Global Digital Economy - E-Government, E-Health and E-Education

Description: This annual report offers a wealth of information on the worldwide development of digital economy in terms of e-government, e-health and e-education. It offers analyses, statistics, forecasts and key trends. It provides insight into National Broadband Network (NBN) infrastructure developments and strategy. Regional information on developments in North America, Latin America, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific are also provided, where applicable.

Subjects covered include:

- Key elements of the digital economy;
- Global e-government overview and statistics;
- Global e-health overview and statistics;
- Global e-education overview;
- Vision of the digital economy after the crisis;
- Insight into National Broadband Network (NBN) developments;
- Brief regional overviews on e-government, e-health and e-education developments where applicable.

E-government, e-health and e-education are some of the most important industries to benefit from advancements in broadband infrastructure. Assisted by the reality of the financial crisis, countries have begun to understand that broadband transmission infrastructure is not merely important for the direct social and economic use of citizens, but that it is equally important for the digital economy and includes critical sectors such as healthcare, education and smart grids. The crisis is a unique opportunity to develop new policies, vision and strategies that allow us to move in a better direction, where investments are also judged within the context of social, environmental and economic benefits.

Many governments around the world have shown leadership in developing online services and recent attention has shifted away from these traditional online services to new initiatives. These include incorporating social media tools into e-government services, particularly those aimed at communicating directly with citizens and implementing cloud computing services in order to cut costs and improve upon ICT system infrastructure.

Governments in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Finland, Korea, Australia, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, USA and Canada are considered to be just some of the leaders in e-government. The US government was one of the first countries to take to the step towards cloud computing with the launch of Apps. Gov and other countries such as the United Kingdom are formulating cloud computing plans as well.

Governments are also recognising that healthcare is one of the last paper-based sectors of the economy due to the inconsistent systems used amongst the various industry segments. New national broadband networks will not only supply the infrastructure for national e-health systems – they can also provide the catalyst for the standardisation and integration of the various widely dispersed computerised systems. Furthermore, the real power of the existing computerised systems is not maximised as they are unable to provide a whole-of-patient service. An equally important element of e-health is that it will give the patient/client a central role in the health system.

The large Internet Media companies certainly want to be part of the future of e-health and once again Google and Microsoft are at the forefront of developments. Microsoft was one of the first on the scene with the launch of its Personal Health Platform (PHP) named Health Vault in 2007 and Google quickly followed with the launch of Google Health. Cloud computing is also gaining attention from the health sector; but large issues surrounding privacy must be overcome before widespread developments can occur.
The Internet and associated Web 2.0 technologies has further broadened the quality and possibilities for remote education and the ‘virtual classroom’. Tele-education is also becoming increasingly important in training health professionals in remote areas. While the current economic environment will see e-learning growth curtailed in the short term as companies reign in spending on non-essential training; in the long term this climate will also encourage more corporations and educational institutions to explore e-learning as a cheaper alternative to classroom style training. New innovations in e-learning are also emerging such as incorporating tele-presence and using Off-Net video technology. Apple’s iTunes U is also an interesting model to watch.

This report provides valuable insights into the digital economy developments taking place in terms of e-government, e-health and e-education. It includes information on key worldwide trends and developments, with supporting examples and statistics. Infrastructure is an essential element for the future of the digital economy and the report provides analyses on infrastructure strategy in terms of National Broadband Networks and a vision for the future. Regional information on the progress of e-government, e-health and e-education is included where applicable for North America, Latin America, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific.

Key Highlights:

- The financial crisis has focused global attention on new infrastructure developments and facilitated a unique opportunity to shift the broadband emphasis from a high-speed Internet service to a national infrastructure for the digital economy that will underpin a range of positive social and economic developments.

- Australia and New Zealand are leading the world with preparing its telecoms infrastructure for the digital economy.

- Australia is also the leader in the trans-sector approach towards the use of this infrastructure.

- Around the world over 50 government agencies have also established SMS facilities that allow citizens the ability to contact emergency services, make general enquiries, reports or provide feedback.

- Although small compared with the world as a whole, tele-education is a fast growing market in Latin America, and practically all countries have adopted some form of distance education as an essential tool to overcome schooling shortages and improve the quality of education.

- The Internet holds the potential to bring vast improvements in key areas where Africa lags behind most of the rest of the world: government, health and education. Ongoing improvements in broadband access and fibre backbone infrastructure are now enabling many initiatives across the continent.

- Among the Eastern European nations, the EU countries have progressed the most in Information society development due to adoption of EU policies such as i2010. This includes e-government and e-health initiatives.

Data in this report is the latest available at the time of preparation and may not be for the current year.

Contents:

1. Key Elements of the Digital Economy
   1.1 Introduction to the digital economy
   1.1.1 Infrastructure essential for the digital economy
   1.1.2 Key sectors for the digital economy
   1.1.3 Key requirements of the digital economy

2. E-Government Overview and Statistics
   2.1 Global e-government market overview and statistics
   2.1.1 Introduction
   2.1.2 Benefits of E-Government
   2.1.3 Barriers to E-Government
   2.1.4 E-Government applications
   2.1.5 Leading E-Government around the world
2.1.6 Fibre key to E-Government
2.1.7 Cloud Computing and government

3. E-Health Market Overview and Statistics
3.1 Global e-health market overview and statistics
3.1.1 Scope
3.1.2 Massive costs of healthcare
3.1.3 E-Health – killer app on true broadband
3.1.4 Recent developments
3.1.5 Brief case study – Estonia’s E-Health evolution
3.1.6 Urgent rethink needed about E-Health delivery

4. Tele-Education Overview and Statistics
4.1 Global e-education market overview and statistics
4.1.1 Introduction
4.1.2 Recent trends and developments
4.1.3 Case study: Australia
4.1.4 Brief case study: Africa
4.1.5 E-Science

5. Vision of Digital Economy after the crisis
5.1 Strategic vision for communications after the crisis
5.1.1 Restructuring the industry
5.1.2 Government leadership
5.1.3 Decisive action by some governments
5.1.4 The position of incumbents

6. Regional Overviews
6.1 North America
6.1.1 E-Health
6.1.2 E-Government
6.1.3 E-Education
6.2 Latin America
6.2.1 Background
6.2.2 E-Government
6.2.3 E-Health
6.2.4 Tele-Education
6.3 Europe
6.3.1 E-government in Europe
6.3.2 E-health in Europe
6.4 Africa
6.4.1 Overview
6.4.2 E-Government
6.4.3 E-Health
6.4.4 Tele-Education
6.5 Middle East
6.5.1 Overview
6.5.2 E-Government
6.5.3 E-Education
6.5.4 E-Health
6.6 Asia
6.6.1 E-Government overview
6.6.2 Singapore
6.6.3 Malaysia
6.6.4 Pakistan
6.6.5 Philippines
6.6.6 Indonesia
6.6.7 Sri Lanka
6.6.8 Taiwan
6.6.9 China
6.6.10 South Korea
6.6.11 Japan
6.7 Pacific Region
6.7.1 Australia
6.7.2 New Zealand
6.7.3 South Pacific

7. Glossary of Abbreviations

LIST OF TABLES:

Table 1 – How investing in broadband can boost economies
Table 2 – United Nations e-government readiness ranking – top 35 countries – 2008
Table 3 – EIU e-readiness ranking – top 6 countries – 2008
Table 4 – Waseda University e-government ranking – 2008
Table 5 – Brookings Institution – highest e-government rankings – 2008
Table 6 – Worldwide top 10 markets with FTTx penetration > 1% – 2007; 2009
Table 7 – Projected regional increases in total healthcare spending – 2020 – 2050
Table 8 – Worldwide broadband subscribers and annual change – 2003 - 2009
Table 9 – Top 10 countries worldwide by fixed broadband subscribers – Q1 2009
Table 10 – Number of consumers using health monitoring – North America; Western Europe – 2008; 2012
Table 11 – Market value and growth of e-health – 2009; 2012
Table 12 – Uptake of e-government services by businesses in select European countries – 2008
Table 13 – Uptake of e-government services by individuals in select European countries – 2008
Table 14 – Citizens’ use of e-government services (Western Europe) – 2008
Table 15 – E-government readiness in Europe – 2008
Table 16 – ICT penetration among GP Practices in select European countries – 2008
Table 17 – Electronic exchange of patient data by purpose in select European countries – 2008
Table 18 – Broadband household penetration in Arabian Gulf countries – 2008

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit 1 – Faster broadband speeds offer more than just fast Internet
Exhibit 2 – Explanation: optical fibre
Exhibit 3 – Definition: E-Government
Exhibit 4 – Examples of Web 2.0 developments
Exhibit 5 – Examples of common web based e-government applications
Exhibit 6 – Countries with low e-government presence
Exhibit 7 – Definition: Cloud computing
Exhibit 8 – Amazon Web Services
Exhibit 9 – Selected healthcare spending statistics
Exhibit 10 – Broadband enabling better chronic disease management in Australia
Exhibit 11 – Advantages of e-health
Exhibit 12 – Digital healthcare appointment systems
Exhibit 13 – Examples of popular health related websites
Exhibit 14 – E-Health project examples
Exhibit 15 – A shared vision of the future of education
Exhibit 16 – Advantages of e-learning
Exhibit 17 – Sample of e-learning ASP market participants
Exhibit 18 – Examples of open source e-learning projects
Exhibit 19 – Examples of tele-education initiatives in developing markets
Exhibit 20 – Many Eyes – e-science web site example
Exhibit 21 – GigaPort and SURFnet
Exhibit 22 – Minnesota e-health initiatives
Exhibit 23 – Singapore – top global ranking in e-government

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