

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1998

THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIMENT WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The Information Age is popularly forecasted as the most likely successor to the current Industrial Phase of the world's development. If this proves to be true, communicators and information professionals will replace engineers and architects as the key agents of development. So far, most of this forecasting has stayed at the conceptual level. The most striking actualization of this exciting concept that we have witnessed until now is probably the astonishingly rapid growth of the Internet, and the World Wide Web in particular.

Malaysia is one of two (Singapore being the other) Southeast Asian Countries to have announced major national commitments to this vision of an Information Age. The Malaysian commitment was made as part of a broader effort to drive the country to developed nation status by the year 2020. Studies conducted had shown that if the country continued with its current manufacturing based economy, the targets set for the year 2020 will not be met because the GDP of the country will soon stagnate well below levels needed

to achieve full development status. On the other hand the same studies reveal that a switch to an information based economy -- "digital economy" - had the potential for GDP growth well beyond the target figures set.

The main instrument sponsored by the Malaysian government in building this new "digital economy" is the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC). The corridor measures 15 by 40 kilometres. At one end is the capital city, Kuala Lumpur, at the other is the new international airport which will open in 1998 to become one of the largest in the region. Within the corridor is Putrajaya, the new Malaysian capital, which is now under construction, several universities, a new industrial zone and a science park.

A state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure is being installed within the MSC. It will be constructed around an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) fibre-optic backbone supporting a speed of 2.5 gigabits per second (Gbps) with potential upgrades to 10.6 Gbps providing very

high speed communication within the corridor area. The MSC will be connected by highspeed connections to Japan, USA, Europe and the Southeast Asian (ASEAN) region through 155 megabit per second (Mbps) international links. This telecommunications infrastructure is estimated to cost RM2 billion (US\$700 million). It will support interactive applications such as tele-medicine, virtual universities, on-line databases, video-on-demand and other broadband services.

The MSC is designed to be the experimental test-bed for digitally based economic activities for the country. Successful prototype applications will be upscaled to other parts of Malaysia to set in motion the planned metamorphosis of the country to a digital economy.

Seven broad areas of experimentation have been identified for the MSC: National Multi-purpose Card, Electronic Government, Worldwide Manufacturing Web, Borderless Marketing Centre, Smart Schools, Telemedicine and R&D Cluster.

The MSC is being developed with inputs from an international Advisory Panel comprising 34 distinguished members of the information industry. Included on the panel are: Alvin Toffler, Bill Gates, Gary Tooker (Chairman, Motorola), Heirich von Piere (Chairman, Scimens), Robert Bishop (Chairman, Silicon Graphics), Stan Shih (Chairman, Acer), Tadshi Sekizawa (President, Fujitsu) and Tadahiyo Sekimoto (Chairman, NEC).

Chin Saik Yoon - Head Research, Publisher and Managing Director, Southbound C-Square

Preparation of ORBICOM Conference



Carmen Rico de Sotelo
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I would be tempted to entitle this article, very daringly, in the fashion of the famous Chilean Pablo Neruda: "I returned from my travels. I sailed building happiness." Isla Negra, 1958.

What is certain is that my experience with ORBICOM, in situ, at UQAM, was incomparable. The purpose of my one-month stay at the ORBICOM General Secretariat was to coordinate the preliminary studies and the drafting of the first stage of the proposed ORBICOM International Conference in April 1999: "The New Deficit of the Knowledge Society and Information Highways. The Huge Gap Between Training and Employment in Information and Communications."

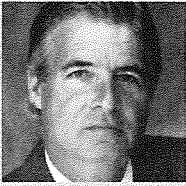
In addition to the Chairs, our main support, we agreed to rely not only on the network of associates, but also on world leaders in the academic, business, industrial, political and government fields. We believed it was vital to consult the Chairs on the topics to be debated to get an input that will feed the preliminary discussion and the one that will take place at the conference. In fact, each continent must work at the regional consultation tables to collect all available information on topics like: regional culture and world development, the changes in the information communication markets and traditional trades, permanent curricular changes in accordance with the new employment needs, information and development (strategies of access, use and appropriation of technologies), the management of strategic information, globalization and the delocalization of work.

We must rethink the way we communicate with ORBICOM Network members and associates and aim at strengthening our ties, at once by proposing and carrying out concrete actions, and also by taking advantage of new communication technologies. Finally, we invite all of you to take part in the preparation of ORBICOM's next Conference

My most sincere thanks to all our Secretariat Staff for such a warm welcome in Montreal, while outside they were «suffering» from an historical ice storm.

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PUBLICATION ON: «NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION»



At this advanced stage in the computerization of social relations, it is most pertinent to observe and analyse the relationship between information and communication technologies and freedom of expression. While the United Nations celebrate this year the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, ORBICOM is proud to announce the forthcoming publication of a book entitled «Freedom of Expression and New Technologies». The book will be launched with the collaboration of UNESCO in the final months of 1998, in Paris, New York City and few other locations.

The premise of the book is that every new development of communications technology throughout history, from writing to television, has been seen by some as creating opportunities for greater freedom of expression and by others as posing dangers to various forms of conventional authority. Each advance in technology has re-created this scenario, from the efforts of European monarchs to license and control the first printers to the regulatory bodies created by modern states to allocate and regulate television channels.

The development of digital communication is the most significant and influential advance in communications technology of our own era. Through such developments as the Internet, it already has created new channels of human communication of unheard-of efficiency, diversity and scope, leading some to herald the birth of a truly democratic global village and others to call for new methods of controlling what they regard as a lawless and dangerous medium. Even as the technology creates controversy, it continues to evolve. Print, audio and video communication are converging rapidly in the growing flood of computer-based digital communication, changing forever the ways in which we perceive others and communicate with them.

This development poses the greatest opportunities of our time to freedom of expression and universal respect for human rights, as well as the most serious challenges.

In recognition of this, ORBICOM, the International Secretariat of the network of UNESCO Chairs in Communi-

cation, has undertaken the production of a book that will examine the challenges to free expression, and the new possibilities, posed by digital technologies. Leading communications scholars and media professionals will be asked to contribute assessments in their own areas of specialization as will national and international organizations active in the promotion of free expression.

Invitations to contribute and the management of the project are the responsibility of an editorial committee gathered by ORBICOM at its headquarters in Montreal.

The Development and Planning Committee consists of Peter Desbarats (co-editor in chief); Michèle Paré (coordinator and co-editor in chief), Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny, Claude-Yves Charron, Pierre Sormany, Pierre Trudel and Laurie Wiseberg.

The Committee's initial description of the book envisages an opening section that will place the digital revolution in historical perspective.

Peter Desbarats and Michèle Paré

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Estadísticas ORBICOM

ORBICOM AHORA TIENE 185 MIEMBROS ASOCIADOS EN 53 PAIS. Otros 91 miembros se hallan actualmente en proceso de reclutamiento, predominantemente entre los sectores profesionales y massmediáticos, lo que permitirá equiparlos a la representación académica. Dichos miembros provienen de Europa (33 %), de América del Norte (22 %), de Asia-Pacífico (21%), de América Latina y el Caribe (11%), de la ONU (6%), de Africa (5%) y del Medio-Oriente (2%).

La red cuenta también con 18 Cátedras, además de otras 4 también en proceso de reclutamiento en Alemania, Dinamarca, Estados Unidos y el Reino Unido; las disciplinas representadas principalmente en la red son: las NTIC y el desarrollo y la gestión de los medios (o mass-media) (33%), las relaciones públicas y publicidad (21 %); la formación y la ética profesional (19%)

Japan and Morocco are now joining the ORBICOM Network. We are still waiting for the nomination of the Philipppines Chair Holder.

L'IMPACT DES INTRANETS SUR LA CULTURE D'ENTREPRISE ET LA PRODUCTIVITÉ

Étude effectuée par Jean-Paul Lafrance, professeur-chercheur au département des communications pour la Chaire UNESCO-BELL

En 1995, peu de spécialistes des communications avaient prévu le développement fantastique d'Internet, surtout à l'époque où plusieurs conglomérats dans le domaine des communications, Time Warner, USWest aux États-Unis ou Vidéotron, Cogeco au Canada annonçaient la mise en services d'inforoutes dites propriétaires. Des milliers ou des centaines de milliers d'entreprises ont maintenant des sites corporatifs sur Internet, mais la plupart n'y ont que quelques pages-vitrines décrivant leurs activités, parfois présentant leurs produits.

En 1996, les prévisionnistes n'avaient pas non plus prévu que les protocoles d'Internet s'appliqueraient avec le même succès aux systèmes internes des entreprises, qu'Internet deviendrait **Intranet** et **Extranet**. Selon Industrie Canada, 25% des 1000 plus grandes entreprises américaines ont maintenant des intranets. Les entreprises américaines se sont "intranisées" depuis au moins 2 ans. Un certain nombre d'études de cas d'Intranet sont relativement bien documentées, ceux de J.C. Penney, de Turner Broadcasting System (TBS), de Bell Atlantic, de Texas Instruments. En Ontario, on se souviendra de l'exemple de l'entreprise Weston, employant 60 000 per-

sonnes, de celui du gouvernement fédéral canadien qui a un important site Intranet à la direction de la fonction publique à Ottawa. Au Québec, il existe des Intranets à Hydro-Québec, à la CSST, à Nortel, au Mapac, à SNC-Lavalin, à Télé globe, au service des immeubles de la ville de Montréal, à Notarius, etc.

L'objet de ce projet est d'étudier les impacts organisationnels des Intranets sur l'entreprise. Les questions suivantes précisent les interrogations qui nous occupent: les intranets s'appliquent-ils à tous les types d'organisations? Quels sont les impacts sur l'organisation du travail? Quels sont les impacts sur les modes de constitution de la culture des entreprises? Quels sont les effets sur les réseaux d'échange et de communication (réseaux formels et réseaux informels):

- entre employés
- entre employés et la direction
- entre départements de l'entreprise
- avec les réseaux de fournisseurs
- sur les relations avec les diverses clientèles.

En toutes hypothèses, l'implantation au centre de l'organisation d'un système d'information dynamique crée ce que certains ont appelé «une entreprise virtuelle», une entreprise qui se définit par son système d'information qui gère l'ensemble des interactions entre les divers acteurs à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur. Ce qui exige la synergie de trois grandes dynamiques:

- la globalisation de l'information interne et externe
- la décentralisation des décisions vers les travailleurs
- la transformation des relations et des comportements avec les groupes externes (fournisseurs et clientèles)

Voici quelques questions abordées dans le cadre de la recherche:

Quels types de transformation peut-on observer dans les diverses entreprises analysées? Du point de vue de la circulation de l'information, des échanges et des communications entre supérieur hiérarchique et employés, employés entre eux, employés et fournisseurs, employés et clients de l'entreprise? Du point de vue de la définition des tâches, de leur réalisation, de la coordination de celles-ci et de l'ensemble de la mission de l'entreprise. Du point de vue de la culture de la compagnie, du sentiment d'appartenance, du partage des valeurs véhiculées dans le travail, etc. Peut-on observer des cas de résistances au changement, de détournement des finalités d'origine, de rejet? Y a-t-il des types d'entreprises qui se prêtent mieux à ce type d'organisation? Y a-t-il des fonctions dans l'entreprise qui en profitent davantage?

L'étude devrait être disponible au printemps 1998.

Chairholders' Activities

LA CHAIRE UNESCO À GRENOBLE

Le Conseil d'orientation de la Chaire UNESCO en communication à Grenoble et en Rhône-Alpes, qui complète en mars sa première année d'activités, s'est réuni le 16 janvier dernier afin de dresser un bilan de ses premières réalisations.

Le titulaire de la Chaire, M. Bernard Miège, a souligné l'importante contribution du premier professeur invité, le professeur Enrique Bustamante de l'Université Complutense de Madrid, qui a séjourné à Grenoble entre mi-octobre et fin décembre. Quatre thèmes furent abordés lors de son cours: les discours sur la société de l'information; les techniques de l'information et de la communication et le développement des régions; la politique télévisuelle européenne et la recherche en communication en Amérique latine. Le cours a atteint ses objectifs, en particulier quant à la possibilité offerte aux étudiants de 2e et 3e cycles d'avoir accès à une pensée «autre» et de pouvoir échanger avec un spécialiste des relations entre techniques de communication et développement. Le Conseil souhaite que soit favorisé un rapport plus étroit entre le Professeur et les doctorants, les équipes de recherche, de mêmes que les professionnels de la Région.

Pour 1998, la Chaire fera appel au professeur Mihai Coman, Professeur de sociologie de la communication et Doyen de la Faculté de Journalisme et de Sciences de la Communication de l'Université de Bucarest. Les cours du professeur Coman porteront sur la construction de la réalité par le discours des médias, ainsi que le développement des techniques de l'information et de la communication dans l'Europe de l'Est.

Le Conseil a également fait le point sur le Séminaire de réflexion et de formation avancée. Ce dernier portait sur les enjeux économiques, socio-politiques, sociaux et culturels et sur les contenus des nouveaux produits. Entre le 23 janvier et le 27 mars, cinq sessions spécialisées s'y sont ajoutées, abordant tour à tour les angles des TIC tels que le transfert des connaissances dans la production, l'aménagement des territoires, l'éducation, la santé et les nouveaux marchés.

Members News

ANNABELLE SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI

"Gender and Glocal Civil Society"

Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, from the Center for Mass Communication Research at the University of Leicester, gave a keynote speech entitled "Only Connect: Gender and Glocal Civil Society", to the Cultural Crossroads Conference organised by the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy in Sydney (Australia) in November.

Her activities over the past year include publication of a major new reader on Media in a Global Context (A. Sreberny-Mohammadi, D. Winseck, J. McKenna and O. Boyd-Barrett, eds. Arnold, 1997).

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Recent UNESCO Publications

L'UNESCO vient de publier *Rapport mondial sur la communication, les médias face aux défis des nouvelles technologies*. Préparé sous la direction d'Alain Modoux, le rapport a été rédigé par Lofti Maherzi, ancien recteur de l'Université de la formation continue (Alger) et chercheur en sciences de la communication. Également publié, le *Rapport mondial sur l'information*, sous la direction de Yves Courrier. Pour commander un exemplaire de ces rapports, communiquez avec les Éditions UNESCO, Division de la promotion et des ventes, Télécopie : 01 45 68 57 41 ou <http://www.unesco.org/publishing>.

New Web Features

UNDP RESOURCE SITES

- UNDP's IT for Development Programme has recently put up a resource and information site containing a wealth of content and hyperlinks, broken down by regions and sectors. The URL is <http://www.undp.org/undp/info21/index.html>

RESOLVING THE YEAR 2000 Problem

- A particular feature is a new sub-website discussing the Year 2000 problem (Y2K) from a developing country perspective - together with some 100 substantive hyperlinks. This info can be found at <http://www.undp.org/undp/info21/new/n-y-disc.html>

ORBICOM's International Secretariat Activities

Last January, ORBICOM's Secretariat received with great pleasure the visit of the president of the network, Rainer Von Schilling, Editor and publisher of Mannheim Morgan. He helped the secretariat on the planning of the conference on "New deficit of the Information Highways and Knowledge Society."

Sylvie Coudray, program officer at UNESCO's division *Freedom of Expression*, spent a few days in March with the personnel of ORBICOM discussing the table of content of the reader in preparation on «New Information and Communication Technologies and Freedom of Expression»

La ministre de la communication de la Côte d'Ivoire, Danièle Boni Claverie, accompagnée du directeur de l'Institut des Sciences et Techniques de la communication, Balet Koudougnon, de passage à Montréal en mars, discutait avec le personnel d'ORBICOM et de la Chaire UNESCO-BELL des besoins de formation de professeurs en multimédia dans son pays.

MEMBERS Working Papers

Revue Prisma N° 9
Université Catholique de l'Uruguay.
Chaire UNESCO en communication 1998

Pour information, communiquez avec Carmen Rico de Sotelo, directrice, Relations internationales de l'Université Catholique de l'Uruguay, par courriel: crico@ucu.edu.uy

Women's Participation in the Canadian News Media: Progress Since the 1970's

Gertrude J. Robinson and Armande St-Jean

Women's Participation in the Canadian News Media: Progress since the 1970s
For more info :
cxro@musica.mcgill.ca

AGENDA

UNESCO/ABA REGIONAL FORUM ON ONLINE SERVICES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) has been successful in obtaining funding to convene the UNESCO/ABA Regional Forum on Online Services in Asia and the Pacific. The regional forum will be held in Indonesia in early 1999. The forum will allow participating governments to obtain an understanding of international developments and to consider how they might wish to proceed to address some of the issues raised by online services in a global environment. For more information: research@aba.gov.au

STRENGTHENING TIES

- With the aim to strengthen ties between Nordic and Latin American research communities in the area of communication, Thomas Tufte promoted and arranged recent visits of renown Latin American scholars to Denmark. In continuation to our first joint colloquium for communication researchers from Brazil and Denmark (Londrina, Brazil, Sept 1996), INTERCOM in Brazil published the main contributions in the book: "Temas contemporaneas de Comunicacao". Now we are seeking funds to organize the second colloquium in Copenhagen, hopefully in 1999. For more info, please contact Thomas Tufte at (45) 35328117 or by fax at (45) 35328110.

ENCUENTROS EN MERCOSUR

- La Vice Presidenta de ORBICOM, Carmen Rico de Sotelo, participara en dos encuentros en la zona del MERCOSUR: En el mes de junio en Asunción (Paraguay), en Endicom, el primero encuentro de investigación y docencia en Comunicación. El encuentro cuenta con el apoyo de la Fundación Konrad Adenauer.
- En el mes de Agosto, en la Universidad Nacional de Cordoba, en el Encuentro sobre "Comunicacion en Globalizacion", organizado por el Centro de Estudiantes de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Informacion de dicha Universidad. crico@ucu.edu.uy
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