

MPHPT

September 24, 2001, Vol. 12, No. 12

Please feel free to use the articles in this publication, with proper credits

COMMUNICATIONS NEWS

Biweekly Newsletter of the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Japan

IT Policy Principles

Focusing on Priority Areas in FY2002 Budget

MPHPT published a paper entitled "IT Policy Principles," which outlines priorities for IT policies in the FY2002 budget on August 28.

The dynamic development of IT (information technology) on a global scale together with the rapid diffusion of the Internet and rapidly evolving communications technologies is nothing short of

a social revolution on a par with the Agricultural Revolution or the Industrial Revolution. Japan is facing issues that include environmental concerns, the rapid aging of society, falling birthrates,

urban redevelopment, etc. in the midst of this age of vigorous transformation. The positive introduction and diffusion of IT is an essential element toward finding a solution to all these challenges for the country. In other words, promotion of IT-oriented restructuring of industries is the only way for the Japanese industry to be recovered and maintain sustainable economic growth in the future. It is necessary to focus all our attention on promotion of IT. Based on such understanding, the Government has developed an "e-Japan Strategy" as manifestation of Japan's policy target of becoming the most advanced IT nation

Indian IT and Communications Minister Pramod Mahajan Pays Courtesy Visit to Senior Vice-Minister KOSAKA

On September 3, 2001, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, Minister of Information Technology and Minister of Communications paid a courtesy visit to Rep. Kenji KOSAKA, Senior Vice-Minister for Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications.

Minister Mahajan visited Japan to participate in the Japan-India IT Summit held in Japan, etc. During the courtesy visit, Senior Vice-Minister KOSAKA explained the "e-Japan Strategy" and MPHPT's major IT policies. In response to the explanation, Minister Mahajan stated that i) India has become a powerful center of IT human resources, ii) the country will develop software and export thereof to Japan, iii) India will dispatch IT professionals to Japan and iv) both countries shall strengthen coop-

erative ties.

In addition, in commemorating the 50th anniversary in April 2002 of establishment of Japan-India diplomatic relationship, Minister Mahajan proposed that both countries would issue commemorative stamps (the Indian Ministry of Communications is in charge of postal administration).

Note: Japan-India IT Summit: Meeting between Mr. Heizo TAKENAKA, Minister of State (Economic and Fiscal Policy, Internet Fair 2001 Japan, IT Policy) and Minister Mahajan. This IT Summit is one of the "Japan-India IT Promotion and Cooperation Initiative" agreed upon in August 2000 between former Prime Minister Yoshiro MORI and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee during Prime Minister MORI's visit to India.

CONTENTS

- IT Policy Principles ----- 1
- Indian IT and Communications Minister Pramod Mahajan Pays Courtesy Visit to Senior Vice-Minister KOSAKA ----- 1
- Experiments of IAA System Successfully Concluded ----- 3

**International Policy Division,
International Affairs Department,
Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications
1-2, Kasumigaseki 2-chome,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8926, Japan**

- We welcome your comments by:
feedback-newsletter@soumu.go.jp
Fax: +81-3-5253-5924
Tel.: +81-3-5253-5920
- MPHPT information is available at:
<http://www.joho.soumu.go.jp/eng/>

in the world over the next five years, together with its action plans, “e-Japan Priority Policy Programs” and “FY2002

Programs.” Specific objectives have been identified and an outline of the measures that need to be promoted, es-

pecially with respect to budgetary support priorities.

Outline of IT Policy Principles

Promoting policies that achieve the intensive and strategic advancement in information technology (IT) is imperative in order to deal effectively with the issues that confront Japan today. Challenges such as environmental problems, the resuscitation of urban area, and the aging population resulting from a declining birthrate, must be handled together with structural reform and work toward economic recovery.

Objectives

- Establish and promote the use of ultrahigh-speed network infrastructure**
- Promote the establishment, within five years, of information communications networks that match world's highest standards and which permit ultrahigh-speed Internet access at a reasonable charge to everyone who wants it.
 - **The world's highest standard Internet network includes:**
 - High-level protection of privacy and security
 - Leading edge, high-speed wireless Internet access
 - **Inexpensive access for everyone:**
 - At minimum, it will be possible for 30 million households to have continuous high-speed Internet access and 10 million households to have continuous ultrahigh-speed Internet access.
 - Encourage the digitalization of broadcasts as the foundation for bringing the IT revolution to the home.

Achieve central and local e-governments

- By FY2003, introduce the widespread use of electronic data processing to administrative functions of both central and local governments, as well as public organizations. This will improve efficiency and make the central and local governments more convenient for citizens to access public services.

Develop human resources

- Raise Internet usage among individuals in Japan to 60% or more during FY2005.
- Establish an environment that allows everyone -- including schoolchildren of all ages, workers, the elderly and people with disabilities -- to acquire practical IT knowledge and skills.
- Foster the development of leading experts and high-level technical specialists in the IT field.

Help bridge the digital divide

- Create an environment that enables at least 30 million households to have continuous high-speed Internet access and 10 million to have continuous ultrahigh-speed Internet access within five years.
- Using coverage at municipal offices, etc., as a gauge, mobile telecommunications services will cover 95% of Japan by FY2003.
- Most television programs will have closed captions for the hearing impaired by FY2007.
- Work will continue to bridge the digital divide between nations, based on the principles outlined in the communiqué from Leaders of G8 at the 2000 Summit Meeting.

Promote strategic research and development

- Facilitate creative research and development that, from a medium- to long-term perspective, helps to strengthen the international competitiveness of Japan's industries.

IT in Japan now

- 1. High-speed Internet access is expanding
 - The number of households with high-speed Internet access (DSL services in Japan are now priced lower than in the United States. Services offering maximum access speeds of 8 Mbps at about 3,000 yen per month will begin in earnest in September 2001.)
- 2. Wider coverage and lower fees are expected for ultrahigh-speed Internet access
 - Currently, services with maximum access speeds of 100 Mbps is limited to portions of the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas. Monthly fees range from about 6,000 yen and higher. Service coverage will not be extended to low population density areas, etc.
- 3. Digital broadcasting is progressing steadily
 - By FY2003, digital terrestrial broadcasting is scheduled to begin in Japan's major metropolitan areas centered on Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, and in all other areas by 2006. (Analog broadcasting is scheduled to be completely phased out by 2011.)

- 1. IT in central government administration
 - An action plan has been formulated that aims to make 35% of administrative application and reporting procedures accessible online by FY2002, and 95% by FY2003.
 - It is necessary to establish basic platforms and resolve technical issues for sharing information for the steady attainment of these objectives.

- 2. IT in local government administration
 - 69% of administrative application and reporting procedures accessible online by FY2002, and 98% by FY2003.
 - Systems must be established to support online procedures, and future efforts will be needed to encourage the use of IT by local governments and public organizations

- 1. Percentage of population online
 - At the end of 2000, 37% of people in Japan had access to the Internet (an increase from 21% at the end of 1999).

- 2. IT in schools
 - 57% of Japanese public schools have Internet access (in contrast with 95% in the United States).
 - Most of these schools have low-speed (128 kbps) ISDN access. (It is anticipated that about 3,200 schools will have high-speed access (1.5 Mbps) during FY2001.)
 - Approximately 27% of all teachers are able to instruct students on the use of computers.
 - In the future, it will be necessary to establish high-speed Internet access at all educational institutions, and to develop content that take advantage of information networks.

- 3. IT in lifelong education
 - The number of people with practical IT skills are now being provided to an estimated 5.6 million individuals. From FY2000, internet access terminals for public use began to be installed at about 7,000 locations such as libraries and community centers. Further efforts will be made to give all adults opportunities to gain IT skills and access to education through IT.

- 1. Mobile telecommunications services
 - At the end of FY1999, using coverage at municipal offices, etc. as a gauge, mobile telecommunications services were available across 92% of Japan.

- 2. Closed-captioned TV programs to assist the hearing impaired
 - The ratio of closed-captioned programs during general broadcasting hours was 67.6% for the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) and 8.6% for commercial broadcasters.
 - It is imperative that commercial broadcasters with low rates of closed captioning should be encouraged to provide more such programming.

- 3. Assistance to developing countries
 - Offering guidance to developing countries on administrative policies and systems, providing technology transfer and assisting human resources development are essential in closing the digital divide between countries.

Focus on FY2002

- Promoting the ultrahigh-speed network infrastructure -- budget request for FY2002: 42.8 billion yen**
1. Develop necessary network infrastructure
 - Establish fiber-optic telecommunications networks in low population density areas, etc.
 2. Establish further regulatory reforms
 - Promote the development of core technologies related to Internet use (for example, through demonstrations of IT applications, e-Project).
 3. Advance regulatory reforms in the broadcasting field;
 - Create a competitive environment to stimulate production of applications and content.
 3. Create world-class information networks
 - Promote the IPv6 standard.
 - Encourage the development of core technologies related to Internet use (for example, through demonstrations of IT applications, e-Project).
 4. Promote development of content
 - Test and evaluate systems to improve broadband content distribution.
 5. Continue the digitalization of broadcasting

Achieving e-government -- budget request for FY2002: 20 billion yen

1. In central and local government institutions
 - Electronic provision of administrative information;
 - Establish platforms to allow application and reporting procedures to be processed online;
 - Carry out procurement electronically;
 - Establish information networks between central and local governments;
 - Establish information networks between central and local governments;
 - Encourage trials of online voting in local elections;
 - Resolution of technical and other issues related to conversion of administrative procedures to electronic formats.
2. Introduction of online information systems for fire fighting and prevention of disasters.
3. Facilitate e-commerce

Developing human resources -- budget request for FY2002: 10.9 billion yen

1. Establish high-speed Internet access at schools and universities
2. Improve IT literacy
 - Support programs to help people acquire basic IT skills.
 - Expand opportunities for the elderly and people with disabilities to use IT (including the development of systems designed for such users, and support for relevant activities of non-profit organizations).
3. Development of technical specialists
 - Expand the training industry.
 - Promote the development of skills related to information security.
4. Encourage the distribution of educational content

Bridging the digital divide -- budget request for FY2002: 13.4 billion yen

1. Establish fiber-optic telecommunications networks in low population density areas, etc.;
2. Install infrastructures for mobile communications;
3. Encourage the closed captioning of TV programming;
4. Ensure everyone has access to IT, including people with disabilities;
5. Further comprehensive policies aimed at closing the digital divide between countries.

Promoting strategic R & D -- budget request for FY2002: 9.7 billion yen

1. Competitive funding to stimulate IT research and development;
2. Photonic networks;
3. Mobile communications;
4. Network security;
5. Nanotechnology, quantum telecommunications technologies

Implementing the above policies is expected to result in a rise in Japanese manufacturing output worth 1,502 trillion yen, and the creation of 89,000 new jobs, by the end of FY2002.

Experiments of IAA System Successfully Concluded

— Communications-Support System for the Victims of Disasters —

Communications Research Laboratory (CRL), an independent administrative institution, developed a large-scale IAA (an abbreviated form for I Am Alive) system, which gathers and accumulates a large-volume of victims' information in disaster-stricken areas and provides an information retrieval service over the Internet. This system is more invulnerable in terms of communications traffic congestion than fixed telephone and cellular phone, namely, a disaster-resistant system. CRL carried out experimental operations of the large-scale IAA system from September 1 through 7, 2001, in order to verify the system performance in cases where large-scale disasters

strike metropolitan areas and a sudden rise in traffic volume is foreseen.

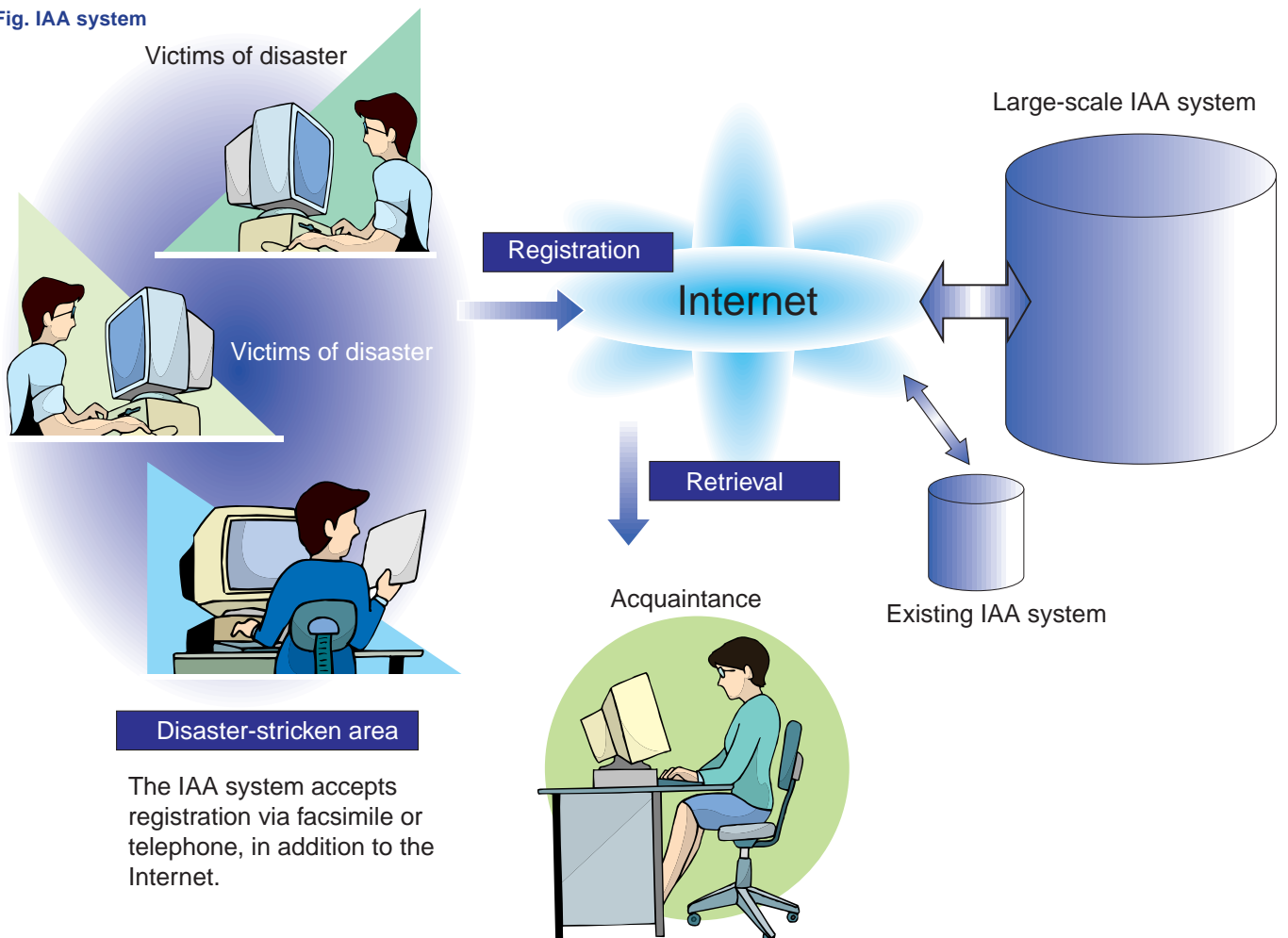
The former IAA system, which is developed by the Emergency Communications Group of CRL and the WIDE life-line Working Group, would not process this kind of huge traffic. In comparison with the former IAA system, the large-scale IAA system with extremely high performance can rapidly process enormous amount of traffic even if a large-scale disaster strikes the Tokyo metropolitan area where there is a large population.

This new system was opened to the general public as a verification experiment. Users accessed to the system as

“victims of disaster” who register their information and/or as “retrievers” who search for information on “victims of disaster” via the Internet. During this experiment, the Internet Disaster Support Drill, huge traffic was loaded on the system to verify whether the system can process a large-volume of traffic within a short period of time. The heavy-load experiment was conducted twice on September 3, 2001.

CRL is planning to carry out the open heavy-load verification experiment to verify that the IAA system can cope with large-scale disasters in densely populated areas.

Fig. IAA system



The IAA system accepts registration via facsimile or telephone, in addition to the Internet.