

ghNOG !!! (success)

The Honorable Minister, Pro Vice Chancellor, Internet Society Education, AfNOG Instructors, E0 Localization participants, partners from the technical community and the ghNOG organizers, It's always a pleasure for me to be back at U.C.C for knowledge exchange but more so to witness ghNOG emerge.

It is with honor that I introduce a section of the Internet technical community in Africa to you, with the ghNOG, Ghana's network operator group a necessary specialized community to sustain the deployment of Internet in Ghana. My appreciation of operator groups in development of Internet started in May 2000, when at a similar event in Cape Town, the African Network Operators Group (AfNOG) was born. As AfNOG celebrated its 10th anniversary in Cairo in May 2009, the role of NOGs has become even more apparent and important. The growth of the Internet network simply demanded more technical capacity of operators who had to coordinate and communicate better.

Although the Internet is a single performing system it is made up of several parts under different policy authorities determined by the individual network operators. Maintaining this singular Internet required coordination among operators thus communities of operators and technical professionals cooperating in support of their mutual success had become essential.

Honorable Minister, the Internet technical community through ghNOG will deliver: ghNIC domain name registry, ghCERT, GARnet, IXPs/Roots, W3C office, AfriNIC training office and many more. This particular community has been ignored in the past several years yet they are on the critical path to Internet growth.

This community is not about media/marketing communication, it's not about telecommunication either. This community is about computer to computer communication and is building the transport for media, telecommunications, and more. This community is often too busy to be noisy and often overshadowed by media and telecommunication interests. This is the community we must engage for Ghana to regain its presence in the global Internet

It was this community that in 1993 connected West Africa to the Internet and transferred knowledge to other countries in Africa. However, Ghana's Internet user penetration statistics has fallen below Africa's average in recent years. The extent of engagement of this community and the policy environment are key factors for success

Although there are many challenges facing local operators which will require re-balancing the policy framework to increase competition, we can leave that to a different forum. There is however one question that need be raised about the eReadiness of the Judiciary to handle IT related cases at IT speeds. The Internet pioneering company NCS had its assets seized in 2003 in a land dispute incident in which the NCA provided no public interest protection. That case is still in court for over 5 years which means that, at IT speeds, all the assets are destroyed and Ghana has been denied the badly needed growth and leadership.

The resolution of such knotty, unnecessary and undesirable disturbances in new vital industry would signal a renaissance of the Internetworking in Ghana, given the global stature of the founder of the company in the dispute

The Internet technical community is our only weapon to prevent the digital divide.

This ghNOG is a very good thing to happen in Ghana and you can count on AfNOG's support in your endeavors. AfNOG thanks the Ministry of Communication, ISOC, NSRC, UCC, ISOC GH, the organizers of the E0 localization workshop and the ghNOG meeting, instructors and participants

I wish you a successful meeting and ask that you become missionaries or revolutionaries who champion Internet development and selflessly serve their communities.

Ghana deserves an Internet renaissance

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