New Report from Internet Society Outlines Steps for Unleashing the Potential of the Internet in S.E. Asia

Report Provides Path for ASEAN Governments to Foster Internet Development and Transform Economies

[Manila, Philippines – 2 March 2015] – The Internet Society (ISOC) and consulting and research firm TRPC today released a report identifying the concrete steps necessary to unleash the potential of the Internet and transform the 10 ASEAN member economies (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) into a highly competitive, single market and production base.

The report, "Unleashing the Potential of the Internet for ASEAN Economies," takes stock of the Internet infrastructure of the region and outlines the actions necessary to support the Internet connectivity goals of the *ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint* a comprehensive agenda for the economic transformation of the region. The report was released at the 'ISOC-TRPC Rethinking the Digital Economy' Forum in Manila.

"The ASEAN region represents over 600 million people and is one of the fastest growing regions in the world, with   projected real average GDP growth rate of 5.4% per annum between 2014-2018.
As a single entity, it would represent the seventh largest global economy," said Rajnesh Singh, the Internet Society's Regional Bureau Director for Asia-Pacific.

According to the report, the ASEAN governments have made some progress in recent years through various e-government projects. However, despite those efforts, the report shows that Internet penetration across the region varies widely and the cost of the digital divide is profound. Many countries in the region still suffer from poor coverage, low bandwidth and unaffordable access.

"In order to take advantage of this economic power and realize the AEC's goals, the region will need to look beyond basic connectivity and focus on the interconnectivity of the Internet, which will underpin the economic integration and usher in the digital economy," continued Singh. "This report provides a view of Internet infrastructure in the region and indicates where each of the 1   countries stand, and the steps and actions that need to be taken to move to a digital economy, which will be key to the ASEAN integration plans."

The report finds that as the Internet becomes more pervasive, the cost of not getting online is only set to rise. Against the backdrop of the AEC, it highlights that countries should look beyond basic connectivity and focus on the interconnectivity of the Internet, which will underpin the economic integration and social inclusion in the ASEAN region and usher in the digital economy.

Th recommendations

The report outlines 1 steps the governments of the region can take to encourage and accelerate the shift from basic connectivity to a more fully-interconnected and interoperable digital economy:

1. Prioritize access to wireless networks by extending them to unserved and underserved areas;
2. Ensure affordability of network access;
3. Prioritize affordability of devices, including ensuring that device distribution and retail networks are fully competitive;
4. Promote infrastructure sharing and equal access, especially where resources are dominated by one or two carriers, to protect smaller new entrants and maximize services competition;
5. Plan for and promote the transition to IPv6;
6. Promote interoperability via voluntary agreements or state-supported clearance systems;
7. Build interoperability into all service delivery by adopting open Internet standards, which allows devices, services and applications to work together across a wide and disperse network independent of the actual platforms they run on;
8. Lead in using ICTs—potentially starting with health, education and disaster risk management services—extending inclusion to marginalized communities considered 'uneconomic' by the private sector;
9. Recognize that populations are mobile-centric and adjust Internet access and national digital economy plans accordingly; and
10. Involve populations that are marginalized by gender or disability in the planning process and distribute resources and capacity building to enable greater access and participation.

"It is no overstatement to say that the successful launch of the AEC in 2015 will depend upo the ability of the ASEAN nations to interconnect," noted Singh. "However, the benefits of a shift from the economies of scale of an Internet economy to the economies of scope of a digital economy will be truly transformative."

To read the full report, visit: https://www.internetsociety.org/doc/unleashing-potential-internet-asean-economies.

About the Internet Society
The Internet Society is the trusted independent source for Internet information and thought leadership around the world. It is also the organizational home for the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). With its principled vision, substantial technological foundation and its global presence, the Internet Society promotes open dialogue o Internet policy, technology, and future development among users, companies, governments, and other organizations. Working with its members and Chapters around the world, the Internet Society enables the continued evolution and growth of the Internet for everyone. For more information, visit www.internetsociety.org

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