system to staff working off site. Activities have now been initiated to install the same type of system in the Reston office - this project is currently pending approval to proceed.

An evaluation of the Marratech conferencing system was carried out in cooperation with ISOC staff. The system was used successfully to support a number of internal meetings - it is also seen as having the potential to enable remote participation in ISOC workshops. And the membership department will work with the technology to facilitate small group meetings with chapters and the organizational member advisory committee. A significant discount has been negotiated with the software vendor, and the system will be installed soon.

The server used to host the Marratech software will also be used to host a Shoutcast streaming audio server to enable live audio broadcasts. This will enable webcasting of briefing sessions, conferences and meetings. For example, by hooking up a VoIP client to the broadcast client it will be possible to broadcast a panel discussion involving remote guests connected via a phone conference bridge. Likewise, the broadcast audio server will be used to facilitate communication for educational programs and for membership events. We will work with staff to embed the technology in ongoing programs and develop new programmatic applications.

Efforts continue to implement standard templates throughout the web site. A new facility to support a private web space for the Advisory Council is under development. This is based on an open source Content Management System (CMS) and will act as a pilot

program for user-managed content on the ISOC site. We have also supported an ISOC Chapter team with their implementation of an open source Wiki for the gathering and presentation of Chapter News. Other new areas under development include a section of the web site dedicated to ISOC Regional Bureaus.

The increasing ISOC staff level is putting greater support demands on ISOC IT, both in terms of requirements for new tools as well as for routine daily support, entailing careful prioritization of our tasks and projects.

## ISOC Homepage Revision 2007 Prototype I

This page image is reduced by approximately 40% from actual screen display size; and page display centers in browser window.

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**Welcome to the Internet Society**

The Internet Society is a non-profit, non-governmental, international, professional membership organization. Its more than 100 organization members and over 20,000 individual members in over 180 nations worldwide represent a veritable who's who of the Internet community. [Read more...](#)

**Conferences and Events**

[Internet Events Calendar](#)

[INET Africa Regional Conference](#)  
Abuja, Nigeria  
4th May 2007

[68th IETF Meeting](#)  
Prague, Czech Republic  
18th - 23rd Mar 2007

[Board of Trustee Meeting Calendar](#)

**Internet Issues**

▶ [Internet Governance](#)

The Internet Society has been engaged in ongoing efforts to create a clear roadmap for discussions of how the Internet should be managed. Our recent effort has included participation in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 'Stock Taking' exercise in Athens Greece where ISOC pushed four central concepts: "openness, diversity, security and access." [Learn more...](#)

▶ [User-Centric Internet](#)

How might one envision the future of the Internet? One way is to think of the Internet built around the needs of the individual citizen of the Net. [Read ISOC's whitepaper](#)

▶ [Internet in the Developing World](#)

Expanding the Internet in the developing world is a complex task. The ISOC Fellowship to the IETF is bridging that gap by connecting promising engineers to the greater Internet community. [Learn more...](#)

**ISOC Headlines**

09 Mar 2007 [Registration for INET Regional Africa Conference now open](#)

06 Mar 2007 [Internet Society's Affiliated Organization PIR Seeks Nominees to its Advisory Council](#)

06 Mar 2007 [ISOC Recruiting New Staff for Chapter Membership, Public Policy and Events Management](#)

26 Feb 2007 [Latest issue of IETF Journal now available](#)

07 Feb 2007 [Candidates for 2007 Board of Trustees Election announced](#)

30 Jan 2007 [Internet Society Abre Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe](#)

30 Jan 2007 [Internet Society Opens Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

26 Jan 2007 [ISOC Recognizes Contributions of Veni Markovski](#)

22 Jan 2007 [News Coverage of ISOC Fellowship to IETF](#)

17 Jan 2007 [Mark Thalheimer appointed as ISOC's Director of Communications and Public Relations](#)

**Membership**

The Internet Society welcomes both individual and organizational members. [Read more...](#)

[RSS feed](#) | [Atom feed](#)

[W3C HTML 4.01](#) | [W3C CSS](#)

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