

ISOC Chapters Workshop at INET Delhi, India

Wednesday, 16 September 2009, InterContinental Hotel, Nehru Place, Delhi

>>> NOTES <<<

Introductions

Mr. Rajnesh Singh, ISOC Regional Bureau Manager for Asia, opened the workshop and thanked all participants for their attendance. The Chapter delegates from Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Nepal and Pakistan introduced each other and described their roles in the Chapter. Ms. Sabrina Wilmot, Manager for Chapters & Individual Members, outlined the workshop agenda and encouraged all to engage in the objectives of this event to

- exchange ideas and experience with Chapter colleagues
- discuss the issues and challenges of running a Chapter
- find topics for collaboration between the Chapters in this region
- identify ways to enhance the activities of each Chapters
- obtain hands-on information about ISOC tools and applications.

Session I: Chapter Presentations - Overview of Chapter and Activities

Each Chapter had prepared a presentation focused on introducing the Chapter providing background on its past activities and outlining planned activities. The presentations were also used to highlight success stories as well as challenges and obstacles the Chapters have or had to deal with. All presentations have been uploaded to the Chapter wiki and can be accessed for information (login required).

Running a Chapter

As former Chapter President, Mr. Rajnesh Singh gave his perspective on working with volunteers. He emphasized the difficulties many volunteers experience when trying to combine their voluntary activities with job and family. Many Chapters face issues when their membership suddenly grows and/or is spread over a large distance. Recruiting new officers or having competing businesses as organizational members can become a challenge for the Chapter and need to be treated carefully. A Chapter needs to identify areas of responsibility by looking at the interests of the overall membership and identifying their needs.

He encouraged the Chapters to create functional groups like "Special Interest Groups (SIGs)" who focus on subjects (e.g. IPv6, Women in Technology or new media), and to set up working groups to work on issues that show sufficient momentum for discussion but are not yet mature enough for a SIG.

Important for such groups is to identify short termed objectives (e.g. 6 month) and to provide incentives and action to keep the momentum going. It is an advantage to have new members

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joining the groups frequently. As well a change in leadership of the group is sometimes necessary as people lose interest, or other demands on their time prevent them from participating fully. Having new people who can take up leadership means there is always a pool of people to keep the groups functional with fresh ideas and plans. Groups without enough interest from new members or for new leadership often become dormant. Another important aspect for having successful activities is to recognize the efforts of the people involved. The recognition can take place in various ways, publically or Chapter internal.

Chapter activities take a lot of work and leaders need to build a base of volunteers that can support them. New Chapter officers can easily be recruited from interested members and a change in leadership helps to keep a Chapter moving forward with fresh thoughts and ideas.

The present Chapters officers from Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Nepal and Pakistan engaged into a discussion on how to find volunteers for their Chapters. Some found it difficult to recruit new members; others suggested program committees responsible for membership management, and the use of relationships through other networks and partnerships (e.g. schools and universities).

Mr. Rajnesh Singh highlighted the importance of a “critical mass” for member recruitment and when the mass point is reached, members will start to make suggestions of actions for the Chapter. In this way, the chapter will continue to develop. It is then the responsibility of the Chapter leaders to set the time frame and to define the goals to achieve. These should be in line with the objectives of the Chapter.

Another suggestion was to organize Chapter dinners on a regular basis. The topics could be suggested by the members and interesting speakers could be invited for a talk over dinner. The costs for the dinner can be equally shared by all present (except perhaps for the speaker as appreciation for his/her time).

Mr. Jon McNerney, ISOC’s Chief Operating Officer, highlighted the INET conference in Delhi on September 17th 2009 and its importance of connecting the Chapters with the regional Internet community. Referring to Mr. Singh’s remarks he underlined the significant of membership outreach and change in leadership for ISOC Chapters.

The Internet Society and the Chapters have an enormous impact and influence on local and regional Internet aspects. He thanked the Chapter leaders for their efforts they have made as volunteers to the Chapter and reminded them about the big responsibility of representing ISOC and its cause.

Many organizations depend on the Internet technology and are interested in the development of the Internet. The Internet is a crucial tool for many businesses and Chapters can engage with these companies by explaining to them the relevance of a functioning Internet.

Recruiting individual and organizational Chapter members is one of the highest goals of each Chapter. The rise in membership numbers is one indicator for showing the relevance, impact and



outreach of a Chapter. Key factors for a successful Chapter are a growing membership, the creation of new leaders and finding new leaders.

ISOC is launching a “Next Generation Leaders Programme” in order to prepare young professionals from around the world to become the next generation of Internet technology, policy, and business leaders. More information about this new programme can be found at <http://www.isoc.org/leaders> . This is something that Chapters can offer to their members.

To further support the Chapters, the Internet Society plans to increase the financial support, and to develop more leadership programs for Chapters in 2010. It is important that current Chapter leaders coach and mentor young, energetic members to become the next generation of leaders. All Chapters are obliged to follow their bylaws and have elections. Chapters are a strategic asset of ISOC and it is important that they work within the agreed framework. ISOC has more than 100 organizational members and there is a huge potential for Chapters to ask organizations to become Chapter members. Chapters need to offer corporate members for their membership, e.g. a call for action, a (dinner) meeting, a project etc. A Chapter has the power to be neutral and provide an independent forum for discussion. Chapters can create a unique environment and have a big impact by using social networking.

ISOC programs like the “Community Grants Programme” and the “Chapter Events Funding Programme” provide financial opportunities for Chapters to organize relevant projects and events.

Session III: Chapter Issues Roundtable

After lunch, the Chapters discussed their issues and challenges in a roundtable format. These included receiving hands-on information from ISOC, more financial support as well as better collaboration and visibility of Chapters. Many of the issues have already been addressed by ISOC, some examples are:

Information about IPv6

Mat Ford, ISOC’s Technology Manager, discusses how the Internet Society is helping to foster IPv6 deployment, the role of government, and the risks of inaction in a video on <http://www.ipv6actnow.org/info/video/>

ISOC recently issued Briefing Papers on IPv6:

a) IPv6 deployment: State of play and the way forward:

<http://www.isoc.org/pubpolpillar/docs/ipv6-way-forward.pdf>

b) IPv6: Why and how Governments should be involved:

<http://www.isoc.org/pubpolpillar/docs/ipv6-government-role.pdf>

A Chapter e-meeting discussing the IPv6 Briefing Papers and questions from the Chapters is planned for September 22nd 2009.

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Multilingualism

ISOC held a Chapter E-meeting on July 8th 2009 giving Chapters the opportunity to discuss the ISOC Briefing Papers on Multilingualism which can be found at:

<http://www.isoc.org/pubpolpillar/docs/multilingualism-20090514.pdf>

(Multilingualism and the Internet, in English)

<http://www.isoc.org/pubpolpillar/docs/multilingualism-20090514-fr.pdf>

(Multilingualism and the Internet, in French)

New Chapter Programmes

In 2009, ISOC has introduced two new programs to support Chapters, the “Chapter Event Funding Programme” (<http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/funding/>) and the “Chapter Travel Fellowship Programme” (<http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/travel/>).

Chapter domains / Web pages, Membership management, Chapter collaboration

ISOC is introducing a new membership system. Aptify has been selected as Association Management Software solution. Aptify provides a single software platform for many of ISOC's membership administration and Chapter organization needs. This system will allow ISOC staff to more effectively serve the community, and to more quickly implement new capabilities to meet emerging membership requirements. Another central objective for the ISOC AMS is the ability to provide an environment for the ISOC community to work together through a common suite of broadly accessible online tools and applications. The Chapter Steering Committee helped define Chapter requirements, review current Chapter processes and inform Chapters of progress with the implementation.

An online demonstration of the new tool was given to the present Chapter delegates at the end of this workshop.

Chapter framework

One of the key activities designed to strengthen and support Chapters in 2009 is the re-writing of Chapter Policies and Procedures through collaboration and review. Having a strong and legitimate platform from which ISOC Chapters can conduct their activities is important for ISOC's credibility both locally and globally. The ISOC Chapter Policy document, approved by the ISOC Board of Trustees has been in place for 12 years (since 1997). A review of the Chapter policies and procedures has been requested by the Board of Trustees and by Chapters through the Sphere Project. Together with the Chapters, ISOC is conducting this review of ISOC Chapter Policies and Procedures during 2009. Chapters are required to abide to their bylaws, to hold elections and to produce annual reports.

Information sharing

Chapters are encouraged to share news and activities and send in their contributions for the monthly ISOC Newsletter. In order to share information in certain topics, ISOC holds Chapter and Member E-meetings and Face to Face. Dates, locations and further information are published on the Chapter meeting page <http://isoc.org/wp/chapter-meetings/>.

ISOC brochures and other publications like the IETF journal are available online and can be found at <http://www.isoc.org/pubs/>.

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The ISOC 2008 Annual Report together with the Chapter Review and the latest IETF Journal can be ordered at <https://www.isoc.org/isoc/reports/order/> .

Community Grants Project

Many Chapters and their members are involved in the development and execution of projects in their local communities. These often include educational projects in schools and university. The ISOC Community Grants Programme has been established to assist ISOC chapters and members specifically in projects that will advance ISOC's mission and goals. Projects can help Chapters to gain local credibility and assist them increasing their membership. Information about the ISOC Community Grants Programme can be found at <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/projects/> . Chapters looking for ideas for projects should read the information about past awards at <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/chapters/projects/awards.php> .

Session IV: Practical/Exercise

In the afternoon, the Chapters formed teams to work on selected Chapter issues and came up with recommendations and suggestions of best practice. A summary of the discussion can be found in the presentations on the Chapter wiki gallery at: http://wiki.chapters.isoc.org/tiki-list_file_gallery.php?galleryId=2 .

Session V: ISOC Tools and Applications

In this hand-on session, the Chapter delegates reviewed the requirements for the “Chapter Event Funding Application”, connected online to practice a virtual E-meeting using Marratech software and viewed a live demonstration on the new membership system (AMS). Experiencing the AMS before its introduction returned valuable feedback for the beta phase of this new product.

Session VI: Wrap-up

The last session of the day was used to exchange and discuss next steps for each Chapter, including concrete commitments and workable solutions. They can be found in the above mentioned summary on the Chapter wiki. Unfortunately, we ran out of time at the end due to the very fruitful discussions during the day. The workshop ended two hours late at 8 pm and was followed by a delicious Chapter dinner which provided more room for cheerful discussions and sharing of experiences.