
The Year that Was

A report on the initiatives and activities of the Asia-Pacific Bureau for 2015

JANUARY 2016



Introduction

This report was put together to outline some of the key initiatives undertaken by the Internet Society's Asia-Pacific (APAC) Regional Bureau in 2015. While it is not meant to be an exhaustive record, we do hope that it provides you with a good overview of our activities in the region.

In addition to the Bureau's core programmes, our Chapters are also very active in their local communities and, as volunteer-led entities, do amazing work in helping to support and carry out the Internet Society's mission at the local level. We invite you to find out more about our Chapters at <http://www.internetsociety.org/who-we-are/chapters>

Regional Highlights

Asia-Pacific greeted 2015 with an even more fervent push to maximise the opportunities the Internet provides.

The region's economic giants ramped up their digital adoption schemes, with China announcing its Internet Plus strategy. This aims to invest in and leverage Internet technologies such as cloud computing, big data, and mobile, to transform traditional industries. The East Asian country, whose top three richest individuals all come from the Internet sector, is also seeing its Internet firms expand to new markets in the region, and new fields like motion picture production and the media.

India, meanwhile, is fast becoming a focal point for global Internet giants, which have made major investments in the country this year—from Google's new campus in Hyderabad to Facebook's announcement that it has thus far provided \$20 million in benefits to Indian developers as part of its FbStart programme. Indonesia also embarked on an infrastructure modernisation plan that will see it invest billions of dollars on its telecom and communications infrastructure, and Pakistan has stated that it will relax its policies on cross-border communications links, which could see it become a regional hub in the region.

Countries across the region are stepping up support for startups and local Internet firms: governments in Taiwan ROC and China, and domestic conglomerates in India and Indonesia have all set up multi million dollar venture funds for emerging tech businesses. Internet finance is on the rise in East Asia, with Japan, China and South Korea opening their first Internet banks, some aimed at providing more capital access to SMEs. There is also increasing activity around the Internet of Things, with many major manufacturers from carmakers to whitegoods manufacturers moving towards embedding connectivity into the machines, appliances and devices they make.

Amidst the sustained zeal to develop digital economies are new regulations that could present roadblocks to future innovation and growth. The sharing economy is showing its impact on traditional business models and the need for policymakers to be proactive and dynamic in what is a fast-changing environment. Ride-hailing apps, in particular, are being opposed by domestic taxi industries, and governments are responding through actions such as impounding vehicles used by the providers, fining drivers and filing tax violation charges against companies such as Uber and Didi. China has required them to set up servers on the mainland, and even the Philippines, which became the first country to legally allow Internet-based transport services, has halted the services' local expansion. Global Internet firms more broadly are facing more scrutiny, with India and South Korea starting anti-trust inquiries on the likes of Apple and Google, and Australia ruling that the latter is liable for the pages that it links. In Australia, the tax department has also been looking into tax returns filed by multinationals (with several technology companies on their radar) and their transfer pricing and other schemes used to pay reduced local tax.

With the rise of online trading comes data management and protection schemes, coupled with new ordinances against online scams and fraud. Both China, which recently surpassed the US as the world's largest e-commerce market, and Japan are rolling out e-IDs alongside tighter privacy laws while the Philippines works on an updated Consumer Act. Several countries are also looking into stronger anonymisation techniques as they move towards machine-to-machine connectivity and treatment of the data

that is generated. Online security and trust related issues continue to be highlighted across various sectors, and there remains a pressing need to for collaboration and cooperation at all levels.

Censorship and Internet freedom

China, which earlier in the year banned Virtual Private Networks and required citizens to use their real names in their online accounts, also introduced a new cyber security law, which legalizes existing surveillance and content blocking mechanisms and led to the set up of an 'Internet police force' to keep tabs on China's large websites and instant messaging platforms to monitor online behaviour. Similar and/or related legislation was also recently enacted in Bangladesh and Vietnam, and is under consideration in Cambodia, Malaysia, and Pakistan amongst others. Nauru implemented a ban on Facebook with other Pacific Island countries indicating they were also considering content filtering type legislation.

Arrests, convictions, and takedowns of content deemed to offend the state, government officials, or sow social discord persisted in a number of countries. Website blocking targeted media platforms like Wordpress and Vimeo, and YouTube remains banned in Pakistan. Internet blackouts were likewise carried out in several states across India throughout the year in response to local issues. The effects of Internet censorship are becoming more visible, with new studies suggesting that restrictions and vague legislation affect business confidence, especially foreign investment and can limit innovation, creativity and growth.

But 2015 also yielded a number of big triumphs for Internet freedom, thanks in no small part to end users making their voices heard online and offline. In India, after a long battle that pitted swaths of civil society and industry against the current administration, the Supreme Court struck down the controversial Section 66A of the IT Act, which had sought to punish anyone posting 'annoying' or 'offensive' content online – where these words were very vague in description. Similar protests forced the amendment of a national encryption policy that would order citizens to keep and make available a plaintext copy of all online communications to security agencies, and the network neutrality debate reached fever pitch in India.

Public outcry in Thailand, together with cyber attacks directed at state websites, also prompted the military government to retract its proposal to create a single gateway for all Internet traffic in and out of the Kingdom. We also saw greater use of the Internet and Social Media by governments and politicians in the region, including as a campaigning and election tool.

Narrowing the digital divide

The year also saw more assertive measures, by both governments and the private sector, to improve Internet penetration in Asia-Pacific. Both India and the Philippines are starting to make free Wi-Fi available in public spaces, and more advanced economies like Singapore are making headway in increasing Internet uptake among their remaining offline communities, particularly the elderly.

As Google prepares to roll out Project Loon in Indonesia, regulators in Thailand and Brunei are taking steps to reduce broadband subscription rates and encourage adoption. Investment in undersea optical cable systems also continue with new cable systems coming online during the year, and announcements for new systems to be deployed in the future. The rapid growth in data requires further capacity, and as more of these cable systems come online – and there is competition between transit providers – access costs also reduce. This passes on to the end user as reduced subscription rates.



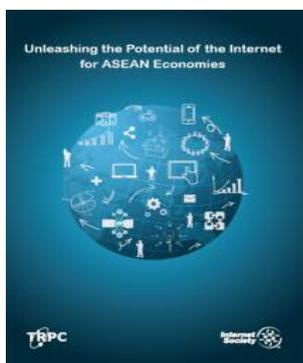
Across the region, young innovators are developing hardware and software to spread Internet use among marginalised sectors like farming communities and persons with disabilities, and NGOs continue working towards helping provide access and capacity building. As the availability of the Internet becomes mainstream and reaches maturity levels in various markets, it increasingly becomes an important tool for social action and change – and becomes a lifeline in many instances. This was seen following the devastating earthquake in Nepal where the Internet became a primary means of communication. The Internet remains critical as a tool to advocate for the rights of women and marginalised and minority communities, and examples of this was seen around the region through the year including in the Philippines, India, Nepal and the Pacific Islands.

But the drive to expand Internet access has also caused contention in emerging markets like India, where zero-rated packages, coupled with several attempts by operators to charge extra for over-the-top voice and messaging apps, has lit up a year-long debate on Net neutrality. A consultation paper released by the Regulator received more than a million comments in favor of content non-discrimination, while carriers argued for OTT licensing. The original paper was withdrawn but the debate continues unabated.

Internal Events

Report launch: Unleashing the Potential of the Internet for ASEAN Economies [23 March, Manila, Philippines]

<http://www.internetsociety.org/news/new-report-internet-society-outlines-steps-unleashing-potential-internet-se-asia>



Held at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, the Manila launch of the APAC Bureau's new study was a well-attended event, with more than invited 60 participants from various sectors, including senior officials from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Trade and Industry, the Asian Development Bank, Philippine ICT and Telecom firms, and print and online media. The launch, which was co-organised by the APAC Bureau and research firm TRPC, kicked off with opening remarks by DOST Undersecretary Louis Casambre, and a dialogue between APAC Bureau Regional Director Rajnesh Singh and TRPC Director Peter Lovelock on the study's key findings. Both agreed on the importance of rethinking traditional telecom models and considering new opportunities for growth. This extends to concepts like infrastructure sharing, both in the Philippine and the ASEAN context, which may be frowned upon by incumbents but is integral to maximising the value of the digital economy.

This was followed by a panel that looked at the positive impact of ICT development, particularly mobile penetration and data connectivity, on a country's global competitiveness. The ADB, which along with the ITU has launched ICTD initiatives in APAC, recommends enabling policies both on the supply and the demand side. This means fostering liberalisation of the telecoms market and investing in infrastructure, but also enhancing ICT skills development, broadband and end-user device affordability, and online content creation. To end the three-hour afternoon session, major carriers in the Philippines, PLDT and Globe Telecom, presented their initiatives to expand access in the country. The launch concluded with a networking cocktail.

Asia Internet Symposium [07 May, Seoul, Republic of Korea]

<http://www.internetsociety.org/events/asia-internet-symposium-seoul-2015>



Hosted by the ISOC Republic of Korea Chapter, the Asia Internet Symposium in Seoul discussed the policy and technology perspectives of the Internet of Things (IoT). Representatives from International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning, Industry, Academia, and the Internet Society shared views on the opportunities offered by IoT, and how to respond to related challenges of interoperability, user privacy, security, and further support for future innovation.

The discussions included IoT policy and the impact on society, and in particular the positive benefits it can bring. Speakers and panellists spoke of the dire need to build awareness among Internet users, specifically those in rural areas, many of whom may not have a very good grasp of privacy, security and the opportunities offered by the Internet.

ISOC-TRPC Forum on Rethinking the Digital Economy [21 May, Jakarta, Indonesia]

<http://www.internetsociety.org/blog/asia-pacific-bureau/2015/07/connecting-other-rising-Asian-titan-indonesia-internet-development>



This event was part of a series of regional events across the ASEAN region to showcase the ISOC study, “Unleashing the Potential of the Internet for ASEAN Economies.” This forum was organised in conjunction with TRPC’s annual forum, primarily focusing on the overall key findings for Indonesia and its development within the ASEAN context.

The roundtable focused on the progress Indonesia and ASEAN have made in advancing a vibrant and digitally integrated society and economy and discuss potential pathways for the region to usher in the digital economy. Over 40 invited participants drawn from policy makers, local and international industry leaders, research groups, the media, the ISOC Jakarta Chapter and the ASEAN Secretariat attended the event. Representatives from ICANN also presented their BCG Study that looks at infrastructure and information development pillars.

INET Colombo [08-09 June, Colombo, Sri Lanka]
<http://www.internetsociety.org/inet-colombo>



Heralded as one the biggest ICT events in Sri Lanka, the Internet Society's INET Colombo conference marked the 20th anniversary of the Internet in Sri Lanka. The conference opening ceremony recognised 25 leaders who contributed to the early development of the Internet in Sri Lanka, inviting stories and experiences from those who helped build the early Internet with many fond memories being shared.

The event attracted over 1000 participants. Of these, some 200 were on-site and the other 800 were spread across 7 remote hubs around Sri Lanka. The power of the Internet was used to its fullest potential to bring the event live to participants in Jaffna, Peradeniya, Oluvil, Kelaniya, Colombo (second location), Sri Jayawardenapura, and Moratuwa.

INET Colombo had several foreign speakers and a dozen local Internet experts and pioneers, who addressed four main areas: Internet Development; History, Evolution and Growth of Internet and IT; Opportunities and Issues in Internet Governance; and Promising a Better Future, Building the Environment.

Asia-Pacific Bureau @ Intercommunity 2015 [08 July Auckland, Manila, Bangalore and Hong Kong]



InterCommunity 2015, Internet Society's first virtual meeting that brought together our global community, was designed to celebrate the Internet's ability to rise beyond boundaries and bring people together. With attendees from more than 141 countries, and 15 Regional Nodes, it truly was a global meeting of the Internet Society, on the Internet, for the Internet.

The Asia-Pacific Bureau led four nodes during InterCommunity 2015, each representative of a sub-region: The main global hub Auckland (Oceania) and interactive nodes in Bangalore (South Asia), Hong Kong (East Asia) and Manila (Southeast Asia). In addition to these, there were multiple viewing nodes set up in Sri Lanka and Malaysia. These interactive nodes held roundtable discussions on a specific topic of local relevance prior to the crossover to the main hub in Auckland. More information on InterCommunity 2015 is available here: <https://www.internetsociety.org/intercommunity2015/home>

Asia Internet Symposium [03 August, Bangkok, Thailand]

<http://www.internetsociety.org/events/asia-internet-symposium-bangkok-2015>



Asia Internet Symposium Bangkok, focused on Over-The-Top (OTT) Services and its current and future implications on the ICT and telecommunications industry. The forum was a result of collaboration with the local industry and the telecom regulator with ISOC to explore possible policy choices to promote a richer local content industry using the OTT platform under the country's Digital Economy vision.

The discussion revolved around the right business model for OTT and monetisation of its services. It was stated that the digital content industry in Thailand has strong potential to grow considerably. However, some of the challenges raised included the lack of policies to promote local talent and the digital content industry through OTT, as well as the heavily regulated telecom environment. There was a general understanding that the OTT market in the country is still in its infancy stage and many believed that it would be premature to regulate it.

In order to develop and strengthen the OTT market, policies will be required that will support both the content side as well as the platform itself to ensure fair and open competition which leverages on evolving ICT technology, local creativity and the global reach of the Internet.

Asia Internet Symposium [07 September, Jakarta, Indonesia]

<http://www.internetsociety.org/events/asia-internet-symposium-jakarta-2015>



“The responsibility to ensure a secure and trusted cyber space is not to be left to governments only, it is an obligation to be filled by all stakeholders.” This was the opening statement of Mr Rudiantara, Minister of ICT, Republic of Indonesia at the Asia Internet Symposium Jakarta. The Indonesian government is currently deliberating the creation of a national cyber security agency, which is expected to be operational next year, and a national cyber security policy to bolster its cyber defence mechanisms.

Cybercrimes have affected Indonesia so much that in a statement, its defence minister warned that Indonesia was on the brink of a cyber-war. Over the course of three years, there have been a staggering 36.6 million attacks on Internet networks. In monetary terms, the loss has been greater than Rp33.29 billion, a figure that is much higher than conventional bank robberies. For much of 2013 and 2014, Indonesia has consistently ranked as one of the world’s top three sources of cyber-attacks. The symposium was well attended with over 180 participants on-site and over 50 around the world watching it live. This emphasises the importance of cybersecurity discussions and the interest from the community.

Speakers highlighted the importance of cross-country collaboration, and shared their views on the social impact of cyber-attacks on users, incident reporting and rectification mechanisms, the need for technical capacity building and user awareness, and the need for strong collaboration amongst all stakeholders.

Asia Internet Symposium [10 October, Dhaka, Bangladesh]

<http://www.internetsociety.org/events/asia-internet-symposium-dhaka-2015>



The Bangladesh government estimates that 80% of the total Internet population of Bangladesh use Facebook, and almost 60% are 13 to 22 years old. The Asia Internet Symposium Dhaka invited representatives from the government, businesses, civil society, academia and social media activists to deliberate on issues related to responsible use of social media in Bangladesh.

Abuse over social media is on the rise in Bangladesh. A recent number of incidents show fake account holders trolling other Internet users, uploading objectionable pictures and videos, and even posting hate messages. The Bangladesh Computer Security Incident Response Team (BD-CSIRT) is said to have received around 2,000 such complaints over the last 18 months.

Event speakers stressed the need to educate end-users on healthier and more constructive use of social media. This would help address the growing problem of fake Social Media IDs used to abuse and demean a person's character online, and the role of public institutions in introducing policies promoting the effective and responsible use of social media. There was also the call for greater consciousness among bloggers on how their postings might affect their readers. Some participants also noted that social media tools are so pervasive today that many individuals don't even think before publishing or posting, with others noting that the moral and ethical use of social media is a collective responsibility.

Press Briefing: "Unleashing the Potential of the Internet in Central Asia and Beyond: Pakistan in Focus"[17 November, Islamabad, Pakistan]



On the sidelines of the INET Islamabad conference, Internet Society (ISOC) Asia-Pacific Bureau also organised a media briefing on its regional study carried out in collaboration with Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UN ESCAP. The study covers ten countries from Central Asia, the Caucuses and South Asia (including Pakistan), focusing on Internet infrastructure and related issues. The briefing highlighted some of the key findings from the study and opportunities, along with some major challenges that are faced by the region and Pakistan specifically. The briefing was standing room only with over 40 media personnel present including all major television channels. The briefing and study findings were widely covered in print, electronic and online media in Pakistan, including primetime TV.

The study is the third in a series of studies by ISOC that looks at sub-regional Internet ecosystems and their level of progress towards transitioning to a digital economy - where the Internet is the underlying driver of all sectors across an economy.

INET Islamabad [16-18 November, Islamabad, Pakistan]

<http://www.internetsociety.org/inet-islamabad>



Internet Society Asia-Pacific Bureau's first-ever Regional INET conference in Pakistan, from Nov 16-18 in Islamabad, proved to be a huge success, both in terms of substance and lively participation. INET Islamabad brought into picture concrete opinions and action items to help in Pakistan's journey towards a Digital Economy; and in building its ICT agenda based on sustainable development.

The event was hosted by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and backed by the telecommunication industry of Pakistan. It featured both international and national subject matter experts from various sectors with broad experience, globally and nationally, in ICT, policymaking and development. The two-day conference was attended by over 400 participants and had an online audience of some 600 people from around the world. There were also close to 2,000 tweets using #INETISB and social media reports tell us this had a reach of some 270,000. International speakers from UN ESCAP, ITU, APT, LIRNEasia, ISACA, Red Hat and other premier organisations helped further the dialogue with their thoughts on:

- Infrastructure and Connectivity for Sustainable Development
- e-Gov Architecture, Standards and Implementation
- Building Trust in Cyberspace
- Growth of ICT Industry
- Digital Financial Inclusion
- Shaping the Move towards a Digital Economy for Pakistan

The first day of the event featured the opening reception with invited guests from the Pakistan ICT industry, and Prof. Gihan Dias from the ISOC Board of Trustees delivering the opening keynote.

INET Islamabad achieved significant exposure for the Internet Society in Pakistan – there were over 100 media spots including live TV, print and online. It also laid the foundation for discussions on how the digital economy can benefit Pakistan, and was acknowledged as the largest and most important event of its kind to be held in Pakistan. Discussions are already underway for follow-up action by various stakeholders in the country and ISOC's Asia-Pacific Bureau remains committed to assist in this process.

External Events

ICANN 52 [08 February – 12 February, Singapore]

The Asia Pacific Bureau participated in ICANN52 where, in addition to tracking developments around the IANA stewardship transition process, ICANN accountability and broad DNSSEC promotion, it undertook significant ISOC community engagement. About 61 members attended ISOC@ICANN meeting, representing 39+ Internet Society Chapters, 10 organisational members and some prospective members. The topic of discussion at this meeting was Cyber Security. The platform was also used as an opportunity, to build upon and deepen existing partnerships, with ICANN and others in the names and numbers community.

Workshop on Internet Governance and role of Stakeholders [19 February, Islamabad, Pakistan]

Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, Government of Pakistan hosted a one day workshop on “Internet Governance and the Role of its Stakeholders” inviting representatives from three I* organisations - APNIC, ICANN and the Internet Society – to inform participants on their organisational activities and role in the overall Internet Ecosystem. ISPs, IT & Telecom companies, academia, officials of government organisations, civil society and other attendees participated in the workshop.

The Minister commended the role of Internet Society in the promotion of the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people around the globe and stressed on a need to build further mutual collaboration.

APRICOT 2015 & Co-located Events [01 – 06 March, Fukuoka, Japan]

The Asia Pacific Regional Internet Conference on Operational Technologies (APRICOT) is the premier technical Internet event in the region, providing a unique forum for Internet builders to learn from their peers and other leaders in the Internet community. APRICOT 2015 hosted the annual meetings of several regional groupings, including the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), Asia Pacific Internet Association (APIA), Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Forum (APTLD), and APStar.

Members of the Internet Society APAC Bureau team had a productive and action-packed week, with several speaking slots, numerous engagement and partnership development opportunities with regional Internet organisations, companies and community leaders.

The Bureau also continued its support of the APRICOT 2015 fellowship program, providing financial support for individuals from developing economies to attend the event, exchange ideas and take their learning back home.

RightsCon Southeast Asia [24 – 25 March, Manila, Philippines]

Bringing together more than 400 participants, the RightsCon summit series, an initiative of digital rights group Access Now, was set up to explore and find solutions to emerging and existing issues around the exercise of human rights online. Co-convened by EngageMedia and hosted by Manila-based Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA), the 2015 RightsCon held more than 85 workshops, seminars and lightning talks to tackle concerns such as data sovereignty, surveillance, privacy, data protection and intellectual property.

ISOC APAC Bureau had wide and high-impact involvement throughout the two-day event, staff spoke at seven workshops, conveyed ISOC's perspective, as well as provided informed views, relating to a variety of topics including Southeast Asia's Internet infrastructure, rural connectivity using wireless spectrum, net neutrality, regional networking for digital rights advocates, the 'right' to access, cross-border requests and transparency, and the IANA transition.

The Bureau also organised an ISOC workshop on "Digital rights and security: can they co-exist and reinforce each other" to discuss the perceived trade-off between security and digital rights.

Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Universal Access and Service and Broadband Deployment 2015 [25 – 27 March, Bangkok, Thailand]

The Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Universal Access and Service and Broadband Deployment 2015 was organised by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission of Thailand (NBTC) together with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Bangkok, Thailand. The Forum is organised under the ITU/ADB framework on ICT for Development in the Asia-Pacific Region (ICTD-ASP), which was launched in April 2014.

The Bureau spoke in the session 'Universal Access and Service from the Demand Side: Digital Financial Services for Financial Inclusion' and presented some of the findings of its recently released study 'Unleashing the Potential of the Internet for ASEAN economies'. A key point made by the Bureau was the need for interoperability between systems.

World Economic Forum on East Asia [19 April – 21 April, Jakarta, Indonesia]

The 24th World Economic on East Asia discussed how enhancing trust can improve regional cooperation and advance critical decisions for accelerating sustainable socio-economic development.

The Bureau had multiple engagements during the event. These included Bureau Director, Rajnesh Singh, moderating the 'Connect on the Digital Economy' featuring the Minister for IT for Indonesia, as well as facilitating a session during 'Human Transformation in Digital Media'.

Asia Venture Philanthropy Network Conference [20 April – 23 April, Singapore]

The Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) Conference 2015 saw over 478 delegates participating, which included funders and intermediaries in the venture philanthropy/ social investing space from 30 different countries.

The network focuses on the growing financial, human and intellectual capital to the social sector across the Asia Pacific region, and the Bureau participated to establish and enhance relationships with entities working in the area, and to explore collaboration opportunities.

Crowdsourcing Startup Workshop [24 April, Singapore]

The workshop was attended by some 50 individuals, which included Bureau staff. The theme for this year was Crowd Economy: Disrupting Billion Dollar Industries and Empowering Billions.

According to a crowdsourcing industry survey, crowdsourcing is set to double in value in 2015, raising USD 34.4 billion up from USD 16.2 billion in 2014. The aim was to promote an understanding on how crowdsourcing and crowd funding works, and how to use various platforms to tap into it, and the Bureau participated to engage with organisations working in the area to explore collaboration opportunities.

Pakistan Mobile Apps Award Ceremony [27 April, Islamabad, Pakistan]

Aimed at recognizing young mobile innovators and the growth of mobile Internet in Pakistan, Internet Society Asia-Pacific Bureau in partnership with Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Samsung Pakistan organized a mobile apps award under the agriculture, entertainment, kids, security, community and business categories. With over 100 entries submitted, the competition was well received.

Delegates from Government (including the IT Minister), industry, academia and media attended the event. In his speech, the APAC Bureau Director applauded the winners and nominees and stressed the need to enable an environment that fosters innovation and creativity.

Freedom Online Coalition Conference [4-5 May, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia]

Hosted by the Government of Mongolia, the 5th annual Freedom Online Coalition conference was attended by delegates from 60 countries. This year's meeting focused on three main themes: a free and secure Internet, digital development and openness, and privacy and transparency online—also the focus areas of its three working groups.

Bureau staff participated in the panel on 'Connecting Remote Communities', showcasing the Bureau's Wireless for Communities project in India and suggesting ways in which Internet access can enable the exercise of digital rights in rural and marginalised areas.

CeBIT Australia [05 May - 07 May, Sydney, Australia]

The Bureau participated in Australia's premier ICT exhibition and conference in Sydney and was able to network with some of Australia's top two hundred companies working in the software platform, security, cloud storage and, networking areas. Highlights and themes at the exhibition/conference include cyber security, digital-social engagement, Internet of Things, mobile technology and business solutions that include cloud, mobility, security, big data, analytics and robots.

APEC TEL 51 and APEC Symposium on the Internet Economy [11-18 May Boracay, Philippines]

Recent developments and upcoming plans of APEC member countries on ICTs were brought to the table at the 51st meeting of the APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group. There was a notable increase in initiatives to incorporate explicit and informed consent from users on online data collection and sharing; to promote end-user tools for safe Internet use; and to promulgate mobile-oriented security measures, specifically in handling geo-location and other personal information stored on mobile devices.

Bureau staff took part in three panels and presented ISOC's initiatives on promoting local content, privacy and data protection in the Internet of Things era, and collaborative security. All presentations were well

received and elicited interest from several delegations, including China and South Korea. In particular, the need to boost technical literacy among policymakers resonated well with participants.

At the APEC Symposium on the Internet Economy, over 60 participants, including a number of ICT Ministers, from 33 member countries attended the two-day high-level meeting on future regional priorities for ICT development. The Brunei Declaration, which will take effect in 2016, was formulated and endorsed in principle. It lays out development priorities and goals for 2016 to 2020. The Bureau presented on 'Internet Development' and made several interventions during the declaration discussions.

Broadband TV Connect Asia [12 – 13 May, Singapore]

The Bureau attended Broadband TV Connect Asia, the offshoot of the Broadband World Series in Singapore, which examined the status, and trends in Broadband, TV, and CDN in Asia. The Bureau was able to network with some of the five hundred delegates and made quality contacts with broadcast, telecom, service providers, consulting companies, law firms and media from all over Asia.

Among the discussions at the event, were issues such as 'is the access to the Internet a Human Right', who should pay for Universal Broadband Access, and whether the general public fully understands the implications of Net Neutrality.

7th International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD) [15 – 18 May, Singapore]

The Asia Pacific Bureau organized a booth and sponsored the 7th International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD). Papers read at this conference emphasized how ICT does much to help human well-being and plays a part in the profound changes that are taking place in the economic, political and societal landscape. Areas that were highlighted include Education, Accessibility Infrastructure, Bridging the North-South Divide, Rural Development, Mobile banking, Delivering health services and e-government.

The 2015 China Government Affairs Forum [21 May, Beijing, China]

The 2015 Government Affairs Forum charted emerging trends in China to map the key policy changes. It looked at the need to develop a new toolkit to build public and government affairs strategies to mitigate risk and complement the reform agenda. Speakers emphasised that media drives public opinion and government needs to leverage social media and public relations. For organisations this new operating environment is often complex and fast changing. Bureau staff kept engaged with meetings exploring partnership opportunities for activities in the region and sharing information on ISOC's value proposition.

mBillionth Award South Asia Grand Jury 2015 [22-24 May, Neemrana, India]

Bureau Director, Rajnesh Singh, was a member of the Grand Jury for South Asia's premier event recognising excellence in mobile innovations for development. The Jury evaluated hundreds of applications to choose winners in various categories from across South Asia.

CommunicAsia 2015 [2-5 June, Singapore]

Recognised as Asia's largest integrated info-communications technology event, CommunicAsia 2015 provided over 45,000 local and international attendees an opportunity to connect and network. The conference track was themed 'Defining What's Shaping the Future of The Global ICT World', and hosted roundtable discussions, panel debates, case studies and demonstrations on where the ICT industry is heading and ways in which organisations need to adopt to stay ahead of the competition.

The Bureau organized an exhibition booth together with the regional Internet organizations (APIA, APNIC and dotAsia). The Bureau Director participated in the High-Level Dialogue at the Ministerial Forum on ICT.

APT 8th Policy and Regulatory Forum for the Pacific & 11th Pacific ICT Ministers and Officials' Meeting [15-19 June, Nuku'alofa, Tonga]

Connectivity, affordability, policy reform and disaster management through ICTs were big topics at the 8th APT PRFP, where regulators, government officials and other APT members gathered to discuss challenges and updates to ICT development in the Pacific. Many island nations have just, or are in the process of, liberalising their telecoms sector, and with it many have or are currently formulating national ICT roadmaps and legal frameworks. These focus on issues like spectrum allocation, universal service and the transition to digital TV. With Internet penetration steadily increasing in the Pacific, island states are also starting to consider other Internet-related issues such as cybersecurity and local content development.

The Bureau provided support for the event and also presented on ISOC's initiatives relating to spam and collaborative security. Staff on the ground also met and discussed possible joint activities with PITA, PiRRC, and the Governments of Tonga, Nauru, Fiji and Vanuatu. Delegations were in particular keen to collaborate with ISOC on capacity-building projects for both governments and local technical communities in the areas of security, IPv6, spam and mobile Internet development. Vanuatu also thanked ISOC for its support in bringing back connectivity in the aftermath of Cyclone Pam early in 2015.

UNESCAP International Conference on Practical steps towards a Knowledge-based Economy [16-17 June, Dushanbe, Tajikistan]

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), jointly organized this international Conference, hosted by the Government of Tajikistan.

During the conference, a session on the Internet Society and UN ESCAP's joint regional study on 'Unleashing the Potential of the Internet for Central Asia and Beyond' was also held. The organisations presented the early findings of the study, which identified some of the barriers to Internet connectivity for 10 countries in the Central, South and West Asian region. The study suggests some policy options for creating an enabling environment for local Internet development and seamless regional Internet connectivity. The Bureau also held a series of meetings with local stakeholders and country experts from the Central and South Asian region.

AIDF Aid and Response Summit Asia [16 June – 18 June, Bangkok, Thailand]

The APAC Bureau was invited to speak on the panel - “Improving Communication with Beneficiary Communities & Among Aid Agencies” where it presented their work on the Wireless for Communities (W4C) project. Attendees included representatives of NGOs, Private Sector, Associations, Donor/Investors, and Academia etc.

The summit examined how technological innovations and best practices can improve aid and development outcomes in Asia, especially with regards to building resilience to disasters and climate change, enabling quicker, safer and better emergency response, and ensuring more effective aid delivery and community engagement via innovative technologies.

GSMA-ITU Digital Societies Policy Forum [26 June, Bangkok, Thailand]

The forum was one of the first such events jointly organized by the GSMA and ITU, and supported by ISOC and ICANN. It brought together over 100 policymakers, regulators, industry and other stakeholders from the ICT sector to discuss issues related to digital societies in the Asia-Pacific region. It also examined the emerging national plans to build digital societies, framed around these new research reports and policies.

In its presentation at the event, the Bureau highlighted findings from its recent ASEAN study and the current mobile Internet phenomena in the region. The Bureau was also part of the media briefing with GSMA, ITU and ICANN.

Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum [29 June – 3 July Macau, PRC]

Some 26 workshops, a 2-day pre-event and a 3-part Asia-Pacific Internet Leadership Program on Internet governance, critical Internet infrastructure and the IANA stewardship transition was held over five days at the Macau University of Science and Technology, the venue for the 6th edition of Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APriGF). Going with the theme, “Evolution of Internet Governance: Empowering Sustainable Development,” the invitees, speakers and participants discussed issues around Net neutrality, access for the next billion, security and privacy in the era of IoT and big data, digital rights, internationalized domain names, ccTLDs, and online safety and transparency.

The APAC Bureau organised two workshops. The first, titled “Can mobile Internet bridge the gender digital divide? Challenges and opportunities for stakeholders,” had panellists from Google, GSMA, APC and the Foundation for Media Alternatives. The second workshop, on “Localising Internet governance: Making multi-stakeholder collaboration work at the national level,” had speakers from ISOC-Armenia, APTLD, the governments of India and Bangladesh and JPNIC.

Staff on the ground were part of 4 other panel discussions covering various sub-themes of the regional Internet governance forum. The Bureau was also a diamond sponsor of the 2015 APriGF.

NetHui and PacINET 2015 [8-10 July, Auckland, New Zealand]

PacINET, the regional conference of the ISOC Pacific Islands Chapter, was co-located with NetHui this year. During PacINET, the Bureau Director presented on ISOC’s initiatives and activities in the Pacific Islands and there were discussions on areas of regional collaboration. As ISOC’s InterCommunity was held in Auckland

alongside NetHui, several ISOC staff also took the opportunity to participate in NetHui and ISOC CEO, Kathy Brown, also delivered a keynote address.

Mobile World Congress [15-17 July, Shanghai, China]

The Bureau attended the fourth Mobile World Congress in Shanghai where the focus this year was “Mobile Unlimited” - how mobile technology from connected cars and wearable tech to mobile payments and smarter cities is revolutionizing and enhancing every aspect of individuals’ lives.

With 35,000 attendees, exhibitors, speakers and press/analysts the Bureau was kept busy with meetings throughout the day around Shanghai, at the MWC Shanghai exhibition including the Shanghai Digital Information Festival, and at the conference including the IoT Summit.

Security Congress APAC 2015 [28-29 July, Manila, Philippines]

Formerly called SecureAsia, this year’s event saw over 350 information security professionals convene for the two-day event in Manila. Participants gained insights into the latest innovations on data security and cyber forensics and emerging technology trends. The Bureau presented a session on ‘Privacy in the Modern Business Environment’ and leveraged inter-regional collaboration to have ISOC’s Bureau Director for Europe, Frederic Donck, share knowledge and learnings from Europe on the issue.

APT Policy and Regulatory Forum [03-05 August, Singapore]

ICTs are starting to figure more prominently on the policy agenda in the Asia-Pacific. Much of the discussion at this year’s APT PRF centred on new and ongoing efforts to build a digital economy, with many state-led initiatives centring on growing SMEs using digital technologies, boosting digital skills and inclusion, harmonising regulations and increasing the capacity of digital infrastructure to support service delivery. Both developed and emerging economies are banking on ICTs; in the case of the latter to transform themselves into middle or high-income countries; and for the former to revitalise sluggish industries and keep them ahead of the curve. But while countries like Singapore are testing automated homes and deploying ultra-fast networks, those like Laos are held back by factors such as low Internet penetration and lack of resources and local technical expertise.

There is a corresponding divergence in priorities. As advanced economies like South Korea focus on growing big data, IoT and cloud businesses, developing countries like Bangladesh are leading in mobile financial services and e-health for rural areas. A growing area of interest among delegates was finding more objective ways, through more data being made available, to measure the social impact of ICTs, with some pointing out that current indices, like the WEF’s Network Readiness Index, are opinion based. With mobile becoming the platform for many of these developments, the conversation also turned towards 5G, projected to enable seamless machine-to-machine connectivity with its low latency and more efficient spectrum use. APAC Bureau staff on the ground promoted an open Internet for inclusive growth, emphasising ongoing challenges and proposing solutions to improve connectivity and Internet infrastructure around the region.

40th Asia Pacific Advanced Network (APAN) Meeting [10 August – 14 August, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia]

The 40th Annual Asian Pacific Advanced Network (APAN) conference along with the Trans-Eurasia Internet Network 4/5 meeting (TEIN) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Over 200 participants attended the event from the Asia-Pacific region from Institutes of Higher education, Internet Service Providers, vendors and application providers.

TEIN provides dedicated high-capacity Internet connectivity for users in research and education communities across Asia-Pacific. It is a large-scale research and education network connecting universities and research centres in 23 Asia-Pacific countries with their counterparts in Europe. ISOC staff attended the event to further discussions on future programme work as part of the TEIN project.

ITU Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on e-Government and Smart Cities / Regional Development Forum [19 – 22 August, Bangkok, Thailand]

The Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on “e-Government, Smart Cities, and Digital Societies for Sustainable Development” brought together policymakers, development partners, decision makers and industry. The Regional Development Forum followed the event. The Bureau spoke during the Cybersecurity session and presented ISOC’s Collaborative Security initiative.

APT Telecom Regulator Council [25 August – 27 August Greater Noida, India]

The 16th APT SATRC regulatory council consists of nine South Asian countries. This was originally formed in 1997 with the support of the APT Secretariat and the ITU to forge greater cooperation among the South Asian region (including Iran and Afghanistan) with the aim to coordinate and accelerate regulatory telecom development. This year’s council meeting was well attended and included regulators from Iran, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

The key issues on regulatory issues have been centrally on strategies for provisioning universal access and spectrum allocation policies for wireless broadband in urban and rural areas. Other concerns included attracting future investment into the markets for future generation networks like 4G/5G LTE, Cloud and Internet of Things. Some interesting best practices were also shared including Maldives Open Spectrum policy and spectrum sharing in India as well as Bangladesh, and spectrum efficiency practices in the more developed Iran market. In order for the region to compete with other regions for more investment in the future, SATRC will need to become more efficient in it’s management and prudent in it’s regulatory policies.

Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway [1 – 2 September, Incheon, Republic of Korea]

The Bureau was invited to contribute as a subject matter expert to the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway. The meeting was co-organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the National Information Society Agency of the Republic of Korea, with the support of the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning of the Republic of Korea. Participants of the Working Group at the meeting included Government representatives from information and communications technology ministries, telecommunications regulators, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, and representatives of the private sector. Bureau staff presented on the role of Internet eXchange Points (IXPs) as well as presenting a

session on early findings from its joint study with UN ESCAP and ADB on Internet infrastructure in ten countries in Central Asia, South Asia and the Caucasus.

Asian Regional Consultation on WSIS+10 [2 – 4 September Pattaya, Thailand]

A group of thirty-eight individuals from twenty-nine organizations based in Asia-Pacific from fifteen countries, self-organized a regional dialogue to review the non-paper WSIS proposals. The meeting was co-organized by The Internet Democracy Project and Bytes for All (Pakistan) with the support from several sponsors including APNIC and the ISOC Asia-Pacific Bureau.

The aim of the consultation was to provide a regional platform to review the current status of developments around Internet governance, Internet development and human rights development in view of the upcoming WSIS+10 meeting later in the year; and to provide timely feedback on the non-paper proposals from the Asia-Pacific region. A series of topical presentations were given by different facilitators on Internet Governance, Internet Development, Cyber security developments (ISOC) and Human Rights development in the Asia-Pacific region based on the original seventy three non-paper submission.

The group developed a ten page document with thirty-three recommendations called the Pattaya Statement that outlines several key areas of concern: digital divide, ICT development, human rights, Internet Governance, and cyberspace including recommendations for the WSIS process. In addition to staff at the meeting, the Bureau facilitated remote participation for the consultation.

APNIC 40 [6-10 September, Jakarta, Indonesia]

The APNIC 40 meeting in Jakarta had co-located with it meetings of a number of regional associations, groups and forums including APTLD (Asia Pacific Top Level Domain), and APStar. The event also hosted a number of seminars, workshops, tutorials, Birds of a Feather (BOFs) sessions with the goal of spreading and sharing IP addressing and network operations knowledge in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Bureau attended and presented at the APStar and APTLD meetings and during the APNIC Global Updates session.

DOST – ISOC IXP Workshops [20-21 September, Cebu and Manilla, Philippines]

The country's Department of Science and Technology and the Internet Society held a series of events, including two IXP workshops and a roundtable policy dialogue to further develop the local Internet ecosystem. The country set up its first neutral IXP, the Philippine Open Internet Exchange (PhOpenIX) in 2007, and has since then experienced steady growth, with 34 networks, including major carriers and cable service providers now directly peered to it. Amidst plans to further expand the IXP's scope, DOST's Advanced Science and Technology Institute, which manages PhOpenIX, brought stakeholders together to discuss ways by which the exchange can grow more sustainably, while maintaining a non-discriminatory and mutually beneficial peering framework.

The first day kicked off with the launch of the Cebu open IX, with four ISPs pledging to join by the end of the meeting. The following day, organizers hosted a roundtable between ISPs, carriers, representatives from

Senatorial and Congressional committees on ICT, and other relevant state agencies on the future of PhOpenIX, The discussions touched upon the recent MoA between the incumbent and the government, in which the latter agreeing to host a third switch for the open IX within its datacentre for 2 years but still opting to have bilateral peering with other ISPs. Participants highlighted the importance of creating a venue by which PhOpenIX members, regardless of size, can make joint policy decisions.

Workshops to orient potential members on the physical and technical set up of IXPs were held both in Manila and Cebu, with ISOC and a representative from BKNIX (Bangkok Neutral Internet eXchange) highlighting the common and demonstrable advantages of open peering for ISPs, network operators, research and academic institutions and other organizations.

12th APT Asia-Pacific Telecommunications and ICT Development Forum **[22-24 September, Macau, PRC]**

Member states at the 12th APT-ADF tackled both the progress and challenges they encountered in deploying domestic e-governance schemes. Forging ahead are economies like Hong Kong, whose Digital 21 Strategy makes use of open source portals and metadata that can be used to develop new applications. The end-goal, for many, is to digitise public services, from social welfare and tax registration, to traffic and water resource management, to allow for their prompt and more widespread delivery. Many developing countries are doing this slowly, focusing first on government to government systems—setting up datacentres, and putting workflows and inventories online—to increase internal efficiency and encourage information sharing among agencies, before moving on to government to business and to customer transactions. Several are also starting to make more public information available online for increased transparency,

Another point of convergence was disaster management. Asia-Pacific remains the most disaster-prone region in the world, and countries that are most vulnerable are exploring various ways by which the Internet and ICTs can help to mitigate and minimise damage from natural calamities. Pilot projects using near cloud cache, microcomputers such as raspberry pi, and countries like Thailand, Vietnam and Japan presented solar powered sensors for early warning systems. Several guest organisations also called for the freeing up of TV white space for use in rescue and recovery. APAC Bureau staff on the ground gave a well-received presentation on improving infrastructure and Internet affordability in the region, and discussed potential joint workshops with the government of Tonga and with APT on Net neutrality and Internet governance for 2016.

ITU Regional Economic and Financial Forum of Telecommunications/ICTs for Asia and Pacific [28 September – 01 October, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia]

Held alongside the meetings of ITU-T SG3 Regional Group for Asia and Oceania, as well as the Focus Group on Digital Financial Services, the ITU Forum tackled common issues encountered by regulators, particularly in countries that continue to have very powerful incumbents amidst the transition from narrowband to broadband, and from PSTN switch to end-to-end IP networks. Key points discussed included fostering competition by lowering barriers for new entrants - for instance by preventing the incumbent from enforcing point of interconnection in a way that maximises its revenue - and from subsidising its competitive services with revenue from its monopoly services. Regulators were advised to focus on encouraging

investment in network capacity, stimulate demand and keep prices affordable, particularly with wireless broadband.

As the discussion turned to digital financial ecosystems, security concerns arose after research presented at the conference found that a number of prominent mobile payment apps in Asia had poor authentication systems that failed to safeguard user data while holding users responsible for any security breaches.

APAC Bureau staff on the ground presented on, and had a conversation with, participants about Net neutrality. Regulators were interested in how fair traffic management practices can be weighed and determined, while operators were concerned that Net neutrality favours OTTs, which they believe lack assurances for data protection and quality of service, while also eating up their revenue base. Other participants however countered that Net neutrality has not slowed down the rollout of network infrastructure, and that the best incentive for incumbents to innovate is the threat of other players advancing before they do.

Pakistan School on Internet Governance [5-8 October, Islamabad, Pakistan]

The Pakistan School on Internet Governance (pkSIG) was hosted and organised by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan together with National Textile University of Pakistan. The school was conceived by the local community, which elicited support from the Asia-Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Middle East Office and the Internet Society Asia-Pacific Bureau in organizing pkSIG. The event aimed to orient the forty individuals from a broad range of backgrounds on issues related to Internet governance and its importance to the future of the Internet.

52nd APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group Meeting [19-23 October, Auckland, New Zealand]

The goals of APEC TEL have from the start been primarily to encourage cross border trade and economic growth through communication and information systems. To achieve this in a technologically dynamic era, the body has begun to widen discussions around digital entrepreneurship, or more broadly, finding ways by which businesses can grow through ICTs, and by which young dynamic firms can become significant job creators for APEC economies. For many developing countries, this means putting greater attention to Internet adoption by SMEs, while more advanced economies in the region focus on building capacity, confidence and creating a culture of innovation, having observed that Internet access remains underutilised in many sectors. The meeting also yielded new developments to the proposed APEC Cybersecurity Framework, with member states concluding that its objectives should be in line with APEC's objectives.

Bureau staff on the ground shared insights on e-entrepreneurship at the grassroots level, in particular expanding livelihood opportunities with our Wireless Women for Entrepreneurship and Empowerment programme by, for instance, increasing their access to credit, training and business networks through the Internet. They also presented ISOC's newly released discussion paper on the Internet of Things, highlighting the unique security and privacy issues around ubiquitous, embedded machine-to-machine connectivity, and offered key points for participants to ponder when creating policies for the IoT era.

6th APT Cyber Security Forum [20-23 October, Bangkok, Thailand]

Recognizing the growing importance of cybersecurity, delegates at the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) 6th Cybersecurity Forum in Bangkok, Thailand exchanged opinions on emerging security threats, best practices in cyber legislation, international collaboration, computer emergency response teams, raising online privacy awareness and approaches to combat spam. Cybersecurity is also one of the work items under the APT Strategic Plan for 2015-2017 adopted by the APT General Assembly held last year in Yangon, Myanmar.

Representatives from 20 member states and several organizations expressed the need to enhance regional collaborative efforts in combating cybercrime, enhancing cybersecurity and countering spam and other online security threats. It was recognized that in addition to policy making, building awareness among end-users should also be a priority for governments. Presenters shared cybersecurity trends and challenges in their respective countries, and agreed on the fact that borders do not limit cybersecurity--threats cannot be dealt with in an isolated manner, and requires mutual collaboration among countries and organizations.

The Bureau presented on spam, highlighting new ways by which spam can be distributed through platforms like social media. Participants were also briefed on the ISOC's Combating Spam Project and Collaborative Security Initiative.

IETF [1-6 November, Yokohama, Japan]

IETF94 in Yokohama was the largest such meeting in Asia in the last 10 years, with about 1,320 attendees and about 1490 registrations. There were a large number of first time participants - about 300. There were 14 technical fellows from around the world funded by ISOC to attend the meeting. Ten public policy leaders from the Asia-Pacific also took part in the ISOC IETF Policy Program held alongside IETF94. This was also the first time India participated during a Bits & Bites event. The Bureau was kept busy at the policy program, attending the various newcomer/mentor outreaches/workshops, meeting with potential partners/sponsors/members and the IETF community.

Pakistan Telecom CxO Roundtable [17 November, Islamabad, Pakistan]

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) with the ISOC Asia-Pacific Bureau as independent facilitator convened the first-ever CxO level roundtable for the Telecom (and ISP) industry in Pakistan. The session brought together industry executives, the regulator, government and representatives from international organisations such as APT and ITU to discuss the challenges faced by the telecom industry in Pakistan and what steps need to be taken to further Internet adoption and growth. Bureau Director, Rajnesh Singh, moderated the energetic session held under Chatham House Rules.

Cloud Asia [24-25 November, Hong Kong]

Organized by Informa, the 7th edition Cloud Asia Forum brought together IT decision makers, operations and development teams as well as Telco Cloud Service Providers to discuss issues such as cloud business models, enterprise mobility, mobile device management, big data, security, and IoT.

Rajnesh Singh, Director of the Internet Society's Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau, moderated and led a discussion on 'China and the Internet'. The session covered the current state of the Chinese Internet market

and challenges and opportunities for both companies looking at entering the Chinese market, and Chinese companies moving into external markets. Panellists included Charles Mok, Legislative Councillor for Information Technology, Hong Kong and Edmon Chung, CEO of DotAsia.

SCS Youth IT Awards Judging Panel [26 November, Singapore]

Bureau Director, Rajnesh Singh, was part of the Judging Panel for the Singapore Computer Society Youth IT Awards. The Awards recognise the best young talent from the IT industry in Singapore. This year's applications were of a high level and demonstrated both innovation and the need to meet market demands. The winners will be announced at a gala ceremony early 2016.

NETAPPS 2015 [1-3 December, Cyberjaya, Malaysia]

About 120 delegates from around the Asia-Pacific attended the 4th International Conference on Internet Applications, Protocols and Services (NETAPPS2015) to discuss papers from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Organized by University Utara Malaysia, NETAPPS2015 aims to provide a platform to promote greater engagement in the work of the IETF and the IRTF. The technical sessions covered Internet Performance, Information Centric Networks, Wireless and Mobile Networks, Network Controls, Wireless Sensor Networks, Internet Applications, Internet of Things, Fibre-optic communication and Security. The conference was led by the Internet Society Malaysia Chapter, with Bureau staff presenting.

Regional Dialogue on ICTD Capacity Building for Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Development [1-4 December, Songdo, Republic of Korea]

Organised by the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UN-APCICT), the event brought together over 100 participants from 32 countries in Asia and the Pacific, including representatives from government, academia, civil society, private sector, international organizations and experts in the field of ICT and capacity development. Bureau Director, Rajnesh Singh, led a discussion on emerging ICT technology trends and served as a subject matter expert in other deliberations.

1st National Gender and ICT Consultation [8-9 December, Manila, Philippines]

The first national consultation on Gender and ICT was organized by the Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA) and supported by other organisations, including the ISOC APAC Bureau. Government agencies, industry players and women's groups from all over the country highlighted the ways by which the Internet can be a double-edged sword, uplifting women's lives but also potentially creating new forms of socio-economic inequities, even among women themselves. The workshop highlighted the diverging concerns, for instance, of women in urban areas, who lament the country's slow, and expensive Internet, and those in rural areas, who continue to struggle with basic power supply and digital literacy, especially among the elderly. Noting a high degree of discomfort with unfamiliar technology among first time Internet users, participants at the workshop insisted on the integration of flexible and community-based digital literacy training with every effort to extend Internet access to women in the country.

Bureau Director, Rajnesh Singh, spoke during the opening and highlighted some of the Bureau's initiatives to promote gender balance through its activities. He also highlighted the need for more females to take up careers in the technology arena.

APT 36th Management Committee Meeting [8-11 December, Ayutthaya, Thailand]

The APT Management Committee meeting is an annual General Assembly for Member States to plan, review, adopt and approve current and future annual programmes on an annual basis as well as consultation on administrative related policies. In the 39th Management Committee Meeting, the quorum (2/3) approved 2016 work programmes, adoption of the current progress report on 2015-2017 strategic plan, budget and extra-budgetary contributions and the adoption of key deliberations in 2015 including key preparatory meetings and Ad-Hoc working groups. For 2016, the meeting approved 30 programmes of which around twenty one will be focused on training and development and the remaining to be allocated for new initiatives. The Bureau attended as an Affiliate Member of APT.

United Nations ESCAP 19th Interagency working group on ICT Meeting [15 December, Bangkok, Thailand]

The 19th Inter-agency Working Group (IWG) discussed the impetus of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Post 2015 WSIS initiatives; subsequently proposing the establishment of a formal regional information sharing forum that provide updates, discuss common interest areas and share future programme plans. Internet Society Asia-Pacific Bureau was invited for the first time and was requested to provide its plans and the priorities for the region. Further updates were provided by other organisations including UNICEF, UN OCHA, ITU and APT. The meeting concluded that closer cooperation and coordination was needed to avoid duplication and improve resource efficiencies and programme implementation. A draft Memorandum of Agreement was developed outlining the cooperation framework, which is expected to be finalised in early 2016. The proposed framework includes rotational chairing by the three organisations: ITU, APT and ESCAP Secretariat.

Workshop on Web Accessibility [17 December, Islamabad, Pakistan]

In partnership with Bytes for All Pakistan, the ISOC Asia-Pacific Bureau organized a half-day workshop on "Web Accessibility" in Islamabad, inviting persons with disabilities to share their accessibility requirements, identify issues / challenges and highlight the barriers that limit them from interacting with the Internet and the World Wide Web. Some 19 million people in Pakistan have some form of disability – roughly 10% of the population. The workshop had 22 persons with visual, 4 with hearing and 3 with physical impairment, all affirming one common demand of 'inclusivity'. They all emphasized the opportunities the Internet can provide for them to be independent and to contribute to society and to their socio-economic development. A follow-up event is planned in 2016.

SATRC Workshop SATRC Workshop on Policy, Regulation and Services [21 – 23 December, Pokhara, Nepal]

The Bureau participated in the workshop, which discussed a number of issues in the areas of telecommunication policy, regulation and services. These included issues such as measures to protect

consumer interests; policy, regulatory and technical aspects of OTT (Over-The-Top) services; emerging licensing frameworks; and international connectivity for the provision of providing broadband services. Bureau staff contributed to discussions on OTT and Network Neutrality, which formed a large part of the workshop proceedings.

Special Meeting on ICT Accessibility [31 December, Islamabad, Pakistan]

In a follow-up development to the ISOC/Bytes for All workshop on web accessibility in Islamabad held mid-December, the last day of the year witnessed important progress in promoting 'ICT Accessibility in Pakistan'. A meeting was held at Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Headquarters, headed by the Chairman Dr. Syed Ismail Shah, inviting a group of People with disabilities along with Internet Society Asia-Pacific Bureau to discuss approaches required to promote ICT 'inclusivity' in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan is currently working on a draft 'IT Policy' for the next five years, and this special meeting provided a basis to provide input on accessibility issues as part of the National IT policy.

Programs

APAC Regional Policy Survey

The annual Asia-Pacific regional policy survey provides a cross-sectional study of the attitudes of Internet stakeholders toward topical Internet policy issues in the region. This year's study took an in-depth look at ongoing Internet policymaking trends, and gained further insights on some areas of concern as identified by respondents in the 2014 survey.

The survey was conducted online using the Survey Monkey platform, disseminated via email to and through the 20 Internet Society Chapters, as well as to individual members, in the Asia-Pacific region. The survey was also opened up to non-members of the Internet Society to gain as wide input as possible, and was promoted via various online channels including social media. The poll was administered in English and divided into four sections; demographics of the respondent, respondents' perceptions of Internet policymaking, Internet access, and cybersecurity.

The survey garnered responses from 3,302 participants, and had a 92.4% completion rate. The report is available at [here](#).

APAC Regional Mobile Survey

In many countries in the Asia-Pacific, mobile broadband networks have overtaken fixed broadband as the main mode of Internet access. Reports indicate more than a third of the region's population going online do so using mobile networks and devices.

Amidst this landscape of great contrasts and potential, the Internet Society Mobile Internet Usage in Asia-Pacific survey sought to capture mobile users' online habits. The survey was conducted online late 2015 and had 1,620 respondents from 37 economies in the region. Early analysis of the survey finds a segmented market whose behaviour largely corresponds with regional projections, but whose growth requires further cultivation. This would require forward-looking measures and policies to ensure that the mobile Internet remains a truly transformative force for the region's economies, and for its people. The report will be available on the ISOC website early in 2016.

Wireless for Communities

This year, the Asia-Pacific Bureau expanded the footprint of its award winning W4C project to Pakistan and Nepal as well as continuing to expand within India. In Pakistan a pilot site was identified and a community wireless network deployed at a village located near Multan city in central Punjab province. The local community welcomed the project with great zeal, knowing that they will have better access to the Internet. The Phase-I of the project was completed in December providing connectivity to two schools, one polytechnic institute and one village community comprising 100 households. Community capacity building will continue through in the early part of 2016.

In partnership with the Nepal Wireless Network Project, the Bureau is expanding its Wireless for Communities project to eight communities in earthquake-affected parts of Nepal. The project will help setup smart villages, provide connectivity to schools as well as setup a couple of rural innovation labs. The

infrastructure deployment was largely completed through December and early 2016 will see the establishment of the rural innovation labs and community capacity building.

Similarly, two locations were identified in India to set up community networks under a smart village concept. Infrastructure deployment was initiated in November and community capacity building and related activities will complete early 2016.

Continuing Support for Network Operator Groups

The Bureau continued its financial support under a newly place agreement for country-level Network Operator Groups including Bangladesh Network Operator Group (bdNOG), Singapore Network Operator Group (sgNOG), Malaysia Network Operator Group (myNOG), Bhutan Network Operator Group (btNOG), the newly established Thailand Network Operator Group (THNOG) as well as the regional forums including Asia Pacific Regional Internet Conference on Operational Technologies (APRICOT) and South Asia Network Operator Group (SANOG). As part of its NOG support programmes, the Bureau continues to advocate for greater female participation in these technical events. It is promising to see continued improvement in female participation; as well a portion of the ISOC supported fellowships were awarded to females from around the region.

Regional Studies

Unleashing the Potential of the Internet for ASEAN Economies

As the ASEAN Economic Community goes into effect this year, the Bureau thought it would be timely to compare data on Internet connectivity, infrastructure and investment across 10 ASEAN economies and propose some broad and specific measures by which the region can, with the Internet's help, create a single market and production base and build the Digital Economy. The report compares data on Internet connectivity, infrastructure and investment across 10 ASEAN economies and finds that Internet interconnectivity and interoperability of systems and platforms between and within countries are instrumental in driving the free flow of information, goods, services and investment across Southeast Asia. The full report and executive summary is available [here](#).

Unleashing the Potential of the Internet in Central Asia, South Asia and the Caucasus

This report is a joint project between the Internet Society (ISOC) Asia-Pacific Bureau, the Asia Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Commission on Economic and Social Development (ESCAP) with further support from the ISOC European Bureau. The report assesses the status of Internet connectivity and identifies key elements required to transition from a basic Internet economy to a thriving digital economy and society. The report focuses on 10 countries – Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – and is similar in style to the ASEAN report released earlier in the year. The final version of the study will be released at the beginning of 2016.

Regional Case Studies

In order to showcase success and impact of the Internet in people's lives, the Bureau initiated work on a series of regional case studies. The first of which showcased a project titled 'Amakomaya', translated as Mother's Love in Nepali. A team of local ICT experts and health professionals in Nepal initiated the project

after they received a grant from the Internet Society's Community Grants Program in 2011. Committed to tackle the challenges that Nepali women face during pregnancy and childbirth, the project aims to leverage opportunities that the Internet and mobile communications offer. The team is making a series of breakthroughs in women's health education, changing community practices that marginalize women, and the digitization of health records.

Online Identity Module in Urdu

The Bureau launched a digital footprint toolkit in Urdu, the national language to 180 million people in Pakistan. The work was an extension of the Online Identity modules made available in 2014 in the shape of 3 interactive online tutorials. Previously, the Bureau has made the modules available in Bahasa Indonesia.

IG mini-course for Asia-Pacific

To meet the growing interest and demand for Internet Governance capacity building in the region, the Bureau launched its online e-Learning programme in November.

The programme was made open to those living or working in the Asia-Pacific region with an interest in Internet Governance. The online course runs over five weeks (Nov 30, 2015 to Jan 11, 2016). The programme has 5 modules covering perspectives on the technology, its governance principles and policies, and its current development challenges. The specific modules covered are Introduction to Internet Governance, Internet Actors and Stakeholder Grouping, Internet Policy Principles, Regulatory Frameworks and Internet Governance for Development (IG4D).

Delivered entirely as an online blended programme with a combination of self-study and moderated sessions with ISOC topical experts, the programme aims to maximise the student's learning experience. Successful candidates are awarded a certificate after passing a final test administered at the end of the course. A hundred and fifty scholarship placements were made available. The programme received over four hundred applications by the closing date.

IETF Yokohama Public Policy Program

The Bureau helped facilitate the participation of ten fellows from the Asia-Pacific region in the IETF Public Policy Program. The highly energetic group included delegates from governments and regional organisations in Australia, Bhutan, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Thailand, Vanuatu and the Philippines. The Program seeks to introduce policymakers to the Internet standards development process and allows them to interact with engineers and experts on topics related to the Internet.

Internet for me Video Campaign

With the assistance of its chapters, the Bureau worked on an idea to collect views on what the Internet means to individuals in the Asia-Pacific region. A number of short videos were collected asking individuals from various countries to respond to 'The Internet for me is...'. The individuals were encouraged to speak in their local language, and the final video has subtitles in English. A copy of the final video is available [here](#).

Chapter and Member Engagement

Internet Society @ APRICOT; Chapter and Member Meeting [03 March, Fukuoka, Japan]



The Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Conference on Operational Technologies (APRICOT) is a forum for key Internet builders in the region to learn from peers and other leaders in the global Internet community. The APAC Regional Bureau organized its regular ISOC@APRICOT meeting with ISOC members on 03 March, hosted by the ISOC Japan Chapter. The agenda consisted of updates from the Japan Chapter, the ISOC Regional Bureau and a presentation on the status of IPv6 deployment in Japan. The floor was then opened to general discussions which covered a range of Internet and ISOC related topics.

Regional Chapter Workshop [7-8 June, Colombo, Sri Lanka]



The ISOC regional Chapter Leaders workshops bring together Chapter leaders to discuss chapter management related issues, share ideas, knowledge, content and experiences. The 2015 Asia-Pacific Regional Chapter workshop in Colombo hosted highly energetic discussions among a group of 22 delegates from 16 chapters in the region. Participants brought together valuable experiences that were shared in a collaborative exchange format.

The first day started off with interactive introductions and introduction of the agenda and working format. Every participant added their presence to the ISOC Chapter Workshop World Map and out of the submitted topics, each participant voted on their personal top 3 topics to be discussed. The workshop facilitator encouraged the participants to look at multiple perspectives of the experiences in their chapters. The

sessions were designed to be participant centric and extract the core learnings from the shared experiences and insights.

The second day saw participants from each chapter proposing collaborative project ideas. The workshop facilitator applied the CAKES model to one of the projects with the help of participants. The Solution Room was the last agenda item before closing of the workshop. This allowed participants to consult their peers and be consulted by their peers in 7-minute rounds and key takeaways and actions were noted down on the table in hand-drawn pictograms and action points in the form of mind maps.

Regional Chapter Calls

The quarterly regional Chapter call is an avenue for the Bureau and ISOC Chapters in the region to regularly provide updates on their ongoing projects and upcoming events and activities. These online meetings provide chapter leaders an opportunity to collaborate with their peers. ISOC staff from other departments also attend the calls, and lead discussions on their current work and areas of expertise.

Regional Chapter Updates

We invited chapters in the region to provide information on their activity highlights through the year that we could include in this year's report. The following is the contribution received from three chapters by the deadline. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all chapters or all their activities, but an indication of the great work done by our chapters at the local level. Full list of ISOC chapters around the world is available [here](#).

Philippines Chapter

2015 was the most active year for ISOC Philippines chapter (ISOC-PH) since rejuvenation in 2009. Chapter representatives were present and engaged at multiple meetings with government throughout the year, including: Senate hearings (Access / Competition), National Telecommunications Commission (Access quality), Department of Justice (Cybercrime / Competition), DOST-ICTO (National Broadband Plan, Philippine Digital Strategy). ISOC-PH co-organized the Future of the PH Internet forum (with FMA / Civil Society) in March, was engaged in drafting the PH Declaration of Internet Rights and Principles, which culminated in a launch in November. ISOC-PH with DOST-ICTO and FMA, also convened a Pre-IGF Multistakeholder forum. ISOC-PH was also engaged in the review and is a founding signatory of the (Industry) ICT Manifesto.

Two ISOC-PH members presented papers at NETAPPS 2015. ISOC-PH presented at the annual Youth 4 IT conference and several others including: the 2nd National Privacy Consultative Conference (FMA), the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce (Telecoms), IDEALS - Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Competition Act), etc. ISOC-PH's Technical Group is engaged in the rejuvenation of PhNOG (with DOST-ASTI and APNIC), which held two meetings this year. ISOC-PH's President attended ICANN-53 in Buenos Aires and our VP-Development represented the Chapter at the Annual Chapters' Workshop in Colombo. Last but certainly not least, at the same time as remote participation during the Intercommunity 2015, ISOC-PH also conducted a forum on Internet quality, speed and cost with the telecoms industry, regulator and other stakeholders.

India Delhi Chapter

This year ISOC Delhi Chapter held various discussions amongst chapter members on various relevant topics. Apart from meetings of chapter members, there were presentations and subsequent discussions on topics such as Software Defined Network (SDN) by Dr. Karan Singh, Assistant Professor, JNU, discussions pertaining to IANA Transition and ICANN Accountability draft papers, on Big Data Analytics by Anuj Gupta, Head M/s Airwoot, and on Net Neutrality by Chaitanya Ramachandran. The Chapter also supported various events organized by other associations such as a round table discussion organized by CCAOI on IANA Transition and ICANN Accountability Process and India's position, where few members of Internet Society (ISOC) Chapters from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, participated remotely.

Hong Kong Chapter

Aligned with the vision of Internet Society - 'The Internet is for Everyone', in 2015 a wide range of events have been held on topics such as Internet Security & Privacy, Startups as well as other issues related to the Internet. Some highlights are:

Activities on Startups

'Best ICT Startup Award 2015' (10th April) - The Best ICT Startup Award is in its second year; its led by the HK Government and organized by the Internet Society Hong Kong Chapter (ISOC HK). Its aim is to recognize ICT startups that have developed innovative and quality ICT solutions, promoted entrepreneurship and startup culture, fostered the startup community and its whole ecosystem in Hong Kong. We received nearly a hundred startup applications and 14 winners were awarded.

'Hong Kong Startup Rocks! Who said HK Startups are dead?' (23rd April) - ISOC HK had invited two of the hottest startups in Hong Kong to come and share their stories with the audience. One was the winner of Hong Kong ICT Awards and has launched via Kickstarter successfully. The other was back from Y-Combinator, which is the world's top accelerator program. The event had a full house with over a hundred attendees.

'World Internet Developer Summit 2015' (21st - 22nd May) - The two-day summit was the annual and signature cross-platform developer summit in the region. The event connected with the greatest minds in the industry with the latest Internet development, news, various development platform techniques, hints and tips. The theme for this year Summit was 'DevCon for Cloud and Mobile'. Speakers included representatives from Dropbox, Twitter, IBM, Paypal, Microsoft and the Alibaba Group. The summit was highly successful with hundreds of participants.

'Story of Open Source Startups' (2nd August) - Speakers from famous open source startups and companies including the Founder of WordPress were invited to share their success stories on how to establish open source startups and run their business. The event had great positive feedback.

Activities on Internet Security & Privacy

'Privacy & Innovation – In Pursuit of Right Incentives' (8th - 9th June) - ISOC HK co-organized this international conference on the balance between innovation and rights-based approaches to privacy and data protection. Speakers from Google and Microsoft were invited to share their insight to the audience.

'InterCommunity 2015' (8th July) - Hong Kong was one of the 9 remote hubs, which connected to the global hub in Auckland, New Zealand during ISOC's global meeting. The on-site panel discussion focused on

Collaborative Security. Professionals from the Internet security and IT sector were invited to express their views and opinions.

'SecureHongKong2015' (11th September) - This one-day conference delivered discussion and thought-provoking presentations on many of the serious critical infrastructure protection, management, security and cyber security issues and challenges facing the industry. Speakers from the USA, Singapore and Hong Kong came together to share ideas on 'Protecting Our Infrastructure and Information Asset'.

Others Activities

'Fred Baker's Talk – The Internet of Things' (16th April) - Mr. Fred Baker was invited as a keynote speaker at our organized seminar. Baker is a past IETF Chair and current co-chair of its IPv6 Operations Working Group. During the seminar, Baker shared his ideas on "The Internet of Everything from An Engineer's Perspective".

Welcome Aboard

This year, Internet Society India Trivandrum Chapter was added to the ISOC Asia-Pacific family.

Communication

The Bureau continued to enhance its communication channels in 2015. This included increased publicity for its events through both social and traditional media, as well as revamping its regional newsletter.

Through the course of the year, the Bureau had several hundred media spots around the region, including primetime TV coverage for INET Islamabad, and engaged with national and regional publications for op-eds, articles, and stories. Follow us on Twitter [@ISOCapac](#) and visit our [Scoop.it page](#) for Asia-Pacific related Internet related news and articles.

Regional Newsletter

APAC Connections is a monthly e-newsletter released towards at the end of every month. It has updates on the Asia-Pacific Bureau's activities and features insights on the transforming Internet landscape in and around the Asia-Pacific region from guest writers and Bureau staff. In 2015, the Bureau published 11 newsletters, which included articles on a variety of topics including cyber security, digital economy, encryption, IANA stewardship transition, Net Neutrality, online harassment, OTT, WSIS+10 review and more.

The newsletter archive is available at: <http://bit.ly/ISOCapacNewsletterArchive>

Subscribe to receive APAC Connections by email at: <http://bit.ly/ISOC-APAC-signup>

Social Media Activity

The Bureau utilized social media much more effectively in 2015. Current Internet developments in the region were captured and disseminated to stakeholders through the APAC Bureau's Scoop.it [page](#). Real-time updates on ISOC and other regional events are broadcast through its Twitter account, [@ISOCapac](#), whose followers have more than tripled since 2014. Snippets from social media from Bureau organised events are collected on [Storify](#), which serves as a repository of highlights and key discussion points following each event.

Regional Blog

APAC Bureau staff blogged more intensively this year and published some 38 pieces, or an average of 3 blogposts per month. These posts were on Bureau activities and Internet-related issues across the region.

These are available at <http://www.internetsociety.org/blog/asia-pacific-bureau>

Media Engagement

A number of APAC Bureau initiatives drew significant media attention in 2015. Notably, the launch of the '*Unleashing the Potential of the Internet for ASEAN Economies*' report was featured in global publications like the Wall Street Journal, but also in local ones such as Business World in the Philippines. INET Islamabad had more than 100 media spots including primetime TV, print and online media. Articles and op-eds by the Bureau were likewise featured in a range of national and regional publications.

Regional Events Live Streaming

All of the regional 'Internal Events' were live streamed hosting an audience of thousands around the world watching these events over the Internet. Webcast archives of these and other ISOC related events from around the world are available on our Livestream channel [here](#).

APAC Bureau Team

The Internet Society's Asia-Pacific Bureau covers South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Oceania with team members located across the region. The APAC Bureau Team with its strong network of contacts, collaborators and contributors, as well as its region-wide reach and relationships, is well positioned to help ISOC face the future of the Internet and the many opportunities it will provide to improve and enhance people's lives across the region.

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