IGF 2017 Reporting Template

Session Title: Day Zero: Working Toward Universal Access: Educate, Engage and Empower

Date: 17 December 2017

Time: 9:00-13:00

Session Organizer: Karen McCabe, IEEE

Chair/Moderator: Karen McCabe, IEEE and Alex Wong, World Economic Forum

Rapporteur/Notetaker: Jim Wendorf, IEEE

List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:
- Vint Cerf, People Centered Internet
- Alex Wong, World Economic Forum
- Karen McCabe, IEEE
- Deepak Maheshwari, Symantec

Breakout group lead discussants:
- Community Networks: Roger Baig Vinas, Guifi.net
- Connectivity and Energy: Nilmini Rubin, Tetra Tech
- Digital Gender Divide: Ursula Wynhoven, ITU
- Digital Literacy Melissa Sassi, Microsoft
- Evidence-Based Research: Christopher Yoo, University of Pennsylvania
- New Models for Financing Connectivity: Eric White, WEF
- Public Access: Stephen Wyber, IFLA

Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):

Connectivity and Energy: Without energy (power) internet connectivity will not be sustainable; when addressing the connectivity and energy challenge different policies need to be analyzed that are good for expanding both internet and energy access; people working to extend internet service and people working to extend power sometimes do not realize their solutions are very similar.

Community Networks: The impact and opportunity around Community Networks were discussed from the perspective of how international organizations can help and in the context of how community networks can give back to international organizations as funding and business models are fundamental issues for the sustainability of community networks; when addressing issues of community networks we need to consider access vs affordability.

Digital Gender Divide: Many of the gender divide challenges are not necessarily just about the Internet or ICTs; often the issues are intertwined with other factors, including access to banking facilities and education; solutions need to be cross disciplinary within and across the ICT sector; when addressing issues, it is important to ask what do *wome*n need.

Digital Literacy: Challenges exist on what does digital literacy or being digital literate mean; there are personal level differences among people in urban and rural settings, differences among cultures and geographic regions; work on digital literacy and related definitions and indicators need to take these differences among others into consideration.

Evidence-Based Research: Research to date on internet inclusion projects raises the issue of barriers to unlocking investment; input from participants noted that is it critical to demonstrate to investors successful models; internet inclusion projects are too small for investors so we need to aggregate them into larger bundles; and it is important to cultivate local community interest and support for the Internet as a source of value vs a cost.

New Business Models for Financing Connectivity: More investment in connectivity initiatives need to be catalyzed; the discussion on this topic needs to address why the dominant models of network expansion by network operators and internet service providers tend to leave rural, remote, and marginalized communities out of service-coverage areas.

Public Access: Public access in all forms remains a highly cost-effective way of getting people online; placing public access points in institutions offering other services can make the access points more attractive, but also make it possible to give the support necessary to ensure that people are empowered to make use of the internet.

Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):

The Day Zero brought together seven global working groups working in the space of universal internet access. These groups included those working on digital literacy, public access, community networks, innovative and alternative business and investment models, energy and connectivity, evidenced-based research and digital equality and provide an opportunity for IGF participants to engage with them, and more so, to inspire open conversation, the generation of new ideas and increased multi-stakeholder collaboration to advance solutions for meaningful internet access.

The event opened with an interactive dialogue among the attendees with Vint Cert around the vision that in the year 2025 the world has arrived at Internet for all and addressing such aspects as what were the key milestones and developments that made this global achievement possible, and once there is universal access what's next. Vint noted that the most important facility that we can assure on the Internet is freedom of access to it, not only for the users and consumers but for people who produce consent and provide other services. It is very important that users and businesses have freedom to get access to the Internet, and have choice who provides that access. Vint further explained that is it very important that we retain the competitive opportunity for differential access. He noted the importance of working together to realize the vision, and that the insights from the Day Zero event may very well set us on a path to achieve the vision of Internet for All in 2025. The dialogue with the participants brought the following points to highlight:
- Not everyone may want to be connected (to the Internet), but even if they do not they have the choice.
- There are ways and steps we can take to erode some of the cost barriers for getting online.
- Communities can build access to the Internet if they are not able to get access from commercial carriers, therefore community networks have value and make sense but only if they are sustainable.

- It is important that we take into account if we truly want everyone to be online by 2025 what environment they will be facing when they do get online, and we do not want to solve challenges by inhibiting freedom of access to information.
- Cost of equipment and communications keeps coming down. Governments can improve the access situation through policies like the US eRate for education institutions and libraries.
- There needs to be change in spectrum management, namely the historic regulatory posture to assign or limit spectrum and its use; and we need to adopt as much open access to spectrum as possible.
- Energy for the Internet access is a prerequisite.
- In multistakeholder governance it is not the size of the stakeholder that matters, but the contribution and impact.

Post the interactive discussion, the session had breakout groups on the following topics:
- Community Networks
- Connectivity and Energy
- Digital Gender Divide
- Digital Literacy
- Evidence-Based Research
- New Models for Financing Connectivity
- Public Access

What extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?

At the session, there was a dedicated breakout group on the gender equality regarding Internet access, and through all the breakout group and plenary discussions, the issues of gender equality were integrated and discussed.

If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:
In addressing the gender equality and women's empowerment, the discussion brought to light that the divide goes beyond Internet and ICT access. The challenges include such factors as lack of identity documentation, lack of access to financial and banking means and institutions, lack of access to education facilities, lack of access to devices/tools (e.g. smart phones, tablets), social norms and culture, and literacy. There is a need to develop a development ecosystem that empowers women and has as its pillars: Internet access, mobile phone/device access, financial/bank access and health and education access. This creates an interconnected ecosystem that when the elements are working well together can begin to empower women and show tangible benefit of what women can produce/contribute to their communities. In short, there is a need for an innovative holistic approach and creative holistic solutions. It was noted that to begin to more deeply address these issues and factors that there is a need for better disaggregated gender data. A source referenced for addressing the gender issue was USAID's Digital Gender Toolkit.