

# The Role of Universities when creating the African Network Society

## Using NRENs as Spearheads and Universities as Think Tanks

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3rd Open Access Workshop  
Maputo 2005-05-11

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## The tasks of Universities

1. Research
2. Education
3. Community Service



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## Community Service could mean

- To act as a think tank supporting
  - Government sector
  - Municipalities
  - Civil society
  - EntrepreneursIn their efforts developing the network society
- Development cooperation
- Incubation
- Targeted Capacity Building



## Research Vision: the Network Society

- Based on communication and interaction
- Empowering people by making human knowledge and experience openly accessible
- Ubiquitous access to services for individuals, enterprise and trade facilitating growth.
- Described e.g. by Manuel Castells in;
  - The Rise of the Network Society, Blackwells, Oxford, 1st edition 1996, 2nd edition 2000
  - the Internet Galaxy, Oxford University Press, 2000



# Strategy towards the vision

- Focus on a few key user categories contributing to a sustainable communications market while contributing to the Millennium Development Goals
  - Healthcare
  - Education
  - Public administration
- Define their user requirements as drivers to
  - Empower and engage user communities
  - Engage all stakeholders
  - Develop technical solutions
  - Deploy pilots



# Engage Research Groups interested in Research on the Network Society

- User requirements
  - Healthcare, education, public administration
- Technology
  - Information and Communication technologies
- Entrepreneurship
  - Sustainable business models for technical solutions meeting the user requirements
- Impact
  - Analysis of Consequences
  - Feedback



## MSc and PhD Education as Muscle and source of entrepreneurs

- Problem-Oriented, project-driven approach
- Mixed global teams with diverse competences
- Has been used to build
  - Internet Exchanges
  - Access networks
  - Backbones out of dark fibres (Longhaul links)
  - Applications and servicesin several developing countries
- <http://csd.ssvl.kth.se/>
- [www.it.kth.se/intms](http://www.it.kth.se/intms), [www.it.kth.se/entms](http://www.it.kth.se/entms)



## The Pan African Fiber Backbone

Can we cooperate with ESKOM, EDM, ESCOM,  
Tanesco and other fiber owners to

- Develop technical solutions and business models for their fibre businesses
- Demonstrate feasibility by implementing NRENs and an Academic backbone (PAREN)
- While adding elements to the Pan African Fibre Backbone
- ??



## Internet exchanges

- Can we accelerate the establishment of Internet Exchanges in Africa and interconnect them with regional / national backbone links??
- Interest from
  - Botswana
  - Zambia
  - Malawi
  - Senegal



## Access Networks and Local Inter/intra-net Service Providers (LiSPs)

- Can we work with government, municipalities and local entrepreneurs to build sustainable local communication markets that can also contribute to the sustainability of the backbone??

