

# Infotech TV Show: Disseminating ICT knowledge through media

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***Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find information upon it!*** ”

**Samuel Johnson**

## Background Information

The information revolution and the extraordinary increase in the spread of knowledge have given birth to a new era-one of knowledge and information which affects directly economic, social, cultural and political activities of all regions of the world, including Africa.

Governments worldwide have recognized the role that Information and Communication Technologies could play in socio-economic development. A number of countries especially those in the developed world and some in developing countries are putting in place policies and plans designed to transform their economies into an information and knowledge economy. Some of developing countries see ICTs and their deployment for socio-economic development as one area where they can quickly establish global dominance and reap tremendous payoff in terms of wealth creation and generation of high quality employment. On the other hand, some other countries regard the development and utilization of ICTs within their economy and society as a key component of their national vision to improve the quality of life, knowledge and international competitiveness.

The diffusion of ICT into Africa is at a snail's speed, on the top of that the gap between the ICT literate and illiterate people are huge; even though there are some improvements.

Consequently most African countries including Ethiopia have not been able to reap the abundant benefits of the global information society and the information economy in areas such as education, health, commerce, agriculture, rural development etc.

The existing situation in Ethiopia calls for a contribution that would support the national endeavour for the development of ICT which will contribute to the development of the country.

Though ICT's contribution to the development of the country is proven fact, the number of the ICT literate citizens able to apply the tools in their activities is minimal.

To boost the ICT literacy among targeted groups specifically and the citizens generally, it has believed that media as a knowledge transforming channel can play a greet role in creating, disseminating, sharing and raising the awareness about ICT and its usage.

It is based on this conviction that PHILMON PRESS private limited company in collaboration with Ethiopian Radio & Television Agency has launched a weekly TV show called Infotech.

This 40 minutes edutainment, magazine-style technology TV program aired on ETV 3 nationally and via Nilesat satellite globally, also in an interactive way through an online platform on Facebook fanpage, Youtube channel and its own website; is dedicated to helping Ethiopian audiences everywhere use and understand technology to simplify their lives, whether at home or at work.

The show features ICT related news, conversations with the most informative experts around, shows about computers, technology, mobile, the Internet, product reviews, tips and tricks, technical support and how-to demonstrations.

To make the audience feel conferrable with the content the show is presented in a jargon free, easy to understand edutainment format. Since audience engagement is vital the show has a question and answer quiz session at the end of each episode, so that the viewers of the show could stand to win a mobile or laptop every week using an SMS technology.

## Goal

Our goal is to participate in the processes of increasing the citizens' awareness of the uses of information communications technology in life and spreading digital culture to build a data-driven informed society.

## Mission

To be a task force in the vision for an ICT literate Ethiopian community, by contributing towards the making of an Information Based Society by the way of disseminating ICT knowledge.

## Target Groups

The target groups are the society as the whole with different levels of emphasis being given to the youth, women, ICT professionals, governmental and non-governmental institutions, private business and educational institutions.

## Priority

The TV show is designed with special consideration for the youth who can learn to apply these newly acquired skills by participating in the creation of an informed society. Another priority is assisting women who have organized themselves in various sectors - the expected benefit being opening up new avenues to their endeavours. These sections of the population are expected to deploy their newly acquired knowledge of ICT in to their day to day activities for their personal development which in turn will bring about awareness and development at the community and other levels.

## Timeframe

Launched on August 30-2011 the first phase of the project is going to stay on the air for five years till August 30-2016.

## Anticipated Outcomes

The project has measurable effects and the outcomes expected are:

- Great improvement in ICT awareness among the society
- Creation of active youth in the information and knowledge sharing (country wide)
- Creation of school ICT clubs, community leaders/entrepreneurs equipped with the tools of ICT
- Provide knowledge driven opportunities for underprivileged citizens

## Project's added value and importance

Education should be treated as a strategic agent for mindset transformation and for the creation of a well educated nation, sufficiently equipped with the knowledge needed to competently and competitively solve the development challenges which face the nation.

In this light, Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are central to competitive social and economic transformation.

It is a fact that, these technologies are a major driving force for the realization of development. They should be harnessed persistently in all sectors of the economy and should be put to benefit of all social groups with a view to enabling the meeting of basic needs of the people, increasing productivity and promoting competitiveness.

The new opportunities which the ICTs are opening up can be harnessed however, appropriate skills and capabilities would have to be put in place. This task demands that adequate investments are made to improve the quality of science based education and to create a knowledge society generally. In this regard, the society should be encouraged to learn continuously in order to upgrade and improve its capacity to respond to threats and to exploit every opportunity for its own betterment and for the improvement of its quality of life.

Thus, this TV show is adding value in an informal edutainment format in sharing, encouraging and inspiring its viewers to make significantly greater use of the technologies by promoting the use of ICT in to their day to day activities, thereby creating an emotional attachment with technology.

After all it is impossible to educate everybody about ICT in a formal way. And the superiority of television over the other medium is too high to hit the program's goal.

## Challenges

- This kind of show needs financial support from different stockholder. But the TV show is confronted with the lack of interest in major potential sponsors due to the wrong believe that shows similar to Infotech are not effective in attracting viewers; rather in our case the truth is the opposite.
- These days most of the urban dwellers and some citizens in the rural villages have a TV set at least around their neighbours but the shortage of electricity especially in the rural area is a big barrier.
- Even though our viewers are capable of understanding our content specially the crash courses on computers and internet; most of them they don't have access to computers and internet where they can practice the knowledge they acquire.

## Relevance of the project to the respective Action Line

As it is noted that in the WSIS Action Lines outlined in the Geneva Plan of Action, the media—in their various forms and with a diversity of ownership—as an actor, have an essential role in the development of the Information Society and are recognized as an important contributor to freedom of expression and plurality of information.

Thus, it is our believe that media as a knowledge transformation channel would play a significant role in the creation of an Information Society and the activities envisaged in this TV show project go in line with the WSIS Action Lines specially mentioned under categories number 9.

## Conclusion

The huge potential of mass media for influencing knowledge gain, public attitude and behaviour has been well recognized through several research studies. Different information tools like radio, television and news paper are spreading awareness related to ICT among the people at the faster rate than personal contact or formal educations.

The production and distribution of printed materials such as book, magazines, newspaper and brochure may help in transfer of new information and technologies whereas radio and television are the important tools for dissemination of quick information.

According to a recent research by Ethiopian Broadcast Authority, it was found that television and radio were the most preferred information tools among the citizens, but television is more preferred. Superiority of television over the other communication channels might be due to the ease of learning through the visual mass medium.

It has been observed that the modern mass media are flourishing now-a-days in our country but these are not performing the expected role among the people due to several reasons like higher illiteracy percentage, gender inequity, lack of electricity and new electronic media devices in rural and remote areas.

This TV show is trying to showcase the significance of the mass media in creating awareness and dissemination of ICT knowledge among our people.

Therefore, emphasis should be laid upon the proper utilization of information channels for dissemination of ICT related knowledge. ■

## **Fact Sheet**

**Launched date : August 30- 2011**

**Station : ETV3 ( also avialable via Nilesat Satelait for global audiance)**

**Transmission time: Every Sunday at 1:30 - 2:10 PM Ethiopian local time  
(New episodes)**

**(Re-run time)**

**Wednesday at 1:30 - 2:10 PM**

**and Friday 8:30 - 9:10 PM**

**Online addresses:**

**[www.facebook.com/infotechtvshow](http://www.facebook.com/infotechtvshow)**

**[www.youtube.com/infotechtvshow](http://www.youtube.com/infotechtvshow)**

**[www.infotechtvshow.com](http://www.infotechtvshow.com)**



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