



Technology at the forefront of innovation, but not without risk

Technology is at the forefront of bringing innovative practices to sectors such as agriculture, health and education.

Today, people will testify to the fact that communication and the exchange of information have become fast and easy through the internet gateway.

Without a doubt, technology is giving people a chance to share opportunities and exchange ideas and communicate online effortlessly and in the comfort of their own locations.

When it comes to development work in the Pacific region, collaborative efforts between organisations such as the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) have resulted in successful use of technology.

In recent years, the increasing use of social networking tools has also had a positive impact on the development work of these organisations.

» cont'd on pg 3

Contents

<i>Technology at the forefront of innovation, but not without risk.....</i>	1
<i>From PICTO.....</i>	2
<i>Marshall Islands Parliament embraces ICT for development.....</i>	4
<i>SPC Niue workshops emphasise importance of ICT in development... </i>	5
<i>Japan-Pacific ICT Centre Multi-Purpose Theatre opened at USP.....</i>	6
<i>News from the region.....</i>	7
<i>Bank of South Pacific donates 1000 laptops to Pacific children.....</i>	8

From PICTO

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Social networking or 'using ICT to socialise' is taking the Pacific by storm and the number of users in Pacific is growing rapidly. A lot of internet users use the internet primarily for 'Facebooking' i.e. using Facebook. There are some big organisations in the region that attribute a third or more of their internet usage to staff accessing Facebook. This can be a good investment of company resources or purely a waste of resources.

Let's look at this in more depth. The view of most critiques on staff using Facebook during work hours is that staff are wasting resources (bandwidth and staff time) by spending too much time on it. Proponents of social networking use, and not just Facebook, advocate that educating users is the best way forward. And they also question why these organisations want to ban staff from using social networking tools when their own websites are using Facebook and twitter etc to disseminate information and to get feedback. I believe that workshops such as the one conducted jointly by SPC and Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) would help answer some of these questions and even better prepare policy makers and users to exploit the benefits of social networking while understanding the challenges that it brings.

In the last few editions, we discussed a number of initiatives and events that looked at how ICT can address some of the challenges that we face in the Pacific. The Japan Pacific ICT Centre at the University of the South Pacific (USP) can assist in providing much needed research on how ICT can do just that. The centre can also provide a centralised facility that can enable us to capture

some of the work that USP has been doing in ICT. There is an opportunity here to collaborate and share online ICT resources available from other Pacific initiatives such as the European Union-funded e-Pacific Island Countries portal (www.e-pic.info or www.pacificict.info) or the World Bank-funded Pacific Islands ICT Regulatory Resource Centre (www.pirrc.org).

Last but not the least; we need ICT champions if we are to effectively utilise ICT to support development of Pacific countries. I believe it is important to continue engaging with legislators and government policy makers to empower them so that they become our 'ICT champions'. This is why it is important to conduct briefings and workshops with these key stakeholders as SPC did in Niue and the Republic of Marshall Islands. Without their buy-in and support, the Pacific would not be fully utilising ICT to improve their communities' livelihoods any time soon.

If you are interested in previous *e-Talanoa* editions, check out http://www.e-pic.info/en/component/docman/cat_view/128-newsletter

And if you have any questions, feedback or stories that you want to share with us, please contact us at edd@spc.int.

Our next edition, *e-Talanoa* 8, will focus on the activities and deliverables of the EU-funded ACP ICT Access for the Poor project that supports Pacific parliaments.

Malo 'aupito



Upcoming events



Octopus Conference - Cooperation against Cybercrime | 6-8 June 2012 | Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France



ICANN 44 | Prague | 24-29 June 2012



PacNOG 11 Educational workshop & training for IP-ISP network operators | 1-6 July 2012 | Sofitel, Denarau, Nadi, Fiji



5th Policy and Regulation Forum for Pacific | 23-25 July | Nadi, Fiji



Pacific Broadband Forum 2012 | 26-28 July | Nadi, Fiji



e-Talanoa

The name of the newsletter 'e-talanoa' came from merging the word 'talanoa', which largely means talking / communicating / sharing in most Pacific languages, with 'e' denoting electronic. E-talanoa encapsulates the convergence of the traditional and the modern means of communication and sharing of ideas and news.

» *cont'd from pg 1*



Participants at the SPC Web 2.0 workshop held in Suva, Fiji, December 2011

In 2011, SPC, in collaboration with CTA, organised a web 2.0 learning opportunity workshop for development organizations and government departments in Fiji. The workshop introduced online social interaction and share tools such as facebook, twitter, google docs, blogs, and wikis and showed the participants how these could be used in their workplace to create innovative ways to disseminate information and allow stakeholders to communicate.

There is a down side. As we move towards the era of web 2.0, we are faced with increased cyber threats, privacy invasions, data loss and security risks, as well as viruses, cybercrime, child pornography, peer pressure, bullying and the risk associated with excessive use of social networking tools.

So how do designers and developers of websites and social networking tools make us less vulnerable to all these potential threats in our transition to web 2.0?

These are risks we all face, but some of us are more vulnerable than others. A nine-year old is probably not aware of the risk of using a simple video chat tool via facebook to communicate with people through his or her web camera.

How can the youths of today be protected?

They are active web 2.0 users, seeing it as an exciting new interface that makes communication and interaction easier

and faster. A new cultural phenomenon has emerged and very little attention is given to youths on the implications of bringing these new technologies into their homes or classrooms. All these issues have been extensively discussed in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), a multi-stakeholder forum for policy dialogue on issues of internet governance. They are well aware that these emerging tools pose security danger and privacy threats and as more and more people go on the internet, more risks and complications will arise.

SPC is working with a number of international organisations to address appropriate cybercrime policies and legislation. SPC is supporting its 22 Pacific member countries to strengthen their cybercrime legislation by building capacity to mitigate the risks that emerge from the use of internet and web 2.0 tools.

If we all work together, collaborate and form alliances, we will be able to reach our goal of making the internet a safer place for all internet users.

Article by Anju Mangal, Information & Knowledge Management Officer, SPC's Land Resources Division.

Marshall Islands Parliament embraces ICT for development

Adoption of ICT as a national priority in Pacific Island nations is critical to improving livelihoods of Pacific communities.

To achieve this goal, strong support is needed from parliamentarians to champion national efforts.

SPC's visit to the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) in February this year, which focused on providing assistance in this key area, was well received by the RMI Nitijela (Parliament).

'This ICT session for Marshall Islands Parliament and some follow-up meetings will definitely help raise the awareness and understanding of parliamentarians about the benefits of ICT and how ICT can help development in Marshall Islands,' said the Speaker, Hon. Donald F. Capelle, in his opening remarks at the Parliament ICT briefing.

The Speaker emphasised to members of parliament and senior government officials that RMI needs to fully utilise the opportunities provided by ICT to

achieve national development goals.

Apart from the briefing session, SPC staff also conducted an ICT training workshop for parliament staff to strengthen their capacity in the use of ICT.

The main purpose of the training was to impart key ICT knowledge and skills to address ICT skill gaps among staff. These gaps were identified through the ICT training needs assessment conducted by SPC prior to the training.

Another key task for the mission was to follow up on a number of regional priorities, such as the development of the RMI National ICT Plan, capacity building in ICT, and the cybercrime bill to criminalise the use of ICT for criminal purposes.

According to Mr Phil Phillip, Secretary of the Ministry of Transportation and Communication,



The RMI Speaker, Hon. Donald F. Capelle, delivering his opening remarks at the SPC Parliament ICT briefing

RMI is making progress in these initiatives with support from various stakeholders, including Nitijela and the National Telecommunications Authority.

The SPC team noted that the use of ICT in key sectors such as health and education, was also increasing. For example, implementing the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project, the Ministry of Education had purchased 1,100 low cost 'XO laptops' to assist school students.

The SPC mission to RMI, which took place from 14–18 February 2012, is a part of the European Union-funded project: ICT Access for the Poor: Improving access to ICT by informing and engaging Pacific ACP legislators.

The project is implemented by the SPC Economic Development Division's Pacific ICT Outreach Programme (PICTO).



Marshall Islands Parliament staff receive training from SPC

SPC Niue workshops emphasise importance of ICT in development

A SPC mission to Niue earlier this year focused on raising awareness among parliamentarians and senior government officials regarding the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in development.

These activities were deemed important and timely by Niue officials as the Niue government is in the process of developing its first national ICT policy.

The mission, which took place in early February, was jointly organised by the Niue Parliament, Telecom Niue and the SPC Economic Development Division's Pacific ICT Outreach (PICTO) Programme.

Led by PICTO Manager Siaosi Sovaleni, the mission commenced with a session for members of the Niue Parliament. The session focused on raising awareness among members on the importance of ICT as a tool for development, especially in addressing challenges in sectors that are key to national economic development, such as education, health and tourism. The session also covered key ICT issues such as cybercrime, social networking and cybersafety.

Honourable Speaker of the House Ahohiva Levi welcomed SPC's intervention to empower legislators in an area that is one of the key drivers of economic development.

A two-day workshop was also held for senior government officials in



Niue Parliament members and staff and SPC staff at the ICT training in Niue

Niue that emphasised the significance of ICT in achieving development goals. The workshop was opened by the Secretary to Government, Richard Hipa.

In his opening remarks, he said, 'this visit is relevant and timely for Niue as the country is currently developing its first national ICT policy. It is vital for senior government officials to share experiences and collaborate in identifying the ICT priorities for Niue. More importantly, it is important to ensure that ICT policies and strategies are needs-based and feasible for Niue.'

The workshop discussed examples of ICT applications in key sectors of development, in particular poverty alleviation, agriculture, education, health,

gender, government and governance, and disaster and risk management. Attendees also discussed challenges in the effective application of ICT for development, especially in the Pacific.

The content of the workshop was based on the UNESCAP/APCICT (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific/ Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication

Technology for Development) flagship training programme called Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders. The programme has been widely endorsed in a number of countries in the Asia/Pacific region and has been translated to a number of languages.

Running in parallel to the workshop for senior officials was the ICT training for members and staff of the Niue Parliament. The training provided an opportunity for members and staff to bridge any gaps in their ICT knowledge and to enhance efficiency in their respective roles.

The SPC mission was a part of the European Union-funded project 'ICT Access for the Poor: Improving access to ICT by informing and engaging Pacific ACP Legislators'.



Niue Parliament staff undergoing ICT training in Niue

Japan-Pacific ICT Centre Multi-Purpose Theatre opened at USP

Students of the University of the South Pacific will now benefit from enhanced learning experience after a new state-of-the-art Multi Purpose Theatre was officially opened on 22 February 2012.

The new facility was opened by the Honorable Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama and the Japanese Ambassador to Fiji, His Excellency, Mr Yutaka Yoshizawa at the University's Laucala Campus in Suva.

The Multi Purpose Theatre worth JP¥ 857 million (approximately F\$18 million), was built as Phase II of the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre. It has a seating capacity of over 300 and is installed with stage equipments and video cameras.

Speaking at opening of the Multi Purpose Theatre, the Prime Minister said that the occasion was a reminder of Japan's long standing relationship with the Pacific.

In thanking the Government of Japan for its generosity and support, Honorable Commodore Josaia Bainimarama also acknowledged that the significant contribution made by Japan was at a time of global financial crisis, which was exacerbated by severe natural disasters and climate challenges.

While emphasizing the importance of using ICT, the Prime Minister applauded USP for taking a leading role in the region in this area. He explained that the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre at USP is an information and knowledge hub that will promote the development of knowledge societies and a 'centre of excellence' in ICT in the Pacific.

In his remarks, the Vice Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra thanked those present at the historic occasion, which he said "means so much to the University and the governments and people of



The Honorable Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama and the Japanese Ambassador to Fiji, His Excellency, Mr Yutaka Yoshizawa on tour of the new Multi Purpose Theatre followed by the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams

the Pacific Islands." He said that the Multi Purpose Theatre and the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre is an example of development assistance that will benefit the region. Professor Chandra also acknowledged the role of the Fiji Government in facilitating the ICT Centre project. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Prime Minister and his Government for their support and interest in USP.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, USP is working with the ministries in Fiji to support their efforts to fully leverage ICTs for all facets of Fiji's economy and society.

H.E. Mr Yutaka Yoshizawa said over the years, Japan has developed a very close partnership with USP and that a total of 70 million US dollars worth of Japanese assistance provided to build the Pacific-ICT Centre has brought the partnership to new heights. H.E. Mr Yoshizawa explained that the Multi

Purpose Theatre is expected to serve not only as an appropriate venue for a wide variety of important academic and other meetings but will also serve as an ideal venue for cultural events that would charm the people of Fiji and patrons from USP member countries.

The event also marked the opening of the international conference on ICT and Oceanian Cultures that was held at the Multi Purpose Theatre till 24 February. A photo and illustrative exhibition was also held at the Multi Purpose Theatre to show the state of recovery and reconstruction after the great east Japan earthquake in March last year.

Article by USP Marketing & Communications Office and Mr. Shinya Murakami, USP-JICA ICT Project.

Cook Islands telemedicine link seen as money saver

The New Zealand aid programme says the installation of video-conferencing equipment in Cook Islands hospitals connecting them with New Zealand specialists will be money well spent.

NZAID's Programme Manager in Rarotonga, Johnathan Rowe, said the Health Specialist Project will provide US\$1.2 million over the next three years.

Rowe says the video conferencing network will both train health workers

and provide consultation services for their patients.

The Cook Islands Ministry of Health said the network is to be extended to outer island hospitals over the next few years so all Cook Islanders will have access to assistance from New Zealand-based health specialists via live video link.

(Source: RNZI/PACNEWS)



Concerns in Guam over sexting and bullying by mobile phone

Sexting — the sending of sexually explicit or nude photos via mobile phone and cyber bullying — have become big issues for teenagers, parents and teachers alike in many countries.

In Guam it's becoming an increasing concern.

Laws there relating to sexting and cyber bullying have been amended in recent years, and teachers are finding that students are still unaware of the details and implications.

And so teachers and students are taking part in workshops that



are part of the program, "Play By the Rules".

(Source: Radio Australia/PACNEWS)

Mobile money transforming transactions in the Pacific

Cell phone users in Tonga can now use their mobile phones in much the same way as they can use a plastic banking card to pay for goods and services in shops; and they do not need a bank account to transfer and receive money from overseas.

The idea of using a special chip in cell phones with a prepaid account has allowed the service to expand rapidly to people in the developing world who do not have bank accounts, credit cards or bank cards. Tonga is among the first in the South Pacific to embrace the

latest technology that uses cell phones in shops.

Digicel Tonga launched its new service called "Beep & Go" this month (May), stating that its customers can pay for goods and services with a simple tap of their phone at more than 40 locations in the capital of Nuku'alofa. The system uses contactless payment technology to enable Tongans to use their mobiles to buy goods, make payments, deposit or withdraw cash instantly on their mobiles at local stores.



Digicel Pacific Head of Mobile Financial Services, Annie Smith believed that Digicel is transforming the way the people of Tonga transact and this sets a new standard for mobile payments globally.

For full article, click on <http://matangitonga.to/2012/05/18/mobile-money-transforming-transactions-pacific>

(Source: Matangitonga Online)

Bank of South Pacific donates 1000 laptops to Pacific children

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 17 April 2012 — As its first act in the new role of lead private sector partner for One-Laptop-Per-Child (OLPC) Oceania, BSP will donate educational computers to children in three OLPC project schools in Solomon Islands and Fiji.

In the coming months, BSP plans to provide more support for children in Papua New Guinea as it spearheads private sector support for OLPC. OLPC's Regional Director for Oceania, Mr Michael Hutak, thanked BSP for its generosity and welcomed the new partnership as a breakthrough for Pacific education.

"With BSP's strong corporate leadership in the Pacific, its large regional branch network and its strong commitment to community participation, we look forward to a long and effective partnership, not just to our ongoing mutual benefit but more importantly to the long-term advancement of Pacific education."

BSP Group Chief Executive Officer Mr Ian B Clyne said the new partnership was a perfect fit with the Bank's corporate social responsibility goals and would broaden the reach and impact of the BSP Children's Foundation, complementing programs such as BSP's widely-praised BSP School Kriket program. The partnership continues BSP's commitment to Pacific development and follows a recent FJ\$100,000 donation to emergency relief efforts following the devastating floods in Fiji.

As lead private sector partner, BSP will join the regional initiative OLPC Oceania, which is a coalition of national governments, educators, donor agencies, academia, the private sector, civil society and community organizers, all working to assist Pacific Island countries to establish the OLPC concept in schools. Mr Hutak said BSP will bring much needed private sector expertise and know-how to the Pacific initiative.

Currently, there are OLPC projects running in 10 Pacific countries, with approximately 10,000 laptops being used by children in 50 schools. Across the globe OLPC has distributed more than 2.4 million laptops to poor children



in 40 countries.

Some 200 laptops donated by BSP's Children's Foundation will be deployed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in the Solomon Islands in remote Marovo Lagoon, the site of the first Pacific OLPC project in 2008. The remaining 800 laptops will be distributed in two demonstration schools in Suva, Fiji, in partnership with the Government of Fiji and the University of the South Pacific. The schools will be where Fiji's teacher and technical training will occur. BSP plans to promote the establishment of similar demonstration schools in Port Moresby and will work with the PNG Government, the World Bank and other partners to scale up OLPC in PNG.

BSP has also agreed to facilitate the collection of public donations to OLPC Oceania projects both online and through its branch network.

Media contacts: Michael Hutak, Director, OLPC Oceania (email: oceania@laptop.org) and Julie Fraser, Head of Marketing & PR, BSP (email: jfraser@bsp.com.pg)



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