

## In Brief

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### APEC: E-Governance a Defining Factor in Structural Reform

E-Governance is critical to the ability of an economy to improve government efficiency and transparency, an APEC Economic Committee workshop concluded at the annual forum in Lima, Peru. Committee Chair Professor Bob Buckle, stated “several economies have attempted to revitalize their public administration and make it more proactive, efficient, transparent and especially more service orientated. One of the most commonly employed tools used to accomplish this is introducing innovations in the way governments mobilize, display and utilize ICT.

Buckle continued: “Yet, while studies indicate that governments are moving forward in e-Government development around the world, progress is slow and often disparate. Within the APEC region, the differences between member economies rank among the top 35 of the world while others require further work to improve their readiness.”

The workshop considered the experience of several economies, including Chinese Taipei whose economy is ranked first in e-Governance for several years. Citizens benefit from online services from payment of tax to tuition to marriage registration. Business opportunities have been extended through the Internet and government offices are virtually paperless, reported the Minister of Research, Development and Evaluation. “In the future citizens will even be able to receive notices of outstanding fees – just like having a personal secretary. Apart from efficiency and timeliness, e-Government goes further an actually enables good governance by engaging the public and actually allows government to interact with citizens.

Also discussed at the meeting were e-Administration for Better Accountability, e-Services for Better Efficiency and Transparency, and e-Participation for Better Policy Making.

### ITU Establishes Global Cybersecurity Center in Malaysia

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA), will have its global headquarters in Cyberjaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. An agreement has been signed with the International Multilateral Partnership Against Cyber-Terrorism (IMPACT), for state-of-the-art facilities. The agreement is in line with the decision of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to build security and confidence in the use of ICT. The Summit also called for the coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation of information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices, and assistance in developing public/private partnerships.

The collaboration with ITU and IMPACT is aimed at building synergies to provide: (1) real-time analysis, aggregation and dissemination of global cyber threat information, (2) early warning system and emergency response to global cyber threats, and (3) training and skills development on the technical, legal and policy aspects of cybersecurity. The IMPACT center is being readied on a 7-acre estate near Kuala Lumpur with an infrastructure built over 58,000 square feet.

The GCA is an ITU framework for international cooperation for governments, international law enforcement authorities, the private sector, international organizations and civil society to make cyberspace more secure in an increasingly networked information society. The international effort is focused on strengthening five areas: (1) legal framework, (2) technical measures, (3) organizational structures, (4) capacity building, and (5) international cooperation.

While the GCA will be housed at the IMPACT Center, ITU will have a ‘virtual showcase’ in Geneva of the early warning system, crisis management and real-time analysis of global cyber threats. Other activities of GCA include training and skills development, se-

curity assurance, and international cooperation will be conducted under the auspices of GCA.

## Broadband Rapidly Expands in OECD Countries

The number of broadband subscribers in the OECD reached 251 million in mid-2008, an increase of 14% from June 2007, according to OECD statistics. This growth increased broadband penetration rates to 21.3 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, up from 20% in December 2007.

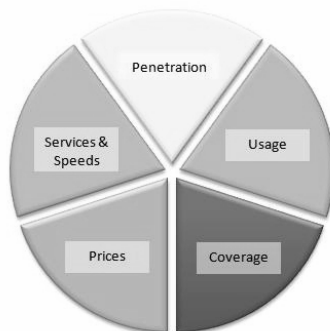
Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Sweden, Korea and Finland lead the OECD with broadband penetration well above the OECD average, each surpassing the 30 subscribers per 100 inhabitant threshold.

The strongest per-capita subscriber growth over the year was in Luxembourg and Germany. Each country added more than 5 subscribers per 100 inhabitants during the past year. On average, the OECD area increased 2.7 subscribers per 100 inhabitants over the year.

The United States is the largest broadband market in the OECD with 75 million subscribers. US broadband subscribers consistently represent 30% of all connections in the OECD.

This portal is directly accessible at <http://www.oecd.org/sti/ict/broadband>.

The OECD broadband portal provides access to a range of broadband-related statistics gathered by the OECD. Policy makers must examine a range of indicators which reflect the status of individual broadband markets in the OECD. The OECD has identified five main categories which are important for assessing broadband markets.



## Consumer Buying Patterns Move Into Online Purchases Using Mobile

The results of a recent study indicate a shift in consumers buying patterns – from traditional retail and catalog shopping, to purchasing goods online and with mobile devices. Some 40% of participants in the research conducted by JJ CoHosting concludes that Internet and mobile shopping have now replaced other shopping means, confirming an emerging trend that mobile devices are becoming the new storefront. According to the survey, 60% of respondents planned to spend up to \$200.00 on goods and services via mobile devices online during the 2008 Christmas season, compared to 45% who will purchase the same amount in retail stores.

In order to tap into this new source of revenue, it will be necessary for vendors to get their products ready for the mobile experience and to make sure that users, with their best available mobile functions, can complete a transaction on the site. Mobile sites are an extension of existing company offerings but can stand alone as well. The mobile sites can be sourced from the same database presently in use to make their management easy.

There are many different mobile devices, the report notes, and today there is not a true standard. With this in mind, mobile shopping sites need to meet the restrictions and limitations of different mobile devices. The real task is to make the site user friendly for the mobile user and at the same time create a site that still inspires them to purchase.

There are continuing concerns, however over the security of mobile e-Commerce. Legislation was adopted by the U.S. Congress in 2008 to address some of the major concerns in the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce. American companies are collaborating to push a public key infrastructure solution to financial institutions. The E-Sign Act became effective in October 2008 states that electronic financial transactions between a consumer and a merchant – typically a content provider – will be legally bound with digital signatures. Digital signature signatures authenticate users that enter into contractual agreements via electronic means, through wired devices of Internet-enabled wireless devices.

## Charting the Direction of Indonesia's Government ICT Strategy

“Currently, ICT is on the top of the agenda for the Indonesian government. Technology can serve as a critical enabler for poverty reduction, and for the achievement of our Millennium Development Goals,” according to Kemal Stamboel, Vice Chairman, Executive Team, Indonesia National ICT Council. The following are his comments made in a recent interview: “ICT has the potential to create earning opportunities and jobs for the country, improve the delivery of and access to basic services in healthcare and education, facilitate information sharing and knowledge creation, and increase the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of government, business and civil society.

“Our strategic intent is to focus on ICT Development Roadmaps such as the Palapa Ring Fiber Optic Domestic Backbone Project, e-Procurement implementation, National Single Window, e-Education Implementation, National Identification Number (NIN), Affordable Computer, Legal Software Implementation and Internet Socialization Campaign.

“But we cannot deliver these through our own efforts. The government hopes to see more of the private sector involved in the development of ICT in Indonesia. The private sector is the key to sustainable growth and the Indonesian government is highly committed to protecting the interests of good-willing investors, and to facilitate mutual business-to-business arrangements in order to develop critical entry point and to develop profitable business cases.

“We want to realize mutually beneficial ICT initiatives for the businesses and population at large. I understand that the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is neither an industry-led nor a government-led initiative, it is a mechanism whereby all stakeholders can have a voice and contribute throughout all stages of the policy-making process as well as in implementation and evaluation.

“The effectiveness of ICT in a society can only be attained if there are skilled human resources available to use the technology. With this in mind, human resource development with respect to citizens' capabilities of using ICT is a crucial component in the effective integration of ICT into society.

“Through our ICT Policy, the government seeks to build an ICT-driven nation revolving around the idea

of a knowledge-based society. I firmly believe that the ICT Policy will allow the development of ICT infrastructure hence improving citizen's access to information.

“This access to information, whatever its source, will be a critical springboard to develop human resources with ICT knowledge, thus boosting the economy of our country, organizations, and families.

“With the increasing need for inspired and inspiring employees and leaders, and the constant demand to be innovative, cutting-edge and different, it is obvious that the arts and business partnerships are here to stay. The future holds many exciting examples that will prove that two can work together not only to further each other's goals but also for the benefit of society at large.

“Policies and regulations change very quickly. It is therefore important for foreign companies to keep themselves updated. Last year's knowledge might not be valid this year. It is also important to have connections with those who know the systems and are capable of speeding up the process.

“Public and private sectors may explore several models such as government-to-government, industry-to-industry, and government-to-industry partnerships for developing the ICT industry. The government will provide full support to encourage the process.” Source: [www.futuregov.net](http://www.futuregov.net).

## APEC Makes Progress on Regional Economic Integration

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) trade officials meeting in Lima, Peru during November, 2008 considered a forward work plan for 2009 which will help promote regional economic integration. Apart from examining the options and long-term prospects for a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), trade officials considered steps to take so that they can achieve meaningful progress on regional economic integration.

The proposals included plans for opening up trade and improving investment regimes. Laying out its objectives for 2009 the committee on Trade and Investment seeks to make progress on directions that were set out in the Minister's Responses for Trade when they met earlier in 2008. “There are challenges as well as

benefits to negotiating large scale agreements. Work on regional economic integration is underway,” said Elizabeth Cheiliah, Chair of the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment. “We have been conducting analyses of the provisions in the free trade agreements in light of a better understanding of the areas of convergence and divergences in response to business concerns over the FTA spaghetti bowl.”

“We have come to understand that there are differing interpretations for rules of origin. Sometimes these measures unnecessarily protect domestic industries from foreign competition. Examining on a sectoral basis these preferential rules of origin will allow us to seek common approaches within APEC. In addition, recognizing how domestic policies impact trade, we have begun work on investment with the implementation of the Investment Facilitation Action Plan which was endorsed by trade ministers.

“Huge benefits can accrue to producers and consumers by encouraging efficient trade logistics. Through a policy dialogue in 2009 we will better understand the economic rationalization and welfare gains that result from land, air and sea connections. While progress was well received by the business community, they asked that APEC officials continue to focus on addressing practical concerns that could improve global commerce.

The APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) reiterated the belief that the FTAAP represents a practical means to converge the various trade agreements that already exist in the region. A regional agreement would advance trade and investment liberalization, helping APEC economies to achieve their long-standing goal for lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers,” according to Mr. Juan Francisco Raffo, chair of ABAC.

He continued, “we urge APEC officials to simplify processes so that doing business in the region is easier. In particular, emphasis should be placed on improving transparency in investment rules and decision-making. We are pleased the model measures developed by the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment, reflects these concerns.

## East African Community (EAC) Members to Draft ICT Policy

Member states of the East African Community (EAC) have resolved to come up with a harmonized

Information Communication Technology (ICT) policy to promote regional integration to yield effective business investment opportunities. Participants at the EAC National Workshop for ICT Policy review in Nairobi understood it is important to prepare a common policy for its members: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

“ICT Permanent Secretary Dr. Bitange Ndemo in an opening statement said the community was looking towards deepening political, social, economic and cultural integration in order to improve quality of life of people through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investment. “As you already know we have made a lot of progress towards integration of Customs Union in East Africa and our aim when we bring the five particular countries together is to establish a common market of at least 120 million people.” The Permanent Secretary continued, “Once the policy becomes synchronized East Africa residents would enjoy the benefits of sending data across the borders without hitches, as the ultimate outcome of policy would ensure a level playing field for member countries. As the stakeholders discuss on the harmonization of the policy they needed to focus on issues such as market structures and regulations effects a single market on consumers, political, economic and social considerations, institutional arrangements and prioritization areas.”

Kenya’s Policy Review Framework, he said “was centered on the importance of ICT policy environment, interconnection costs, innovative technology and Finance. Open access, ICT and violence against women, participation in the international bodies and ICT, and the environment (E-waste).” Ndemo announced that the ICT Bill already has been published, was currently under review, and told the EAC stakeholders that the parliamentary committee on Information and Communication would invite them to discuss the bill in the next three weeks. The bill covers e-Transactions and broadcasting with a broadcasting law that would lead to proper regulation of radio and television content. A Freedom of Information Bill also has reached advanced stages while the Government was also working on a new bill on Data Protection not covered by the ICT bill. It was pointed out that even though the region has witnessed growth of the mobile industry there was still limited improvement in broadband networks thus killing opportunities for development. It was stated that “universal access to ICT networks and services as an indicator is still far from being a reality.”

## ASEAN Innovation Center Formed in Singapore to Facilitate Data Storage

An ASEAN innovation center has been formed in Singapore to facilitate the development of data storage and management in the region. The estimated US\$1.5 million center is launched by NetApp in partnership with the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA). It is designed as a showcase center for partners and customers from ASEAN to test applications from Microsoft, Oracle and Symantec on the latest storage technology infrastructure. IDA expects the center to promote strategic and partnerships between Singapore companies and other multinational corporations. Enterprises in the region are estimated to spend US\$13.4 billion on IT services. More than 40% is expected to be used for data storage and management solutions.

## Creating Information Societies in Latin America with Young Men and Women

“It is essential to create, together with young men and women, ways of inhabiting the information society in Latin America,” so believes Gloria Bonder, Coordinator, Regional UNESCO Chair, Science and Technology in Latin America. “Since the early spread of ‘new’ information and communication technologies, it has become almost cliché to suggest that youth are key actors for the creation of the digital revolution. Youth are portrayed as the protagonists and the motivating force for ICTs promise: innovation, constant creativity, and ultimately, global economic and social progress.”

“Digital natives and the ‘e-generation’ are both terms that create the perception that youth is a relatively homogenous group and ignore the huge internal differences within the group. From the perspective of many older adults, youth are endowed with capabilities that seem unattainable for most adults. Today’s ‘digital immigrants’ are struggling to manage these tools.

Several discourses attest to the strength of this social imagery, from fictional and futurist discourses, to the

media, the academy and even our daily language. If inclusion is the main goal, it is young men and to a lesser degree young women, who are the target of policies and programs. In Latin America, the gap among youth from different socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds have encouraged the development of a series of educational programs. Formal and informal educational projects seek primarily – and in some cases exclusively – to increase young people’s access to computers and connectivity, while providing basic capacities for ICTs use. Large economic and human/social resources investments have been made in the region to achieve this goal. However, there are few assessments describing how the projects were planned and what their impact was on the lives of Latin American youth in terms of better economic and employment opportunities, increase social capital, broadening of networks and creation of knowledge.

By lacking appropriate tools to assess progress’ success, we run the risk of wasting our resources, and potentially frustrating young people’s expectations and those of the institutions that address their concerns. The author led a project that included the creation of a database on youth and ICT programs in Latin America, and an in-depth study of 12 ongoing or recently completed programs. She has prepared an article on Gender Equity in Latin American Youth’s Access To and Use of Internet Applied Research containing the perspectives of implicit representations and meanings that have supported programs implemented in 4 Latin American countries aimed at developing technological literacy for underprivileged youth. Source: the monthly magazine of ICT4D August 2008 [www.i4donline.net](http://www.i4donline.net).

## Council of Europe Opens Data Protection Treaty to Non-European Countries

The Council of Europe Convention on Data Protection, for the first time since it was opened for signature in 1981, is inviting non-European countries with data protection laws to sign and ratify it. The Convention’s Consultative Committee recommended “that non-member states, with data protection legislation in accordance with Convention 108, should be allowed to accede to the Convention and it “invited the Committee of Ministers to take note of this recommendation and

to consider any subsequent accession requests accordingly.” The Committee of Ministers on July 2, 2008 “agreed to examine any accession request in the light of this recommendation” and instructed the Secretariat to disseminate information about the Convention.

## Citizen-Centered e-Government Presumes Knowing What Citizens Want

The promise of E-Government and a range of other E-s is to engage citizenry in government in a user-

centered manner, but also to develop quality government services and delivery systems that are efficient and effective. This was the theme of the ACM International Conference on Digital Government Research held in Montreal, <http://portal.acm.org> Speakers pointed out that user-centered e-Government suggests that governments will gain economies of scale, reduce costs, and provide technology-enabled user services. The extent to which these goals of e-Government are mutually exclusive is an issue that requires additional study, particularly research that focuses on the relationship between citizen-centered e-Government services and the attainment of cost savings. A key issue is that citizen-centered e-Government implies that governments know what citizens want from e-Government, want to meet citizen expectations and needs, and actively seek to discover what citizens want from e-Government.