

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATICS AT MSA: THE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR IDIA

Report on the Monash-IITB partnership, and the 1st & 2nd DI Workshops
Presented to the Inaugural IDIA International Conference, Prato, 7/11/07



‘Now is the time for us to turn to each other,
and not on each other’

*(Prof. Tyrone Pretorius, Pro-Vice Chancellor, 2nd Annual Development Informatics
Workshop, MSA Campus, 30 Nov. 2007)*

From inspiration in Maharashtra, India...

Collaborative study November 2005: Prof. Don Schauder (Monash Centre for Community Networking Research – CCNR - Caulfield); Dr Jacques Steyn and Judy Backhouse (School of IT, MSA); Prof. Krithi Ramamritham (IITB Development Informatics Laboratory, Mumbai).

- Explored the question: *‘Could the technical solutions and collaborative models developed by IITB and rural partners in India (‘aAQUA Project’) help to meet development needs in Africa?’*

- Auspiced by the Monash South Asia Steering Committee.

- Follow-ups to the Indian visit ...

- by Don Schauder and Graeme Johanson, with Mark Shuttleworth at UN World Summit for the Information Society, Tunis

- by Prof Ron Weber, Monash Dean of IT, with SAP Research Laboratory, Pretoria

- by Jacques Steyn and Judy Backhouse with other stakeholders at MSA

encouraged our adoption of DI as a key area of research focus at MSA.



...to 1st Workshop for collaborative action in Development Informatics (DI) at MSA

JULY 2006: Jacques Steyn and his MSA colleagues organised, and Krithi Ramamritham, Don Schauder and Graeme Johanson participated in the 1st DI Workshop and a series of other strategic consultative meetings in the same week.



Prof Don Schauder Monash Australia, CCNR
Prof Krithi Ramamritham IITB, Mumbai, DI Lab
Dr Harold Wesso Deputy Director (Policy and Strategy), Dept of Telecommunication, South African Government
Helen King International Relations Manager, The Shuttleworth Foundation, London and Cape Town
Dr Jacques Steyn Head, MSA SIT

Stanley Sixolile Ntakumba Assistant Director (Research), Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)
A/Prof Graeme Johanson Monash Australia, CCNR
Yumi Isawa, MSA SIT
Dr Braam van der Vyver, MSA SIT



...linked to Monash's wider engagement with Community Informatics.

- **CCNR** (Centre for Community Networking Research, Monash Australia) has long-standing links with CI pioneers Profs **Mike Gurstein** and **Wallace Taylor** (now at **CPUT**). CCNR was a co-founder of CIRN (Community Informatics Research Network) – a worldwide movement for the advancement of community informatics theory and practice. IDIA is holding its first international peer-reviewed meeting at the **2007 Annual CI Conference at the Monash Centre in Prato, Italy**.



- A significant new alliance for IDIA is **CITANDA** (Centre for Information Technology and National Development in Africa) at the **University of Cape Town**.

Since the 2006 Workshop Monash/IDIA and CCNR have strengthened their relationship with CPUT/TISI (The Information Society Institute).



- Monash/IDIA tries to ensure that its activities articulate with those of **Meraka** (including the new **W3C Office**).



DIW1 - Recommendation 1

1. **Monash South Africa with its community, academic, business and government partners should undertake one or more Development Informatics (DI) research and community action projects.**

OUTCOME: Agreed, and to mark the World Cup, Monash adopts the banner 'E-Goals' for all MSA DI projects at least until 2010 (including pre-existing projects on e-government).



Dr Harold Wesso Deputy Director (Policy and Strategy), Dept of Communications, South African Government addressing the Workshop said:

“A major current priority is 2010 when South Africa will host the FIFA World Cup – this presents a major window of opportunity to get ICTs into communities.”

DIW1 - Recommendation 2



2. Projects to be considered should include :

- i. **World Cup:** Young people learn to use IT and collaborative skills in contexts associated with the run-up to the Cup in 2010.
- ii. **Digital Hero Book.** Steve Vosloo's project concerning personal and peer-to-peer problem solving, especially for young people, using digital media.
- iii. **Open Source vs. Proprietary Software:** Win-Win Solutions. Aimed at maximising cost-benefit for CBOs and NGOs in their interoperations with government and business.
- iv. **ICT for Fitness and Preventive Health**

- v. **ICT Convergence:** Partnership with other stakeholders on the interoperation of ICTs for public benefit. Several new technologies (such as digital TV, broadband, advanced cellular access) will be used for the first time in 2010. What might be the social dividends of such convergences?

OUTCOME: Monash chooses the project theme 'Mobs4D: Mobile Phones for Development' – seen as integrating key aspects of all the above project suggestions.

DIW1 - Recommendation 3

3. The project or projects chosen should be seen as central to the research agenda for the first four years of a proposed Centre for Development Informatics (CDI) or a similarly named entity.

OUTCOME: Monash chooses the name IDIA (International Development Informatics Association), in preference to CDI, because it signals that collaboration with others is a fundamental value of DI research at MSA.



Yumi Isawa, MSA SIT

Michael Morgan, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Johannesburg

A/Prof Graeme Johanson Monash Australia, Caulfield: CCNR

The IDIA agenda aligns with the priorities of several UN agencies and major NGOs in Africa.

For CCNR, IDIA was the latest of many community related collaborations in Australia and internationally, that were honoured in the 2006 Vice Chancellor's Industry and Community Engagement Awards.





2nd MSA DI WORKSHOP

30 October 2007

Launch of IDIA

Keynote: Prof Sospeter Muhongo,
Regional Director for Africa, International
Council of Science (ICSU)

Participants from: Business, NGOs,
Government, Research Organisations



DIW2:

**KEY THEMES OF CONCERN IN
THE SEVEN-HOUR WORKSHOP:**

1. COLLABORATION
 2. TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE
 3. GLOBAL INFLUENCE OF CELL PHONES
 4. COMMITMENT TO REDUCING DIGITAL DIVIDES
- *Major outcome for Monash IDIA: specification of a South African Mobs4D pilot project.*

