



ORBICOM FORUM



Digital Review of Asia Pacific to Address Governance and Economic Issues

Internet governance, digital inequalities, and economics of the services sector will be the focus of the 2005/2006 edition of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific. This was decided during a three-day meeting of the panel of authors held in Jakarta from 27-29 February 2004. The meeting was opened by His Excellency Mr. Ong Keng Yong, Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Secretary General of Orbicom and Vice-rector of UQAM, Dr. Claude-Yves Charron, chaired the meeting's general session. The ASEAN Foundation was the local host.

Two other crosscutting issues will also be addressed in depth by the next edition: the social and political impact of ICTs, and appropriate ICTs, open source, localisation, and internationalisation. These five themes were the focus of a one-day working session involving all the participating authors.

The next edition will also provide updated chapters on the 27 economies covered in the current publication. Iran and Maldives will be covered for the first time, bringing

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Photo caption: From left to right: Ms Maria Ng Lee Hoon, Senior Program Specialist IDRC, H.E. Mr. Ong Keng Yong, Secretary General ASEAN; Vice-rector Claude-Yves Charron, Secretary General of Orbicom; H.E. Prof. Dr Ruben Umaly, Executive Director, ASEAN Foundation; Mr. Pietro Sicuro, Director, Francophonie Institute of New Information Technologies; H.E. Mr. Wisber Loeis, Chairman ASEAN Foundation Board of Trustees.

the total number of economies reviewed to 29. The special regional chapter for the Pacific Islands will be expanded to cover 20 states and territories from the 14 currently reviewed. The 2005/2006 edition is therefore expected to review a total of 49 economies and territories.

The authors visited a telecentre established for street kids during their stay in Indonesia. They also had the privilege of holding a dialogue session with a group of senior Indonesian ICT experts on the state-of-application of the new technologies and Internet access in the country. The authors were highly impressed by their Indonesian colleagues' use of appropriate technologies and self-sustaining business models in the growth of a vibrant online community.

It is interesting to note that the first edition of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific has attracted positive comments

among the international stakeholders, especially at the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva from 10 - 12 December 2003, where several presentations of this pioneering work were made. The successful editorial process involving a panel of authors from within the region writing to a common template is a useful approach for reviewing and monitoring the information society. Requests for projects similar to the Digital Review, but covering other regions of the world, have been received at Orbicom from potential funding agencies. It is too soon to determine what may be done to respond to them, as publications of this kind imply a multi-stakeholder approach and the appointment of champions to lead the project to fruition.

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Habitar en la red

El hombre es un animal suspendido en las redes de significados que el mismo ha tejido"

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture*, 1973



¿Dónde vamos?

Lo he hecho varias veces. Recorro una pantalla, leo textos, muevo el ratón, clickeo varias veces, paso de una imagen a otra, "si acepto" y al cabo de una media hora, ladran mis perros porque alguien se acerca a la puerta. Tocan el timbre.

-¿Esta es la J3?

-Sí

-Está difícil encontrar la casa-. Y el personaje sonríe y entrega la pizza, o el video, o los remedios, o un refrigerador.

Y siempre me quedo pensando en esa sonrisa. El encuentra difícil encontrar una casa sin número. A mí me parece milagroso que él se materialice frente a mi puerta porque yo navegué con mi ratón.

El domingo 18 de enero de 2002 apareció en "La Tercera" un artículo sobre el fenómeno de los divorcios y separaciones de las parejas. El tema no es inusual. Pero lo raro era que el motivo de estas separaciones era que la pareja se había enamorado a través de internet, en el chat, de otra persona. El artículo "muy útil" entregaba datos sobre las conductas sospechosas que permiten detectar al infiel cibernauta.

No había ninguna pregunta –menos entonces un intento de explicación– sobre cómo podía ocurrir algo así. Cómo alguien puede sentir esa intensidad emocional por una secuencia de letras, ocasionalmente interrumpida por una fotografía, que aparece en su pantalla. Secuencia de letras que puede llegar a producir un orgasmo.

La pasión se desata en la red. Las acciones de las compañías tecnológicas caen. Fortunas rápidas, pobreza más velozes. Algunos alcanzaron a hacerse ricos y siguen profetizando con los ahorros. Entre tanto, mientras los gobiernos de América Latina preparaban los planes para fomentar el desarrollo tecnológico y aprovechar las oportunidades de la Nueva Economía, ésta ya se daba por muerta. Demasiado tarde. Las carreteras de la información fueron el gran tema de Al Gore, Vicepresidente de Clinton en la campaña presidencial de Estados Unidos en 1992.

Las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC) están en todas partes, modificando nuestro espacio cotidiano, nuestras opciones individuales y posibilidades colectivas. Pero la conversación sobre las TIC sigue siendo territorio de ingenieros y comisiones técnicas, de software y de hardware, de aceleración y de capacidad. Los niños conocen a sus amigos en un chat, no en la pichanga, pero el presidente y los gerentes no utilizan el e-mail. Con el uso de las TIC las empresas reinventan su negocio y la forma en que trabajan las personas, pero el director ejecutivo y el jefe de servicio dejan la decisión sobre la inversión tecnológica en manos de los "especialistas".

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Continuación en el sitio de Orbicom, sección "Crónicas"

Formula for Failure



Is There a Formula for Success?

The success of soap operas or the commercials themselves become obvious through different indicators. TRPs, number and type of sponsors, number of commercials, letters from the audience, animated drawing room discussions, etc. are some of the common formal and informal indicators. The development educational programmes can hardly be measured through any such indicators. Any such effort is fraught with danger because application of wrong parameters is very misleading.

Does it then mean that there is need to evolve a different set of criteria for the success or otherwise of a development and educational programme? It may appear so very obvious but it is forgotten very often than not. Popularity and catching of the eyeball is important for any programme but the appraisal of a development/educational programme (now onwards referred as "social communication" as a generic term) has to depend on a few additional set of criteria too. Also we must realise that having a set of parameters is quite different from having a formula for success. You may have many parameters to judge the success of communication, but there is no guarantee that the features have led to success in one case do not necessarily work for another. Just as there is no formula for success for commercial programmes there is no success formula for social communication programmes also. Paradoxically as it may seem, there is a lot for the social programmes to learn from the soap-operas, commercial feature films and commercial advertisements. The guiding principle should be to learn, repeat learn, from the commercial communication and then either to follow or inverse of what commercial programmes do. It will depend upon the specific situation as to whether I follow the commercial formula or inverse of it. Let us see some of the parameters vis-à-vis both types of communications.

1. Clarity of Goals

The commercial producer is very clear about the end result to be achieved. A box office hit, wholesome entertainment, thrills through suspense or fears are some of the very obvious goals, which are followed through to its logical conclusion. Unfortunately one cannot say this for the social communicator. That is why falling between the curriculum or enrichment stools or getting confused between providing information and analyzing the situation is very common in social communication.

2. End to End Approach

A company advertising a product not only ensures that the communication itself is packaged properly and it is effective in meeting the end results but also ensures that the product is readily available when it is needed. This facilitates easy change and easy acceptability. The social programmes are known for neglecting this important aspect. Communication often happens in isolation without due regard to other facilitating or hampering conditions. True that the social communicator may not have a product to sell but she/he has to 'sell' a concept, belief, idea and that is all the more reason why the other support conditions must be taken into account.

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Full text on Orbicom's Web site, "columns" section.



Orbicom at WSIS



Festivals, Presentations and Meetings

The Cyber-Festival of Local Content organized by Orbicom's President Alain Modoux in the context of the WSIS was opened on 8 December at Forum Meyrin by His Excellency Adama Samassekou (President of the WSIS Prepcoms), by President Jose Maria Figueres (CEO World Economic Forum and President of UN ICT Task Force) and by the Swiss Authorities. Secretary General Claude-Yves Charron and Ambassador in Residence Pierre Giguère chaired two of the sessions of the successful event. The Cyber-Festival attracted a good number of aboriginal people from all around the world. Dances and exhibitions added an exotic flavour to the serious debates.

It would be cumbersome to list all the workshops and panels in which the small team of the Secretariat took part. Claude-Yves, in particular, had to display a great sense of ubiquity - because of his multiple hats - in order to attend the Canadian delegation meetings (he was the representative of the academic component on the official Canadian delegation), the presentation of the Orbicom's projects and those in relation with distance education including the one of United Nations University (Japan). One event worth mentioning in particular was the *Forum on the Power of Networks* (networks associated to the Global Knowledge Partnership) where Claude-Yves Charron made impressive visual and oral presentations.

Monitoring the Digital Divide ...at WSIS

George Sciadas, Scientific Director of the DD Project, made two presentations of *Monitoring the Digital Divide ...and beyond* in Geneva.

The first one took place at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) among the community of international experts working on the measurement of the Information Society. George's second presentation was made at the Symposium of the InfoDev Programme of the World Bank. Other panelists were President Figueres, the President of Microsoft for Europe and the Middle-East and Professor Dutta of the INSEAD. George's PowerPoint presentation left an extremely good impression on the audience.

Monitoring the Digital Divide ...at APEC

The work was also successfully presented at the *Digital Divide @ APEC Telecom Working Group* in Hong Kong on 24-25 March. Mr. Pindar Wong, Chairman of VeriFi (Hong Kong) Limited, one of Asia's early commercial Internet pioneers, and Orbicom Associate member who contributes as author to the *Dir@P*, has graciously accepted to represent Orbicom and made a Powerpoint presentation creating awareness of Orbicom's work and interest in carrying some aspects of it forward among APEC stakeholders.

Visit of the UNESCO Evaluators to Orbicom



Mr. Richard Siaciwena, Distance Education Specialist from Zambia and working for the Government of Mozambique, Dr. Roch Denis, Rector of UQAM and Institutional Ex-officio Member of Orbicom, and Ms Vijayluxmi Bose, a Consultant from India.

ENGLISH : The visit to Orbicom's International Secretariat of the evaluators mandated to assess UNESCO's partnerships aimed at strengthening communication capacities through specialized networks such as Orbicom, AMIC and IAMCR took place in Montreal from 19 to 22 January 2004. The two evaluators appointed by UNESCO are: Ms Vijayluxmi Bose, a Consultant from India, and Mr. Richard Siaciwena, Distance Education Specialist from Zambia and working for the Government of Mozambique. They traveled to the cold of Canada to review Orbicom's affairs and the Canadian Chair's activities. They are requested to submit their report to UNESCO in the spring. They appear on the photo with Rector of Université du Québec à Montréal, Dr. Roch Denis.

ESPAÑOL : Del 19 al 22 de enero, el secretariado internacional de Orbicom recibió la visita de dos evaluadores designados por UNESCO para examinar el trabajo conjunto de dicho organismo internacional con tres redes especializadas, Orbicom, AMIC y AIERI. Los dos evaluadores mandatados por UNESCO son la Sra. Vijayluxmi Bose, consultora en India, y el señor Richard Siaciwena, especialista en educación

a distancia en Zambia, y funcionario de gobierno en Mozambique. Viajaron al invierno canadiense para revisar las actividades de Orbicom, y remitirán su informe a Unesco la primavera boreal. En la foto, aparecen en compañía de Dr. Roch Denis, rector de Université du Québec à Montréal.

FRANÇAIS : La visite des évaluateurs au Secrétariat international d'Orbicom dont le mandat est d'évaluer les partenariats pour renforcer les capacités dans le domaine de la communication entre l'UNESCO et trois réseaux spécialisés, Orbicom, AMIC et IAMCR a eu lieu du 19 au 22 janvier 2004. Les deux évaluateurs nommés par l'UNESCO sont : madame Vijayluxmi Bose, une consultante de l'Inde et monsieur Richard Siaciwena, spécialiste de l'éducation à distance de la Zambie à l'emploi du gouvernement de Mozambique. Ils ont voyagé dans le froid du Canada pour passer en revue les affaires d'Orbicom. Ils doivent remettre leur rapport à l'UNESCO ce printemps. Ils apparaissent sur la photo en compagnie du recteur de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, monsieur Roch Denis.

People & Events *Conferences*

IN MEMORIAM : Narantsetseg Baljin, an Orbicom Associate and a Digital Pioneer who Shaped the Future



Orbicom has lost a valued and respected associate member of the network, Narantsetseg Baljin, who passed away in Mongolia on 6 March 2004. Narantsetseg, Nara to all who knew her, was one of the rare visionaries working at the distant peripheries of the Internet who bravely embraced the new technologies and decided to make them the centre of her life. It was a life cut short but lived inspiringly well.

To many people outside her country, Nara was not only the representative of the Mongolian Internet but also of Mongolia itself. She was an immensely effective and impressive representation of both.

Nara was equally successful at home. She was awarded the "Best IT Researcher for 2003" by the ICT Stakeholders group, a recognition which moved her to tears. And on the day she died, the Mongolian Business Women's Association named her the "Best Business Lady".

Nara was in Jakarta, Indonesia, the week before, taking an active part in the meeting of the Panel of Authors of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific. She spoke passionately about the digital inequalities which existed and the importance of not under estimating the commitment required to close the digital divide.

This obituary is by the authors and publishers of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific originating from the Pacific Islands, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Bhutan, Cambodia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, India, Japan, Lao PDR, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Macau, Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

Full text on Orbicom's website.

James Archibald, an Orbicom Associate and McGill Academic, Named VP of the Association for Business Communication



Linda Beamer, President of the Association for Business Communication (ABC) and Director of the Honors Program in Communication and Marketing at California State University at Los Angeles (CSULA) is pleased to announce the election of James Archibald to the position of Vice President for the Canada region on the ABC Board of Directors.

ABC is an international organization committed to fostering excellence in business communication scholarship, research, education and practice. The membership of the ABC, like the field of business communication, is richly interdisciplinary, drawing members from such fields as management, marketing, speech communication, linguistics and information systems, to name only a few. Its membership also encompasses communication consultants and other business practitioners. Members hail from North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific Region.

A long-standing ABC member, Archibald has served on the Joint Modern Language Association of America (MLA)-ABC Committee since its inception and has participated in the ABC sessions at MLA from 1997, when he presented a paper on teaching professional writing in translation programs, to 2003, when he participated in the joint MLA/ABC panel on professional communication and globalization at the annual MLA meetings in San Diego, California. In addition to this, he has also been active in the activities of ABC's European Region. His research interests are in organizational communication, translation and language policy.

A graduate of McGill University, the Université de Montréal and the Université de Lille, and a member of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques, Dr. Archibald is the Director of Translation Studies at McGill University in Montréal, Québec. As a Regional Vice President, Archibald will be responsible for representing ABC members resident in Canada at all meetings of the Board.

VII FOLKCOM - Brazilian Conference on Folk Communication
13-15 May 2004
Lajeado, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
www.metodista.br/unesco

CommunicAsia 2004
15-18 June 2004
Singapore, Singapore
www.unilinkfairs.com/cp/communicasia04

REGIOCOM - IX International Colloquium on Communication for Regional Development
16-18 June 2004
São Caetano do Sul, São Paulo, Brazil
www.metodista.br/unesco

Société de l'information, Société du contrôle ? Évolutions de la critique de l'informatisation
30 juin, 1er et 2 juillet 2004
Paris, France
colloque@creis.sgdg.org

13th AMIC Annual Conference
1-3 July 2004
Bangkok, Thailand
<http://www.amic.org.sg>

IAMCR 2004 Conference
25-30 July 2004
Porto Alegre, Brazil
<http://www.pucrs.br/famecos/iamcr/textos/iamcr.htm>

Conférence de suivi du "Sommet mondial sur la société de l'information" sur le thème des médias dans le monde arabe et en Afrique
22-24 novembre 2004
Marrakech, Maroc
orbicom@uqam.ca

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