



REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE

Ministry of Transport and Communications

Information Communication Technology

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Internet & Intranet Services in Timor-Leste

Background

The provision of Internet services is critical to the development of a country, especially in post-conflict situations. By 1999 70% of all communications infrastructure, public buildings, and essential utilities had been destroyed in East Timor as a result of war. Collapse of Communications services hindered the implementation of aid and development programmes and reinforced the isolation of the country.

By February 2000 there was a full deployment of United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). With no communication infrastructure in place the Transitional Administration had to install a system that would enable communication within its offices spread all over the country.

In November 2000 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) instigated an Internet Network for Development Project with the aim of providing Internet services to East Timor Public Administration, Civil Society Organizations, Diplomatic Missions and some UN Agencies. Upon its completion the Project had to transfer all communication devices it had acquired to the Government.

Between 2000 and mid 2002, there were three Internet Gateways each serving a different set of clients; the UN Systems, UNDP Internet Network for Development Project and Telstra. Of the three gateways only Telstra operated on a commercial basis.

Connectivity Providers - Contact Data

Timor Telecom

<http://www.timortelecom.tp> - <http://www.timortelecom.tl>

Internet & Intranet:

In July 2002, through an International Telecommunication tender, Timor Telecom won the bid to 'Build Operate & Transfer' BOT telecommunication services for Timor-Leste. TT signed contract agreements to operate telecommunications services in Timor-Leste for a period of 15 years; the contract also included operating country's commercial Internet gateway.

TT has established regional access points in all the thirteen districts and interlinking all the districts via a Microwave Network. Services within the districts depend on how far the clients are from the access points. (Incase of lease lines). Besides the Internet Services TT also offers Data Circuits of multiples of 64K and thereby allowing organizations with offices spread out in the country to communicate; prices depend on distance and circuit capacity.

The United Nations Office, UN agencies and some diplomatic missions have their own gateways and Internet services within these organizations are for internal use only. In this case TT is only used as a backup.

Government Network:

In March 2005 the United Nations Mission Office (UNMISSET) donated its Nation wide Microwave and Wireless Network infrastructure to the Government. This has gone a long way in promoting Government connectivity services to the districts. Through this setup, some of the government offices in the districts have Internet services. There are plans to use the same infrastructure to transfer TV news/data to and from the districts. Plans are also underway to upgrade the current Internet bandwidth of 2Mbps to 3Mbps or 4Mbps so as to cater sufficiently for all Government offices within the country.

Challenges:

Cost

In those areas where the infrastructure has been developed, Internet may be perceived as an all-round good deal for businesses. But not every business has an opportunity to take advantage of the Internet. In Timor-Leste, the cost in some cases can make access and use of the Internet prohibitive. In addition, the infrastructure may simply not be developed in remote areas, making access at any cost impossible.

Consumers also have to pay heavily for computers and communications devices as these devices have to be imported from neighbouring countries.

Capacity development

There may be a lack of adequate and sustainable structures and institutional procedures needed to get connected to a computer, modem, and telephone. In addition, certain skills, tools, and information are required when using the Internet. These capacities are scarce in Timor-Leste due to the weak financial base of some business organisations and the citizens; this has hampered the development of the Internet.

There is need to educate the public on the importance of Internet services and the benefits, it can bring (as a catalyst for development)

Future plans:

Plans for drafting a focused ICT policy paper are underway and concerned bodies are working towards achieving this goal.

Through the approval of Autoridade Reguladora das Comunicações (ARCOM) a special body within the Ministry of Transport and Communications, academic institutions could be exempted from leasing internet services from TT and instead set up their own Internet gateways; this would be for internal use only.

Formulation of a Regulatory framework

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