The Way Forward

A Joint Presentation
By All
Internet Service Providers
In
The Gambia

Presented by
Simon P Abraham, Managing Director
Netpage Solutions

An Overview

An Overview

Full high speed Internet (FI) came to The Gambia late 1998. Before that a 9.6Kbit link named GAMNET operated by GAMTEL (The country TELCO) served as the main Internet system. Old, proprietary systems like Healtnet and Arpanet was also in use during the early 90's.

An Overview

In early 1997 Commit Enterprises Ltd. (a company owned by a couple of Norwegian brothers and a Gambian partner) started operating a reliable PoP mail UUZIP mailbag system (dial-up every 30 min.) until late 1998 when the World Bank/UNDP supported Gateway project were opened for private sector and individuals.

An Overview

The Gateway is a complete satellite system from GAMTEL's Satellite station in Abuko, The Gambia, to Teleglobe in Canada. The satellite link speed when introduced was 512Kbit with a 2MBit in-country line-speed with local access nodes in strategic towns.

In 2001 the **Satellite Link** speed was increased.

Internet Service Providers

Internet Service Providers

Since 1998, a number of ISPs came to light namely GAMTEL (www.gamtel.gm) and QaNet (www.qanet.gm) in 1998 and subsequently AIRTIP (www.airtip.gm) and Netpage (www.netpage.info).

Below is a brief description of what these ISPs have on offer:

Internet Service Providers

GAMTEL

GAMTEL is the country Telco and have access nodes in the major population centers around The Gambia. They provide standard PoP3 and TCP/IP access for single customers and corporation/organizations. They are also The Gambia Gateway operators as well as IP providers, line providers etc…

Internet Service Providers

Quantum

Quantum is a private sector ISP providing standard PoP3 and TCP/IP access for single customers and corporations/organizations using a link to the Internet backbone. QaNet also provides hosting facilities and Daily News on their web site.

Internet Service Providers

AIRTIP

AIRTIP is a private sector ISP offering standard PoP3 and TCP/IP access link to the backbone for single customers and corporations/organizations. They are connected to the country backbone. The ISP has a goal of enhancing the image of Africa to the world.

Internet Service Providers

NETPAGE

NETPAGE is a private sector ISP offering standard PoP3 and TCP/IP access link to the backbone for single customers and corporations/organizations. Netpage also provides a built-in antivirus solution as well as web-to-mobile phone message service namely WEB to SMS for their email services. The company provides hosting facilities as well and Daily News on their web site (www.gambianet.com and www.visitgambia.com).

Internet Service Providers

A number of organizations also have leased lines from the GAMTEL backbone providing internally Internet and email services, one of these organizations is the Medical Research Council.

Cyber Cafés

Cyber Cafés

Since 1998, The Gambia has seen a widespread introduction of the Internet and email services through cyber cafés.

QaNet initially introduced its first cyber cafés, successfully expanding them in to a chain. Netpage followed with its chain of cyber cafés together with GAMTEL and Airtip following too.

Cyber Cafés

Complimenting the already growing population of cyber cafés provided by ISPs, a large number of smaller cyber cafés were born at an incredible success rate. This proved the growing need of the Internet society in The Gambia.

Today, you will find business people, individuals, both young and old, members of the international community, rural and urban people, all visiting cyber cafés just to access the Internet and to read their emails.

The Need
For
Speed

The Need For Speed

There is a growing hunger for internet speed by the Internet community; this includes organizations, both small and big, office and private users.

The Need For Speed

File sizes have grown larger, emails are displacing the postal service, traffic is growing and speed is dropping rapidly. Web sites are becoming more graphically oriented; the introduction of flash macromedia and other web authoring tools are all producing larger web sites that demand speed as well. However, our Internet connection speeds are not increasing; dialup users face the burden of lengthy downloads daily, blaming their ISPs quite often.

The Need For Speed

ISPs will continue to demand faster leased lines to cater for the hunger of their users, and the Internet backbone regulators should look into providing **faster and more affordable** leased lines to ISPs.

There is an ever growing gap between The Gambia and the Developed world with regards to speed. The Gambian ISPs equipment are highly under utilized due to the nature of their bandwidth allocation.

The Need For Speed

Providing greater bandwidth to ISPs will introduce The Gambia to the world of quality, affordable, competitive Internet Hosting and data Banking Facilities around the world thereby creating a conducive environment for rapid economic expansion and foreign exchange generation for all parties concerned.

Conclusion

Conclusion

It is already evident that The Gambian community has responded positively to the advent of the Internet, although a thorough study is yet to be conducted.

Conclusion

The continued support of the Internet backbone providers and governments are continually sought since they act as an umbrella for any meaningful economic development.

Conclusion

The need for a faster and more reliable Internet infrastructure cannot be over emphasized.

Thank You.