

I was going to call this presentation

Stock Take and Blue Print

but decided that this was
too pompous, too presumptuous and anyway
impossible in 10 minutes

so instead settled for

a more modest

”Some Lessons and Some Ideas”

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Lesson Plan

- Where we have come from
- Where we are
- Where we have to go and perhaps what we ought to be doing about it

We have come a long way

- Since the first Forum Leaders meeting nearly failed because the HF links of the 70's were not adequate to get all leaders at the one spot at the one time
- Since Grahame Davey (ITU) and Jimmy Wilkinson (PIFS) helped plan and install switches, VHF links and satellite links in the 80's
- Since David Holland (ITU) trained technicians at the UNDP Training center at Vatuwaga in the late 80's
- Since Henry Naisali (PIFS) knocked heads together at midnight that saw the PACT DAMA network become a regional reality in 1990
- Since Lindsay Sage (ITU) first did file transfers over the telephone network in the early 90's
- Since PIFS installed satellite dishes at Samoa and Tuvalu under EU funding in the same period
- Since we saw Planning Reports and Training course from PIFS
- Since Ed Durand (PIFS) gave Fiji the equipment that started the Internet in Fiji
- Since Stu and others created PITA out of the demise of PIFS role in the sector in the mid 90's

We have shifted

- From HF to VHF to satellites and cables
- From manual to automatic
- From analogue to digital
- From PSTN to IP platforms
- From connectivity to services
- From government to largely private sector operations

We have learned

- To adjust to the new technologies, the new commercial models, the new applications of these new technologies to create and use the new services
- To actually do things that make it happen whether it be establish PITA, reform our legislation and regulatory models or make investments that have the right public private mix
- To work together as region or sub region on matters where the benefits of collective action (club theory) are positive

We have seen the

- The Missing Link (Maitland) 80s
- The Pacific Link (Cutler) 90s
- The Communications Action Plan 1999-2002
- The PIIPP
- The Digital Strategy and Pacific Plan 2004
- The Wellington Declaration 2006 in the core ICT areas (indicators, policies, modest govt applications, assessments, seek assistance in HR, try bulk purchasing,)
- A host of more general or specific statements such as MDGs and leaders and ministerial mandates from computers in education to information management and connectivity in disasters and regional cables and satellites initiatives
- And, perhaps of most significance, the emergence of a raft of additional players, international, regional, government, non government and private

Lessons we have learned to

- Anticipate and accept the changing environment and the models needed to work in these environments
- But in the future we will have to manage
 - regional cable and satellite networks
 - community services such as VSAT with VoIP, community radios or GSM in a box
- Put the emphasis on the human dimension
- But in the future the scale will shift from the techno and vendor to the general public even students
- Work together where the synergies exist
- But in the future there may be real sacrifices of sovereignty called for
- Exploit the technology (web, DFL, the Internet itself) to manage the issues and develop the capacity
- But in the future these technologies will be the norm

But we still

- Have a growing divide
 - Particularly between town and rural access
 - Between have and have not
- And are unprepared for a digital future particularly
 - Governance including the Internet, of new commercial models eg for GSM in a box
 - Governance of convergence, broadband and the media
 - Governance of content –(Google, Text, Utube, and Facebooks), FOI and personal privacy and liberties
 - Governance of security in its broadest sense
- Have a long way to go in developing applications and their management to exploit the connectivity eg e-Government, mobile banking, uses in disaster management, OLPC and distance learning
- Have huge gaps in human capacity to plan and implement information societies
- In a deteriorating global economic environment

So we need to

- Create the environment that is friendly to new capital and create the environment that recognises that services are what can generate money
- Note that many of the services such as health, education and government involve equity and non commercial values and
- Understand that all countries (developed and developing) are faced with the equity issues in access and services
- That, particularly amongst the smaller states, regional approaches are essential if we want economies of scale but more generally, as we “share the Pacific” (oceans and air space), it makes sense to do many things from legislation and regulation to operations and applications together.

And we need

- Put more resources into and be cleverer in governing
- Allow more freedom and encourage applications to leverage the connectivity
- Start with the next generation when it comes to human capacity
- Learn to be more efficient as the world battles a prolonged recession

If I might humbly suggest

- It is time for a formal review of our strategy particularly to make it more inclusive and service/user orientated and that this should probably be a continuous process
- That perhaps we need a focal point or structure to take the Pacific forward, not only through the review but beyond, and hopefully led by USP and SPC and
- Hopefully, use the new technologies eg web based, to manage the new regional leadership and governance arrangements

Summary

- We can be proud of our past and
- We can look forward to receiving the benefits of Moore's Law well into the future
- We must strike the balance between over regulating the future and exposure to the risks involved in uncharted waters
- Increasingly it is a future dominated by interdependence and interconnectedness of
 - Nations
 - Operators and services
 - Ultimately –mankind
 - but at the same time one we will have less and less control over

Thank you!