Bridging the Connectivity Divide from an Applications Perspective

Experiences, Challenges, Opportunities

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COMSNETS 2011
TEK: Browsing the Web via Email
with Saman Amarasinghe, Libby Levison, and many contributors from MIT

- Widely deployed with moderate impact
  - 10,000 searches from 500 users in 40 countries
  - Enabled first Web access for Solomon Islands

- Lessons learned
  - Beware of technology inflection points (email → webmail)
  - Web is missing locally-relevant content
Enabling User-Generated Content in Rural Areas

- **Approach:** Interactive Voice Portals

**Recent milestones:**
- 15,000 calls and 450 published reports since Feb 2010
- Anecdotal impact on the political process

**Potential to create rich, scalable audio communities**

*First instantiation:*  
**CGNet Swara:** A portal for citizen news journalism
- “Press 1 to record, or 2 to playback”
- Posts available via Web and phone

_Citizen Journalist in Chhattisgarh_
Opportunities and Challenges

• **Opportunities**
  – Leverage entertainment
  – Leverage peer-to-peer
  – Leverage humans

• **Challenges**
  – Manage metered bandwidth
  – Find killer apps
Can Streaming Video Enable Cash Flow into Rural Areas?

with Kapil Vaswani, Sriram Rajamani, B. Ashok

Second Life

“Third World”

• Revenue-generating opportunities
  – Virtual tourism
  – Remote shopping
  – Evidence-based philanthropy