

UNESCO FORO MUNDIAL DE CÁTEDRAS UNESCO

ORBICOM fue distinguida con un reconocimiento por la UNESCO

Durante el debate de los titulares de Cátedra sobre la brecha digital y el trabajo en red

El Foro Mundial de Cátedras Unesco reunió en París, del 13 al 15 de noviembre, representantes de cientos de titulares de Cátedras UNESCO y de las redes UNITWIN de todas las disciplinas, incluyendo diez Cátedras de Comunicación de la red Orbicom. El Director General de la UNESCO Koichiro Matsuura otorgó la distinción UNITWIN a 16 de las cátedras y a una red: ORBICOM. En su alocución, el Director General señaló que « es estimulante notar que varios de los más destacados proyectos pertenecen a esta área (sociedad del conocimiento): la red Orbicom y las Cátedras UNESCO en Comunicación ».



Durante su visita a Montreal, el presidente de Orbicom Alain Modoux entregó al Rector de la UQAM Roch Denis la distinción otorgada por la UNESCO a Orbicom.

La ceremonia de la premiación fue seguida por el panel sobre el Sector de la Información y la Comunicación. El mismo se desarrolló en la primera sesión de la tarde y despertó un particular interés entre los titulares de Cátedras de Orbicom y otros expertos.

A sugerencia de la UNESCO, el panel se centró en la brecha digital y en la contribución que las cátedras de Comunicación pueden realizar para su superación. Es éste un importante tema en el marco de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información que se desarrollará en Ginebra en Diciembre de 2003.

Durante su encuentro de julio 2000 en la ciudad de México, las cátedras UNESCO de Comunicación focalizaron su atención en los proyectos sobre TICs y la brecha digital. Varias cátedras y el Secretariado Internacional de Orbicom están desarrollando investigaciones a nivel nacional e interanacional. Una vez terminados, esos estudios constituirán herramientas útiles a los tomadores de decisiones cuando evalúen las posibilidades de reducción o superación de la brecha digital.

Mientras mostraba las disparidades entre los países o regiones en términos de infraestructura y conectividad que ejemplifican la brecha, el panel señaló que el tema de la brecha digital no se limita a los meros aspectos técnicos. Tiene una dimensión humana ilustrada por los problemas siguientes :

La formación en TICs es altamente dependiente del nivel de educación, así como de un mínimo conocimiento del lenguaje internacional.

Debido a la creciente comercialización de la

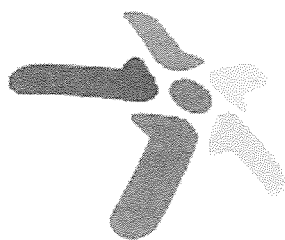
información y el conocimiento, la información esencial no es accesible a todos. El acceso está pues sujeto al pago y continúa siendo inalcanzable para los usuarios pobres.

Numerosas autoridades políticas están restringiendo el acceso a Internet de varias maneras: financiera, técnica, administrativa o legislativamente. No obstante, a pesar de estas restricciones, más o menos severas según el país, y debido a la inmaterialidad de Internet, ésta representa una fuente tremenda de esperanza para millones de individuos que pueden ejercer su derecho de búsqueda, recepción y distribución de su información y sus ideas; ellos están así en el proceso de « ganar su soberanía personal »

Los informes completos del panel y de la mesa redonda, así como la lista de los participantes se encuentran disponibles en el sitio electrónico de UNITWIN.

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<http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/unitwin/index.html>



world summit
on the information society
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005

Freedom of Expression at Stake

Abstract of the speech delivered by Orbicom's President, Alain Modoux, to the Inter American Press Association, Lima, Peru, 25 October 2002

We are living in a transition period that is leading us from the industrialized society to the information society. With the advent of the latter, information and knowledge are at the core of all areas of human activity: information on prices and goods enables markets to function; information on diseases, disease prevention and treatment is the basis of any health policy; information on the world in which we live is a source of learning; information shapes good governance. However it is precisely information that is most lacking in the countries of the South, and it is increasingly recognized that the deficiency will, and already does, constitute a major obstacle to their development. Thus, the perennial gulf between the affluent and the poor will continue to widen as the developed regions of the world establish the *information society*. The North/South divide characterized by social and economic disparities now has an added dimension, commonly known as the '*digital divide*'. The gulf is widening not only between North and South, but also within the South, between the elites of the towns and the cities and the more underprivileged populations living in the suburbs of large cities and in rural areas. On a smaller scale, this dichotomy is also found in the North, where the unemployment and illiteracy (10 and 20 percent of the population, respectively, according to country) have become the main factor of exclusion.

The *digital divide* is now a subject of priority concern to the international community. It has become clear to all that this daunting challenge cannot be met by governmental and intergovernmental entities (political players) alone. It is essential that the private sector, which primarily represents the different protagonists in society, should be closely involved in the debate. It was with this in mind that the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), with support from all States and from the United Nations systems, has taken the initiative in organizing a *World Summit on the Information Society*. It is planned to hold the Summit in two sessions, the first in **Geneva** hosted by the Swiss Federal Council, in **December 2003**, and the second in **Tunis in 2005**, at the invitation of the Tunisian Government. It should bring together all the protagonists concerned, namely all United Nations Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and the civil society. The *digital divide* should be the core issue for this important summit meeting. Its more general objective, as defined by the UN General Assembly, in January 2002, will be '*the development of a common vision and understanding of the information society and the adoption*

of a declaration and a plan of action for implementation by Governments, international institutions and all sectors of civil society'...

While several questions concerning infrastructure, connectivity and contents will be at the heart of the *World Summit on the Information Society* debate, there is no doubt that there will be many discussions among the participants present in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, on such issues as those related to the use of the information and communication technologies (ICT) to foster economic, social and cultural development, but also to their illicit or even criminal applications, as well as to their impact on societies.

Regarding the media, there is a general consensus on the fact that they are key actors in the information society. But this consensus does not seem to go much further. One can foresee that the crucial issue of press freedom - and more widely of freedom of expression in the information society - will be at the heart of highly controversial discussions...

My duty is to tell you very clearly today that freedom of expression and its corollary press freedom are at stake. The threat does not come only from authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. It appears very clearly to me that the freedom of expression and freedom of the press issue is fading away and it is no longer on the agenda of the international community. Now the new priority seems to be 'security'. I see exactly the same trend in the context of the World Summit. Even States who have traditionally been unwavering supporters of human rights try to make up vague formulas to avoid speaking openly about them, because it could hurt some big countries, not to name them! This is why I am calling upon all press freedom fighters to be very, very vigilant regarding what will happen in Geneva, at the World Summit. There is no doubt that many States want to get full control of it and impose their way of thinking. Moreover, I wish to mention another matter of concern for the media, that is the attempt by a small, but very militant section of the civil society linked with Puerto Alegre anti-globalization movement to revive some old demands of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), in particular the so-called right to communicate.

Alain Modoux

Full text available upon request to ORBICOM.

AGM 2002: What was said?

AGM 2002 which took place at the end of September has been the occasion for the membership to express views and to recommend actions that now must be taken into consideration by Orbicom's Executive members.

On the housekeeping aspects, the requested votes and endorsements were done successfully. However, it seems that there is a preference for AGMs that would allow for fast and easy adoption of statutory requirements, and for focus on discussions of substance and thematic debates.

There is a perception that Orbicom seems (usefully) to be in the middle of a set of difficult hard to reconcile trajectories of communications technologies (ICTs), telecommunications, media and other communicational interests, and that it is the role of Orbicom to ensure that the linkages and connections are duly reconciled to keep the interest of the membership.

There is general agreement that Orbicom should take part in the World Summit of Information Society (WSIS), Geneva 2003 and

Tunis 2005. In this regard, several proposals were made to hold the next AGM *in situ* :

- a) To organize a preparatory colloquium to WSIS 2003 in Rabat, and hold the next AGM in September 2003 around the colloquium;
- b) To meet in Abuja around the 2003 International Conference of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Orbicom acting as co-sponsor at no cost to Orbicom;
- c) To meet in Mexico early May 2003 during or after the Conference on Media and Terrorism,

Suggestion was also made to arrange for Orbicom to join with regional organizations conducting researches of interest to our Network and to participate in some regional conferences or workshops. What takes place between the European Union and other regions of the world was given as an example.

The request was made and supported that there should be an electronic newsletter or a web page dedicated to the timely information of the membership about developments in or around the Network.

Authors meet in Kuala Lumpur to finalise the Digital Review of Asia Pacific



Maria Ng, IDRC, facilitating the Southeast Asia Working Group during its session to peer-review the chapters for the sub-region.

The contributing authors to the Digital Review of Asia Pacific met in Kuala Lumpur for three days from November 27 to 29, 2002 under the leadership of Claude-Yves Charron, Secretary General of Orbicom. The publication covers 28 countries and territories of the Asia Pacific region. A special regional chapter for the Pacific Islands reviews all 14 of the islands making up the Pacific Islands Forum. The Review will bear the joint imprints of ORBICOM, IDRC and APDIP-UNDP.

The work of the contributing authors will be published as the 2003 edition of the Review next spring. It focuses on the application of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support and facilitate socio-economic development of countries and territories in the Asia Pacific region. The edition reports on and analyses progress made in Internet-based content and services. It also surveys issues related to the governance of the Internet at the national and local levels.

The design of the publication was finalised a year ago. A review of literature at that time revealed that several e-readiness studies were underway. This led to an editorial decision not to cover hard technology issues that has been the focus of these regional studies as well as other past publications on the ICT sector of the region.

The first day of the authors' working sessions was set aside for peer-reviews of all the chapters. The authors worked in four parallel sub-regional working groups. It was an opportunity for the authors not only to review each other's work, but also to share information and experiences, and to begin synthesizing trends in their sub-regions.

The team of authors shifted focus on the second day to discern trends in the sub-regions for the three areas covered by the 2003 edition: Governance, content and on-line services. It was a

challenging day. The broad diversity of the region was striking. At one end of the scale, highly advanced countries were setting world standards in niches they had created in the industry. South Korea's leadership in broadband technology was one such example. At the other end of the continuum, countries were in the early stages of connecting to the Internet. Afghanistan and East Timor were examples of countries in the midst of rebuilding their infrastructure and connecting to the Internet at the same time. Most of the countries in the region can be found in intermediate notches on this scale. They have made stable connections, and in many cases excelling in selected niches of the sector while working hard to build universal access on other fronts.

The authors were guests of MIMOS Berhad and Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) on the third day to learn first hand the Malaysian experiences in building the ICT sector. ORBICOM member, Tengku, Datuk, Dr. Mohd. Azzman Shariffadeen, CEO of MIMOS was the host. An interesting presentation by Dr. K.J. John of the Malaysian National IT Council laid out the country's plans to «leapfrog» from the newly industrialised and manufacturing stage of development, to a fully developed knowledge society by deploying ICTs in a strategic manner.

The visit to the MDC gave the panel of authors an opportunity to see first hand the progress made within the 15 by 50 km. «Multimedia Super Corridor» over the past three years. The strip of former oil palm estate land has been transformed into a state-of-the-art technology park at which several major multinational companies have established their regional hubs and offices. These companies have been drawn to the park by an astute combination of fiscal incentives, robust, high-speed infrastructure, and legislative guarantees.

Please e-mail digitalreview@ict4d.org to receive more pre-publication information about the Digital Review of Asia Pacific.

Photography credits: Onno Purbo

Chin Saik Yoon

People & Events Conferences

Nouvelle nomination à l'UQAM



L'Université du Québec à Montréal est heureuse d'annoncer la nomination de Carmen Rico de Sotelo comme professeur en développement international au Département des communications. Mme Rico de Sotelo a été vice-présidente d'Orbicom de 1999 à 2001. Membre associé actif du réseau depuis sa création, elle a été, au cours de sa carrière, Directrice de l'Université Catholique de l'Uruguay, professeure et conseillère en communication.

D'importants visiteurs à Orbicom

De l'UNESCO

Lors de sa visite, le 29 août 2002, M. Khan, assistant du directeur général pour l'information et la communication à l'UNESCO, a pris connaissance du plan d'action d'ORBICOM. Durant son séjour à Montréal M. Khan fut convié à la table du recteur de l'UQAM, M. Roch Denis, pour un repas qui réunissait les représentants d'ORBICOM et les principaux contributeurs canadiens au réseau (gouvernements du Canada, du Québec et Bell Canada). La journée s'acheva par une table ronde sur le thème du « E-learning » à laquelle des professeurs de l'UQAM et M. Robert Thivierge, chargé de l'innovation technologique pour le Conseil des Recteurs et des Principaux des Universités du Québec, ont participé.

Le développement des technologies de l'information et de la communication, qui constitue l'un des champs de compétences d'ORBICOM, est également une composante essentielle du programme de développement dont M. Khan se fait le porte-parole et, en particulier, tout ce qui relève de l'éducation à distance.

De Malaisie

Le 11 octobre 2002, Mme Rinalia Abdul Rahim directrice de l'exécutif du Global Knowledge Partnership, et son assistante Mme Kwan Liow ont rendu visite à l'équipe d'ORBICOM. Basé à Kuala Lumpur, le GKP est le réseau regroupant tous types d'organisations publiques et privées pour le développement des pays.

Les préoccupations d'ORBICOM en rapport avec la société de l'information concordent avec les objectifs ambitieux

du GKP. Développer et promouvoir le partage des savoirs et des compétences en communication par l'action concrète, faciliter et recommander les politiques globales de dialogue sur les TICS, en augmenter la disponibilité des informations et la connaissance, sont les moyens qui contribueront à améliorer la qualité de vie et à réduire la pauvreté dans le monde.

D'Australie

Le 24 octobre 2002, le Secrétariat international d'ORBICOM recevait dans ses locaux M. Tom O'Regan titulaire de la nouvelle Chaire australienne à l'Université Griffith dans l'état du Queensland. M. O'Regan est professeur et également directeur du Centre australien pour la Culture et les Politiques médiatiques, qui axe ses recherches sur le développement de la convergence des médias en Australie.

Claude-Yves Charron, secrétaire général, ainsi que Pierre Giguère, ont discuté des projets du nouveau titulaire et des grandes réalisations qu'entend mener à bien M. O'Regan tout au long de son mandat, soient les objectifs culturels et sociaux à atteindre, les enjeux critiques à dépasser, les pratiques créatives à instituer, les stratégies à explorer. Le développement et la gestion des médias sont la clé de voûte avérée de la société de l'information.

Stéphanie Bazot

Communication and Information Ethics

by Ila Joshi sureg@icenet.net



The discussion on ethics started in context with print media way back in seventies. In most countries where newspapers have been published for over a hundred years, there was no formal code of ethics, but only a legal framework.

After World War II in Britain, the Royal Commission on the Press (1947-49) insisted upon formulating a code of ethics on those who were jointly engaged in the profession of journalism. At the same time in US Commission on the freedom of the Press published a study on 'A Free and Responsible Press in 1947. In 1948, United Nations General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) brought into focus the dimension of human rights and their duties.

Full text on Orbicom's Web site.

World Bank's InfoDev Symposium

9-10 December 2002
Hong Kong, China (by invitation)
www.infodev.org

Première réunion de la Haute Commission sur l'éducation de l'Afghanistan

17 au 21 décembre 2002
Salle XI, Paris
<http://www.unesco.org>

Conférence internationale sur l'enseignement secondaire

21 au 23 décembre 2002
Mascate, Sultanat d'Oman
<http://www.unesco.org>

WSIS Asian Regional Conference

13-15 January 2003
New Takanawa, Tokyo, Japan
<http://www.wsis-japan.jp>

WSIS Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference

29-31 January 2003
Bávaro, Dominican Republic
<http://www.indotel.org.do/wsis>

Premio Nuevo Periodismo CEMEX-FNPI

Internet, Radio y Televisión
7 de febrero de 2003
<http://www.nuevoperiodismo.org>

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

10-12 December 2003
Geneva, Switzerland
www.itu.int/wsis

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