

## WSA INDIA INTERNATIONAL E-CONTENT SUMMIT ON 21ST CENTURY INDIA THROUGH DIGITAL CONTENT

# A Digital Content Policy is the need of the hour

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The Summit intended to be India's largest Digital Technology and Digital Content Summit was held on the occasion of 2009 World Summit Award Grand Jury. With India as the host through Department of Information Technology, the Summit witnessed a gathering of digital technology and content experts, policy experts, research and academicians who are into technology and development, representatives from private and civil society stakeholders, digital technology and content innovators and practi-

tioners and community leaders, who shared the platform to discuss digital technology and content areas in development. With several round table sessions, the Summit ended with key outcomes! Among key speakers included Chief Guest, Mr. Wajahat Habibullah, Chief Information Commissioner of India; Prof. Peter Bruck, Chairman, World Summit Award; Mr. R. Chandrasekhar, Special Secretary, DIT, Govt. of India; Mr. S R Rao, Additional Secretary, DIT, Govt. of India. The Summit, held on April 2, 2009 in New Delhi, was organized by Digital Empowerment Foundation with support from Department of Information Technology, Govt. of India and strategic support from World Summit Award, Austria.

### Summit Objectives

Key Summit objectives included:

1. To share best practices and lessons learned about digital technology and content for development from international and national experiments;
2. To share tools and strategies for digital technology and content for development;
3. To have focused and targeted deliberation on the linkage between digital technology and content and social, economic, and cultural capital;
4. To increase the level and scope of knowledge about the strategies and resources available to build social, economic, and environmental capital, especially in light of the changing technology and content environment;
5. To deliberate on key policy aspects of digital technology and content for last mile development.

### Summit Outcome

Working Session I: Digital Content in Business, Enterprise & Livelihoods

The focus of this session was to discuss the role of digital content & services on various ICT tools and media platform. The idea was to bring forth international learning and put them into Indian perspective and vice versa. The special focus was on ICT enabled sustainable business models providing livelihood, entrepreneurship and growth.

Thematic Session I: ICT Enabled Enterprise: Bridging Demand-Supply Gap

### Key Outcomes

1. There is need for clear-cut definition of an ICT enabled enterprise
2. There is extreme need for stakeholders to come together to meet the disparity between demand and supply of ICT enabled enterprises
3. Development in an ICT enabled enterprise has to be at three levels- development of infrastructure, development of practice and creation of user specific content
4. There is need to address the issue of misalignment between content and efficiency. Content is available in a large quantity but has to be realigned in order to be user specific and hence enhance the efficiency of the enterprises.
5. In order to develop an



enterprise it is deemed important to be precise about the target audience and whether it would be a public or private enterprise or a partnership between the two.

## Thematic Session II: Digital Technology & Supporting Role in Infrastructure Development

### Key Outcomes

1. Technology cannot replace need for basic infrastructure requirements
2. Overall infrastructure is the base and technology can be built on it
3. Technology has great ability to supplement infrastructure gaps fulfillment
4. Information communications technology needs to be deployed to meet key short, medium and long term information and communication gaps
5. Infrastructure policy decisions must take into account ICT policy decisions and vice versa.

Thematic Session III: Content creation, language content, new media platforms and content service delivery

### Key Outcomes

1. Content creation with a focus on local content and not only local language
2. Access is not that big a challenge. Wherever there is access, local content is missing
3. Localisation is not only translation. It has to be

converted to learning objectives

4. Incentivising the creation of local content should be done
5. The value of digital content has to be conveyed to the people so that they realise it

Thematic Session IV: Access, Affordability & Bandwidth for convergence enabled content flow

### Key Outcomes

1. The focus should be on development of content rather than only development of technology
2. In order to develop content and technology there is a need create infrastructure that works
3. Mobile technology should be emphasized as it provides the lowest cost of ownership.
4. ISP (Internet Service providers) should be incentivised in order to overcome their previous failure.
5. Fiscal incentives must promote ICT and content usage and outreach.

Working Session II: Digital Content in Education & Culture: Scaling up Social &

## Cultural Capital

The focus of this session was on the essence of ICT deployment and content enablement to support education and learning processes for quality outcome. The focus was on preserving cultural resources and capital through effective deployment and creation of digital technology and content storehouses. The stress was on the issues involved in preserving social and cultural capital vis-à-vis content generation and promotion.

Thematic Session I: Digital Content in Education and Culture: The Policy Thrust

### Key Outcomes

1. There is need for digital content policy to streamline the content ecosystem which is expanding every day
2. Strengthening networks like the National Knowledge Network in India and the proposal to power up network connectivity be taken vigorously
3. Avoiding structures like most content is in English and accessible only to people with technical know-how and education
4. Need for regulation of content under a creative

common license and the need for inter-operable content.

5. For content on the internet, standardisation of language fonts for regional languages is important.

Thematic Session II: Scaling up Educational Indicators through Digital media and Content

### Key Outcomes

1. The process of content development is equally important than the content itself. The content should be developed on the basis of present demand and not on the availability of technology
2. There should be adequate accreditation and certification of content
3. There should be standardization of both quality and quantity of content
4. Emphasis on content being open source
5. Medium of the content should be highly flexible.

Thematic Session III: Quality Content & Services in Education: Demand & Supply Issues

### Key Outcomes

1. Quantity and supply of



content cannot bypass quality check at various levels

2. There is need to strictly enforce standardisation aspect of content services
3. There is urgent need to have content authority in education services in a country like India where there are every new player each day
4. Timely assessment needs of teachers and learners necessary to streamline content demand and supply
5. Education content need not replace traditional quality learning processes and instead facilitate this

### Thematic Session IV: Sustaining Cultural Communities through Digital Media & Convergence

#### Key Outcomes

1. There is need to preserve transformation of culture
2. There is need to decentralize the process and more participation should be asked from communities
3. The technology to be given in the hands of those we are archiving and a special attention is to be given to tribal history
4. Archive culture is to be continued to nurture

5. There is need to build local community capacity to preserve the culture as is done in countries like Egypt who will not be able to pick up unless they build their capacity to national standards.

### Working Session III: Policy Framework for Governance & Inclusive Development

The focus of this session was on the policy parameters, policy compatibility in enabling a governance framework that caters to inclusive development through supporting role of technology and digital content. The session deliberated on the pros and cons of having an effective policy framework catering to governance and inclusive development needs using digital content and technology.

### Thematic Session I: Digital Content in e-Governance: Policy Focus

#### Key Outcomes

1. Keeping the relevance of digital content for e-Governance in view, policy may primarily focus on all relevant aspects of G2C/C2G and G2B/B2G domains of content, to

- start with.
2. Government is a natural content producer and basically the main producer of content for mass consumption. Therefore, Government should ensure that key standards and obligations are embedded in the Policy
3. Technology aspects should be dealt in the policy at the delivery levels e.g. bandwidth requirements, various media and platforms of delivery etc. Policy for these aspects should be distinct from all other policy matters relevant to digital content generation
4. Big bang idealistic policy measures should be avoided because past experience revealed that idealistic policy measures to have "Single Window Delivery" or "Universal/Content Management Scheme" did not yield planned results in other countries
5. Creation of National Content Commission which would take care of creation, preservation, use, re-use, IPR and all other related issues. Commission may be empowered to prepare rules and procedures.

### Thematic Session II: Time Bound

### Technology Infrastructure Development & up-scaling Successful Pilots

#### Key Outcomes

1. Learning from pilot should be quickly assimilated and made part of policy
2. A master plan should be made before the project actually starts
3. For time bound technology infrastructure development - use of technology which can be deployed faster
4. Having right kind of manpower available inside the government or the bodies which are going to implement
5. Legal and business process reengineering should be looked into and it should be fully settled before up scaling work starts

### Thematic Session III: Efforts on Inclusive Content Development through Mass Participation: Web 2.0 Technologies and Media

#### Key Outcomes

1. Content creation should involve people with special needs
2. Not just technologically free access but we need to show the benefit in getting involved in using the internet
3. The government needs to participate in the develop-



ment of policies and content. By government it means, not only the national government but the State government and also the local government

4. Education is the key
5. Web 2.0/3.0 gives voice to anyone who wants to participate in democracy

#### Thematic Session IV: Sustainability of the Technology Driven Projects: Public Private Partnership Modalities

#### Key Outcomes

1. With changing times due to global and national economic dynamics it has become important that Public - Private partnerships takes the lead in fulfilling key growth needs including in ICTD domain
2. Need to concentrate on PPP empowering and capacity building along with good practices and PPP success stories
3. Flexibility should be ensured and so should be the ability of utilizing new and evolving technology,
4. Need for having an 'enabling framework' for PPPs; there is importance of drawing out agreements between parties and having a clear RFP
5. While implementing, one needs to have benchmarks against which the assessment shall be made and there has got to be mechanisms for proper evaluation

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## Summit Recommendations

The Summit ended with key recommendations at large for policy and planning consideration.

Key cluster of recommendations were made during the 12 panel breakout sessions. The content community must keep up with the rapid pace of evolution of ICTs. The world is moving from the "third" screen (PCs) to the "fourth" screen (mobiles, handhelds). The nature of the mobile medium calls for some different criteria of content design, interactivity, security and location awareness. Stronger alignment is called for between key stakeholders in content generation. Alliance models like PPP have been touted for a long while in areas like community content and telecentres, but greater clarity is needed to ensure continuity and ownership after the partnership period expires. For content to be relevant to local audiences, it must be in the local language; it should include not just global content translated into local needs, but uniquely created content specifically for local user needs.

Another dimension of balance is between top-down and bottom-up (and even middle-out) models of content promotion. Greater resources should be dedicated to building capacity among ICT users for not just creating content, but also monitoring, assessing, rating, tagging and validat-

ing content out there on the Internet (e.g. students should not treat Wikipedia content as fact, but as pointers to authentic content elsewhere). From multilingual fonts to library taxonomies, there are strong movements emerging for standardisation of digital content (or at least for interoperability among different platforms and codes). Standards movements in different verticals should be tracked (e.g. education, health, government, payment) and best practices gathered across sectors and countries.

It is important for content promoters to fully grasp not just legal issues at the creation end of the content spectrum (e.g. creative commons license) but also at the access end (e.g. freedom of information, right to information, security). In an increasingly ICT and media driven world, it is important for citizens to enrich the infosphere by imbibing a "content culture" which includes eagerness to publish and share content, assist in co-creation of value, and democratically harness content for a range of applications and functions. The 21st century is marked by increased regional and global cooperation for content promotion and collaboration. For instance, the World Summit Award itself is a good example of international collaboration for periodic benchmarking of best practices in content publication around the world.

