



# ORBICOM FORUM



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## Acceso Equitativo a las TIC



**José Carreño Carlón**  
Titulario de cátedra  
de UNESCO  
Universidad  
Iberoamericana, México

El Departamento de Comunicación de la Universidad Iberoamericana, México D.F., en el marco de las actividades de su Cátedra UNESCO "Telecomunicaciones y Sociedad" y en seguimiento a los acuerdos adoptados en la Reunión Internacional de Consulta de las Cátedras UNESCO en Comunicación, fue sede del Seminario Regional sobre Acceso Equitativo a las Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación que se llevó a cabo los días 28 y 29 de noviembre en las instalaciones de nuestra universidad.

Durante estos dos días contamos con la participación de académicos, empresarios, representantes gubernamentales, además de los titulares de las Cátedras UNESCO de Comunicación de América Latina y del Dr. Alejandro Alfonzo, Director de la Oficina Regional de Comunicación para América Latina de la UNESCO. Asimismo, la Sra. Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny asistió en representación de ORBICOM para presentar el plan de acción de esta Red de Cátedras UNESCO.

Los temas que se discutieron fueron varios: desde la participación y responsabilidad del sector empresarial en el fortalecimiento del acceso de la población a las tecnologías en cuestión, hasta las estrategias gubernamentales de diferentes países de la región que han sido más o menos exitosas en combatir la brecha digital existente. Los académicos presentes establecieron un marco crítico para poner sobre la mesa los temas pendientes en la agenda.

Estamos convencidos de que el acceso inequitativo a las tecnologías de información y comunicación que se vive en toda la región latinoamericana, es un indicador más de los bajos niveles de bienestar en que viven nuestras poblaciones.

Por lo mismo reiteramos la importancia de que este seminario sea el principio de una definición de estrategias para la reducción de la brecha digital latinoamericana.

La continuación a la página 3.

## Orbicom and GKP

Orbicom has now formally joined the GKP (Global Knowledge Partnership) and its Secretary General, Claude-Yves Charron, has participated in its annual meeting hosted by the Swiss Agency for Development (SDC) in Geneva on March 22 & 23.

The three principals agenda items for that annual meeting are: discussion of the GKP's report to the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force) of the G8 (and eight other countries from the developing world), the review of the GKP action plan, and the election of the the Partnership Executive Committee's now members.

The GKP is an evolving, informal partnership of public, private and non-profit organizations which are committed to share information, experiences and resources to promote broad access to, and effective use of, knowledge and information as tools for sustainable and equitable development.

Orbicom is a strong supporter of GKP from the early days when our Network served as a sounding board in preparation to the 1997 Toronto Conference "Knowledge for Development in the Information Age" and later actively participated in the Kuala Lumpur Conference in 2000.

Members of the Partnership cooperate through a variety of initiatives - pilot projects; conferences and workshops, capacity-building initiatives; information sharing and project coordination. Orbicom's action plan fits within this framework.

For more information, visit the GKP web site: [www.globalknowledge.org](http://www.globalknowledge.org)

## Networking for Human Development

Since November 1999, after the election of Ambassador Koichiro Matsuura as Director General, UNESCO initiated a reform process aimed at restoring its role as a major player on the international scene.

With the goal of "contributing to peace and human development in an era of globalization through education, science, culture and communication", UNESCO is undergoing a deep transformation, that has changed both its programme and structure. Three strategic axes were selected in order to develop this new vision: protecting the common good, enhancing diversity and promoting knowledge sharing. This last objective is specially relevant to Orbicom's mandate, as well as to the renewed priority given by UNESCO to the education for all program.

In fact, the promotion of equitable access to information, particularly within the public domain, is the main task assigned to the Information and Communication Sector of the Organization. Within the framework of our institutional transformation, we are working to improve our partnerships with major stakeholders in the area of the new information and communication technologies. Now more than ever, networking is the key to promote access to NICT, an endeavour that is changing the pattern and pace of development all over the world. By its own nature, Orbicom has a comparative advantage in this field. The implementation of the projects recently adopted by its Board of Directors should be a major contribution to UNESCO's efforts on behalf of peace democracy and human development.

Miguel Sales,  
UNESCO

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## Projet Trust sur la confiance dans le commerce électronique: Du financement pour la phase canadienne

Lors de la réception offerte conjointement par l'UNESCO et l'Université du Québec à Montréal dans le cadre de la réunion du Comité exécutif d'Orbicom, le ministre canadien responsable de l'Agence de développement économique des régions, l'honorable Martin Cauchon, a fait l'annonce d'une contribution non remboursable pour la réalisation de la phase canadienne du projet "Trust" qui porte, dans un premier temps, uniquement sur la confiance dans le commerce électronique.

Cette contribution représente 50% ou 52,000 \$ cdn des coûts associés à l'étude. L'autre partie locale devra être financée par des partenaires du secteur privé.

L'initiative de recherche originale et plus globale, et qui fait partie du plan d'action



Miguel Sales, Rainer von Schilling,  
le ministre Cauchon et Gilbert Dionne

d'Orbicom, a été proposée par le titulaire de chaire de l'Université de Konstanz en Allemagne lors de la réunion des chaires UNESCO en communication à Mexico en juillet dernier, après consultation de ses collègues du Japon et de la République de Corée.

Cette recherche devrait se faire dans six régions du monde et focaliserait sur les dispositifs permettant d'établir la confiance chez les usagers d'Internet et de déterminer jusqu'à quel

point les mécanismes d'édification de la confiance sont universels ou dépendent des perceptions culturelles.

## The executive committee decides on the RMS implementation

Orbicom's Executive Committee was convened in Montreal on January 8th at the request of Orbicom's President Rainer von Schilling, mainly to decide on a course of action to implement the Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS) discussed and approved last Fall by the Board of Directors. This meeting was of paramount importance given the Secretariat's very tight cash flow following decisions made by various traditional contributors not to finance secretarial infrastructures, but to help with the financing of projects. The meeting allowed the Excom members to address fundamental questions about the role of Orbicom's International Secretariat in the working out and in the financing of the network's various initiatives.

There was recognition that the Latin American Chairs' project on "Equitable Access to information and Communications Technologies", is a good example of how the network should operate. The conference on "Access" of last November in Mexico has brought together professionals, academics and industrialists. The cover page of the current Newsletter issue is partly dedicated to this event. On the other hand, it was noted that few colleagues have been active in translating their initial project concept into a full fledged project, and even fewer have given any indication on how the projects could be financed. Orbicom's Secretariat is therefore facing a dilemma: is the Secretariat the facilitating hand of the Network, connecting people together to implement the various initiatives, or is it the role of the Secretariat to write everything and seek funds for most of the initiatives ?

Under the competent leadership of Orbicom's new Treasurer and President of the Finance Committee, Ms Ellen Wartella, Chair, University of Texas at Austin, a plan of action was designed to help both the financing by major contributors of the more appealing initiatives of the network and, at the same time, generate the necessary revenues to sustain the Secretariat's operations. In a very short term, Orbicom's Secretariat should try again to motivate its traditional contributors including UNESCO, and request the membership dues from all members. The network will also identify its past successes and decide on the most flourishing initiatives within its action plan to be presented for funding to foundations, the private sector and major international agencies. A number of house keeping decisions were also made.

Two of the committees, the Finance and the Pre-selection of the Chairs were reactivated. Our colleague and friend Yassen Zassoursky, Chair of the Moscow State University, has accepted to preside the later committee. The application of three new chairs were examined and favourable support was given to the ones from South Africa and Chile. With regard to the Peruvian application, it was misdirected to UNESCO headquarters in the first place. The file has yet to be presented for assessment to Orbicom's Pre-selection committee. UNESCO may undertake in future to review and evaluate the current chairs and the expired protocols. Dormant chairs should be replaced by active ones taking into account the following guiding principles: 1) more even geographic representation, 2) priority given to populous countries, 3) expertise of the new chairs in ICTs.

Continuación de la página 1 : *Acceso equitativo...*

**-CONCLUSIONES-**

Una vez concluidas las sesiones de análisis, y tomando en cuenta el marco conceptual elaborado previamente, la Cátedra UNESCO/UIA "Telecomunicaciones y Sociedad" presentó un documento de conclusiones que al final incluye un rubro de propuestas. Dado que se trata de un documento largo, reproducimos aquí únicamente las propuestas. Sin embargo, si alguien desea conocer el documento completo lo puede solicitar a [gabriela.warkentin@uia.mx](mailto:gabriela.warkentin@uia.mx)

**PROPUESTAS:**

- Concientizar, desde todas las tribunas posibles, a todos los sectores del problema real que enfrentamos y que se resume en tres puntos: acceso irregular, acceso ineficiente y acceso costoso.

- Aumentar consistentemente la teledensidad en la región y, específicamente, en México. Ya se llegó al 2000 y no se cumplió la meta de las 20 líneas por cada cien habitantes que se había propuesto para esta fecha en el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo.

- Fomentar el uso de alternativas de acceso, tales como la telefonía inalámbrica, que permitan realmente extender la teledensidad y que no se vuelvan acumulativas para quienes de por sí ya tienen cubierto el servicio de acceso telefónico.

- En este rubro es más que pertinente pensar en la necesaria convivencia de distintas soluciones tecnológicas para asegurar el acceso a todos los niveles socio-económicos.

- Incentivar la inversión en las zonas del país que tengan una baja o nula teledensidad y no sólo en las ciudades económicamente atractivas para las empresas.

- Aplicar la Ley sin cortapisas y el marco regulatorio para transparentar el manejo de tarifas y precios, de servicios de interconexión y demás servicios intermedios, de oferta o negación de acceso, de subsidio al servicio universal, etc., para consolidar la apertura del mercado en el ámbito de las telecomunicaciones que conduzca a un beneficio real para el consumidor final en términos de existencia, costo y calidad del acceso.

- Desarrollar mecanismos de resolución de disputas transparentes y efectivos que tengan en mente el desarrollo del sector en pleno y no sólo la superación de problemáticas inmediatas.

- Incentivar la puesta en marcha de un Plan Nacional que asegure el acceso a un ancho de banda cada vez mayor en el país.

- Fomentar la creación de un Fondo de Telefonía Universal cuyo fondeo, administración y destino sea absolutamente transparente y claro para los proveedores, beneficiarios y la sociedad en general.

## Digital Divide Index, an Orbicom - CIDA Project

Major stakeholders in the world, particularly the G-8 and other countries and ODA agencies participating in the Dot Force, consider the digital divide to be a major issue and are committed to disburse considerable funds to help bridge the divide.

However, there exists no measurement instrument of some reliability that could be used to assist the stakeholders in their analysis of developing countries ICTs' needs and eventually to measure the progress or the regress of the digital divide following the implementation of various measures and programs of assistance to narrow the divide.

In order to fill this information gap, Orbicom plans to build, as a preliminary phase of a more global project, the methodology and a model to develop an instrument to measure the digital divide in the world which will be called the "Digital Divide Index" (DDI). The Digital Divide Index will assist major stakeholders in focussing on access to new information and communications technologies in developing countries using the following data sets ( not exclusive): state of infrastructures, public policies and regulations, industrial and managerial capacities, and human resources and training in ICTs.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has volunteered to take the leadership and to fund the bulk of Phase I research.

Other interested partners will be associated for sectoral contributions: the Canadian National Research Council (CNRC) for the literature review, and possibly UNESCO for presentation of the methodology and model to the International Conference on the Digital Divide at Austin Texas in November 2001.

Following completion of Phase I, other agencies may join to support the construction of the DDI per se. The ultimate objective of the DDI is to help focus attention on the issues of training, research and practice (as related to the ICTs).

The Orbicom - CIDA initiative should be useful to advocate for resources to address urgent needs in education, development and research into the application of the ICTs, in developing country settings where the issues may have less to do with connectivity and more about relevance of the technologies, and their fit into unique communication and

information systems. It is generally recognized that the digital divide is less about technology, computers and connectedness than about information, knowledge, cultural identity and the ability to shape globalization.

Phase I will be conducted between April 2001 and February 2002 and the following outputs are expected:

- a report on the complete literature review on the issues relating to the digital divide;

- a listing and description of data sets available for building the model;

- specifications for the model;

- prototype model, including the methodology for its construction;

- prototype Digital Divide Index, including the methodology for deriving the index from the model, its periodic revision and update;

- a publication entitled " A methodological approach to model the digital divide"

# People & Events

*Orbicom welcomes the new Chair holders in Tokyo*



Dr. Obi



Dr. Sasaki

The Network is proud to inform its membership that two distinguished Japanese colleagues are joining us as Co-Chairs: Dr. Keinosuke Obi, Chancellor, and Dr. Shoichiro Sasaki.

Dr. Obi is Chancellor and executive Vice-President of the Bunkyo University's International Exchange Center and has produced a considerable amount of publications including, *Charting for Info-Communication Industry in Japan, Telecommunication Industry, Multimedia education*. Mr Obi is also Chair, Policy Advisory Council, LDP, Communications Industry Association of Japan and Japan Multimedia Forum. Dr. Sasaki is a Professor at the Information and Communication Department of Bunkuyo University after more than 30 years as TV program producer and director with the NHK.

## 2001 Symposium on the Digital Divide



The International Communication Association and the International Association of Mass Communication Research in collaboration with the University of Texas and the dean of its Chair in Communication, Ms Ellen Wartella, organize a symposium on the "Digital Divide" to be held November 17-19, 2001, at the University of Texas, Austin, TX, USA.

New communication and information technologies are central to the economic, educational, and social development of individual nations and the global community. Much previous research has shown significant references among social groups within nations and among nations in access to and utilization of new communication and information technologies. This has come to be called the digital divide. The event will be jointly convened by Manuel Parés I Maicas (Spain) president of IAMCR and Joseph N. Cappella (United States) president of ICA. The

University of Texas and the International Federation of Communication Associations also supports the symposium. Conference organizers invite scholarly contributions on any issue related to the digital divide. For additional information, contact Wolfgang Donsbach, Department of Communication, Dresden University of Technology. Email: [wolfgang.donsbach@mailbox.tu-dresden.de](mailto:wolfgang.donsbach@mailbox.tu-dresden.de)

## Brazilian Chair's events



Dr. José Marques de Melo informs that the International Colloquium on the Latin School of Communication will take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil from May 21 to May 23 2001 and is entitled *Marxism and Christianity, origin's of Latin American thought*. For more informations, [www.metodista.br](http://www.metodista.br).

## European Content Syndication Seminar



Ms Monique van Dusseldorp, an Orbicom member, and founder and director of Van Dusseldorp & Partners, organizes the European Content Syndication Seminar that will be held on April 4, 2001 in Amsterdam. Syndication has long been a viable model for reselling content to newspaper, radio and television outlets. But syndication recently has become an attractive distribution model on internet, as it becomes increasingly apparent that ad revenues alone would not sustain most content companies. What is the role of syndication in today's market? What is the content worth? Who is buying? Who is selling? Where do we go from here? Those are questions that the seminar will address. This event is presented in collaboration with YourNews, a leading European content syndicator, and Backstream, a technology provider for content processing applications. For more information, visit : [www.europesyndication.com](http://www.europesyndication.com).

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Orbicom, P.O. Box 8888, Downtown Station, Montreal, PQ, Canada, H3C 3P8  
[orbicom@uqam.ca](mailto:orbicom@uqam.ca) • [www.orbicom.uqam.ca](http://www.orbicom.uqam.ca)  
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# Conferences

El Mercosur en la era "punto com":  
Conocimiento, acción e integración  
Universidad Católica del Uruguay  
10 - 11 - 12 de mayo de 2001  
Uruguay  
**www** : <http://www.ucu.edu.uy/>

Les nouvelles formes de travail dans la  
société de l'information  
15 - 16 mai 2001  
Québec, Canada

**www** : <http://www.cefric.qc.ca/francais/activites/colloque.html>  
**e-mail** : [info@cefric.qc.ca](mailto:info@cefric.qc.ca)

Inet 2001  
5 - 8 juin 2001  
Stockholm, Suède  
**www**: <http://www.isoc.org/inet2001/>  
**e-mail**: [inet2001@ISOC.ORG](mailto:inet2001@ISOC.ORG)

3ème Colloque International sur les Usages  
et Services dans les Télécommunications  
baptisé "E-USAGES"  
12 - 14 juin 2001  
Paris, France  
**e-mail** : [mail.fws@wanadoo.fr](mailto:mail.fws@wanadoo.fr)

8th Annual EDINEB International  
Conference Technology, Pedagogy and  
Innovation  
June 20 - 22, 2001  
Nice, France  
**www** : <http://www.edineb.net>

FOLKCOM' 2001 : IV Conferência Brasileira  
de Folkcomunicação  
26 - 29 de junho de 2001  
Campo Grande, Brasil  
**www** : <http://www.orbicom.uqam.ca/es/actualidades>

Industries culturelles et dialogues des civili-  
sations dans les Amériques  
17 - 19 septembre 2001  
Montréal, Canada  
**www** : <http://www.uqam.ca/gricis>

2001 Bogues: Pluralisme et Globalisme  
19 - 22 Septembre 2001  
Montréal, Canada  
**www** : <http://www.uqam.ca/gricis>

II Congreso Mundial de Redes Ciudadanas  
Global CN 2001  
28-30 de noviembre de 2001  
Argentina  
**e-mail** : [Sfinguel@ciudad.com.ar](mailto:Sfinguel@ciudad.com.ar)

2001 Symposium on the DDI  
17 - 19 November 2001  
Austin, United States of America  
**e-mail** : [wolfgang.donsbach@mailbox.tu-dresden.de](mailto:wolfgang.donsbach@mailbox.tu-dresden.de)