

## **Enabling Access Initiative 2009 Strategic Actions and Impacts**

**Submitted by Karen Rose and Frederic Donck  
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ISOC's Enabling Access Initiative is designed to address the fundamental impediments to Internet growth and usability. It is comprised of three programmatic areas: *Technical Capacity Building; Policy, Regulation, and the Access Environment;* and *Underserved Communities*.

### **Program: Technical Capacity Building**

Approach: For 2009, the Education Department has embarked on a comprehensive and ambitious programme to increase Internet technical capacity in developing countries, with projects in the following areas 1) Improving and Implementing Key Internet Infrastructures in Developing Countries, 2) Extending Technical Knowledge and Core Skills Networking Skills, and 3) Promoting Leadership in Technologists from Developing Countries.

Recent Activities: In Q1, the Education Department made significant progress in advancing major projects that will provide immediate and long-term beneficial impacts in developing countries. Q1 Highlights include the following:

*Implementing IXP Infrastructure and Routing Training Programme:* ISOC received a generous donation of routing equipment from Cisco to facilitate training and IXP implementation in developing countries at the end of 2008. Our goal is to use this equipment to conduct 4 -6 routing workshops in developing world by the end of 2009 and to implement 2 -3 new IXPs. We have identified and are finalising dates for training in 4 countries and have identified 3 countries as possible candidates for new IXP implementation. In addition, dates were established to conduct two routing workshops conjunction with African NRENs in 2009.

*Anycast Root Server Implementation:* We developed a partnership with AfriNIC to implement Anycast Root Servers in Africa. We are now working with 4 countries in Africa and one in Asia on new root server deployments.

*Wireless Networking Training:* In Q1, we developed a partnership with Wireless U and NSRC to deliver wireless networking training in developing countries. Three workshops are being planned on a pilot basis. Dates in Africa and Asia have already been confirmed and the dates for the final workshop will be confirmed by the end of March.

*ISOC Fellowship to the IETF:* In Q1, we expanded the "Returning Fellows" programme. In addition to sending five newcomers to the IETF in San Francisco, five programme alumni will be attending on the "Returning Fellows" programme. We are also working on a "senior seminar" programme for fellowship alumni.

Going Forward: The main project areas under Technical Capacity Building were set forth in the 2009 budget and will be pursued as the core project areas for the Department. The Department will be hiring a new staff person in early Q2 to extend the reach and depth of programmes. It is expected that the new staff person will be located in either Asia or Latin America. In addition, the Department is reviewing each individual programmes to determine how best they can be leveraged with other activities across ISOC, including the other Initiatives, fundraising activities, Org. Member participation, Chapters, and so forth.

**Program: Policy, Regulation, and the Access Environment**

Approach: Within the Enabling Access initiative, the public policy team has committed to position ISOC as both a regional leader on internet access related issues and a reference partner to key policy and decision makers at regional and local level. The public policy team has started developing tailored content for regional use and is in the process to kick off a strategic regional and local advocacy programs to address those access related issues within each region. In parallel to these efforts, we are formally engaging with regional institutions to develop concrete partnerships. The Regional Bureaus are a key part of this visibility and engagement strategy.

Recent activities: in Q1, the Public Policy Department made significant progress in its advocacy plans on internet related issues including:

Finalizing a very ambitious tool that will provide regional and international policy makers and the internet community with data and indicators on Internet deployment and development in major countries per region (“access benchmark”)

Defining issue documents that will be shared with ISOC members and chapters, and be further used as advocacy tools with policy and decision makers. Those orientations documents cover critical issues as the deployment of IXPs, multilingualism, V4V6 as well as specific regional interconnection issues.

Participating in key events to increase visibility and credibility with decision makers at regional level. For example, ISOC has played a prominent role within high level policy conferences in Africa (Bamako in January, Mauritius on ccTLDs and governance in Africa, in March) in Asia (UN APCICT meeting Seoul in February, UNDP meeting in Kuala Lumpur in February, Apricot in Manila in March) as well as in Latin America and in Europe.

Going Forward: ISOC will continue to build its regional credibility through the ISOC Regional Bureaus and engage with local players, including ISOC Members and Chapters on a more holistic way. Our commitment to engage more with regional decision makers and involve- to a greater extent - ISOC members and chapters to our regional advocacy programs will also lead us to develop new orientations documents on trust and identity issues (in close relationship with T&I) as well as on wireless access, in Q2/3. Also the team, together with the Bureaus will embark on a very INET program in each region, where at least two high level INETs will be organised as from Q2, in Africa (with UNECA and African Union), Asia (with UN APCICT) and Latin America (with CTU, CITELE). In conjunction with the Internet Development Benchmark

study we also aim to deliver specific access policy messages and locally relevant policy materials to further enhance our advocacy on access issues.

**Program: Underserved Communities**

In many instances, connecting the next billion Internet users will be a more complex endeavour than the first billion. “Underserved Communities” – including populations using non-Latin language scripts, people with disabilities, and geographically remote and dispersed communities – face unique access challenges that simple network growth approaches may not adequately meet. Two issue areas are being pursued, multilingual issues and e-accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Multilingual Issues: ISOC established an expert group to assess the challenges and opportunities in the multilingualism area. The group’s guidance suggests that there are opportunities for further engagement at the local level and international levels. ISOC has produced an orientation document on multilingualism and will engage in an in-depth advocacy program with key regional stakeholders as from Q2.

Persons with Disabilities: Our disabilities consultant, Arnoud van Wikj, has developed a framework for developing and implementing a beta version of the Real Time Text Broadcast Service. Built on the Real Time Text protocol, the Broadcast service will allow text input to be broadcast seamlessly to multiple clients. This will allow the hearing impaired (as well as hearing users) to follow transcribed audio and video files remotely in real time with out the significant delays and inconveniences associated with current text relay. In addition, a new Chapters list has been started for Chapters interested in advancing disabilities issues and the first conference call was held in Q1. An action agenda is being developed to advance joint work between ISOC and its Chapters on this issue.

Going Forward: Our plan is to continue the work in these two areas in 2009. We would like to assess other “underserved communities” projects that ISOC may be strongly positioned to address, such as the unique technical and market challenges associated with rural, remote, and disparate communities.