Not long ago we witnessed a turning point when the Internet crossed the 1-billion-user threshold. That accomplishment is more than a testament to the technological savvy and foresight of the people who built the Internet; it is proof that the model of openness and collaboration that has come to define the Internet works. The Internet we enjoy today happened not because someone or some entity decided it; it happened because the engineers, the entrepreneurs, and the organizations at the grass roots were free to imagine and create it.

Preparing for the next billion users poses considerable technological, economic, and social challenges. That is why in 2008 the Internet Society made considerable efforts to promote IPv6 as the only viable option for dealing with the depletion of the IPv4 address pool. With IPv6, the Internet’s growth, stability, and openness can continue unimpeded. The Internet Society continued to build on the major initiatives that had been launched in the previous year—especially those that will help ensure that social networking sites and personal data-management tools, such as online banking, do not put a user’s privacy or identity at risk.

We further strengthened the Internet Society as a global organization by providing still more support for Chapters and by setting up a new Regional Bureau representing Latin America and the Caribbean. The Internet Society’s support for the Internet Engineering Task Force remained as strong as ever, and our engaging of policy makers around the world continued unabated. We have retained and attracted extraordinary talent and we are financially sound. Please take a moment to read more about those accomplishments on the following pages.

I offer my sincerest thanks to everyone who helped with our success in 2008: the staff; Organization and Individual Members; Chapters; and all of the countless volunteers and friends of the Internet Society. This is the last opportunity I will have to express my thanks from this position. After three gratifying and successful years, it is time to pass the baton to a new chairperson. I look forward to serving all of you as a trustee for another two years. The work we will continue together will not only mean a healthy future for the Internet; it will also ensure that the technologies we are promoting remain beneficial to our lives.

Thank you.

DK
The Internet Society maintained a solid financial position during 2008. Fiscal responsibility was melded with a drive to deliver on the organization’s mission and goals for the year.

Two thousand eight was a pivotal year for the Internet Society. We not only executed an ambitious organizational transformation; we also successfully delivered on our promise to expand and increase the organization’s influence in areas that present the most significant challenges to the Internet, such as public policy and governance, capacity building in underserved regions, and spurring the deployment of critically important new technologies or standards. We have never been better positioned or more enthusiastic to build on our mission.

Taken as a whole, our efforts this past year fall into one larger, critically important priority: preserving and protecting the open, collaborative, distributed, multistakeholder model that has defined the successful development of the Internet to date. As the organizational home of the Internet Engineering Task Force, we express our belief in that model every day. However, as the Internet becomes the primary tool for communicating, conducting business, and managing government activities, the pressure to manage, regulate, and control its development and use is mounting.

In response to those pressures, the Internet Society invested time and resources in 2008 to educating and informing policy and other decision makers throughout the world about the urgent need (1) to protect the Internet’s development model and (2) to keep the Internet unencumbered by excessive government or private controls on technologies, infrastructure, or content. Much of our success in those areas was the result of the Internet Society’s expanded efforts in the area of policy. Through those efforts, the Internet Society has had unprecedented effectiveness in engaging with international bodies. In 2008, the organization brought together a group from the Internet technical community to participate in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Ministerial Meeting on the Future of the Internet Economy in Seoul, South Korea.

Many of our other notable achievements this past year can be traced to progress made as part of our three key strategic initiatives: Enabling Access, InterNetWorks, and Trust and Identity. By leveraging the extraordinary talent and expertise of our entire staff, as well as those of our Members and Chapters, we have been able to cultivate robust relationships with partners in a wide range of communities, ranging from Internet operator groups to the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission of the Organization of American States.

Finally, I am happy to report that the Internet Society maintained a solid financial position during 2008. Fiscal responsibility combined with planned growth helped us navigate through the global economic downturn, making it possible for us to deliver on our mission and goals for the year while building additional reserves for the year to come. We were able to increase our engagement with and support of our Chapters, and we were able to expand our Organization Member base with new members from underrepresented geographic and business sectors.

As the Internet continues to grow and evolve, our focus remains on preserving the model of development that has made the Internet the platform for innovation that it is. We look forward to working together with our Members, Chapters, Trustees, and partners to fulfill our mission of an Internet for everyone, everywhere.