Chapter Development Program: 2007-2009

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Introduction

This document provides a high level overview of the multi-year strategic effort to develop the ISOC chapters into strong, effective and robust organisations that promote and defend the principles of the Internet Society.

Goals

The goals of the Chapter Development program are for ISOC chapters to be:

- Active and well respected in their local community;
- Working in partnership with local stakeholders to advance ISOC's mission;
- Strong and engaged with their membership base;
- Unified components of the ISOC 'family' working towards a common cause;
- Working collaboratively with other chapters;
- Delivering a clear and consistent message and image of ISOC.

Focus

To achieve these goals, the Chapter Development programme will focus on the following areas of development:

- Chapter policies and procedures
- Stakeholder relationship management strategy
- Tools, communications and support
- Funding support

Overview

Chapter policies and procedures

A consistent and comprehensive set of policies is important for ensuring that roles and responsibilities are well understood and implemented consistently across chapters. It is the foundation upon which partnerships are built. It is true that roles and responsibilities are described in some of the corporate documentation, however compliance is variable. Work being undertaken in this area includes:

- Review of current policies and procedures documents
    - Documents identified
    - Work with the community to revise and develop policy documents as appropriate
    - Focus on generic policy issues that localise well
    - Identify tools and procedures for ensuring that the policies are followed and consistently applied
- Development of a chapter policy document

Dependencies
Receiving the support and participation of the chapters in developing these policies. This will lengthen the development period, but is seen as essential to the development process.

Stakeholder relationship management strategy

This is a critical and substantial area of work that is focussed on developing a model for building strong, sustainable and trusting relationships with chapters and between chapters (as two distinct but related areas).

As a foundation, this activity requires a common and shared understanding of roles and responsibilities within the ISOC community. This requires constructive interactions and communication between all parties, upon which co-operation and trust are built. The quality of current communications in the network is variable; with a degree of adversarial interaction that is not productive. This is an area for development.

- Review and document all methods of communication with chapters;
- Examine the roles and quality of relationships within the ISOC community;
- Identify areas for development;
- Define strategies for managing relationships;
- Operationalise strategies to develop a fully functional network of stakeholder relationships.

The Regional Bureau's require a special mention. They enable a high degree of personal contact, support and guidance with chapters. They are an important component of managing relationships and we anticipate expanding the Bureau concept to other regions. Moving forward, we see an expanded role for the Bureaus in supporting this area of chapter development.

Dependencies
The ability to operationalise the strategies for improving stakeholder relationships lies partly in the provision of technical infrastructure, technical developmental resources and communications support as mentioned below. Also, this activity may require an external facilitator for face-to-face work to assist with developing relationships.

Tools, communications and support

This area could be considered an operational aspect of the 'stakeholder relationship' area of work in that it discusses the 'tools' of communication, information and support.

Tools

- Improving the membership system;
- Website, including a chapter wiki supporting the needs of the chapters;
- Speaker support program connecting speakers with events;
- On-line forums, meetings and seminars;
- Development of remote participation tools;
- Archived multi-lingual library of media (including audio and webcasts).

Communications

- Update and expand website material;
- Develop chapter outreach material and templates;
- Chapter "in a box kit" for new chapters to help get them up and running;
- Guidelines for talking to the media and the press;
- 'White' papers and position papers (through Policy and Education);
- Develop supporting sponsorship materials and guidelines.

Support

- Define 'service' levels in responding to chapters or chapter applicants;
- Respond to chapter applications and to chapter requests;
- Monitor chapter activity and assist with chapter rejuvenation as necessary;
- Promoting and supporting multi-lingual communications with appropriate procedures to ensure development and maintenance.

Dependencies
The ability to deliver effective communications and information tools is dependant on developments in ISOC's technical infrastructure, technical developmental resources and communications support. There are also dependencies on the policy and education departments with respect to the provision of information and dependencies in the availability of funding support for translations.

Funding Support

This area will examine various models for supporting chapter development, with the objective of creating a model that leads to "sustainable" chapters and is also scalable in terms of the financial obligation to ISOC. Currently, funding of chapter projects mainly takes place through the Project Funding program. Work to be undertaken includes:

- Continuation and review of the Project Funding program;
- Evaluate models for increased financial support to chapters;
- Draw up recommendations and seek approval as appropriate;
- Implement and operationalise.

Dependencies
This work area will have financial impact on the organisation and will be embedded in ISOC's budget and planning process.

Timelines and Priorities

Due to the critical nature of some of the dependencies across the activity areas and the scope of our activities, we are not yet able to provide accurate timelines for all initiatives. These will be developed in consultation with the appropriate departments. Please also note that additional staff resources will be available in October 2007, with the appointment of the Manager for chapters and individual members. This will allow many developmental activities to fully commence in 2008.