

MPHPT

June 3, 2002, Vol. 13, No. 4

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COMMUNICATIONS NEWS

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

“Study Group on the Next-Generation Closed Caption” Releases Report

Since September 2001, MPHPT has been holding the “Study Group on the Next-Generation Closed Caption” (Chair: Dean KIYOHARA Keiko, School of Media Science, Tokyo University of Technology) in order to study future closed-caption production, including effective measures thereon and closed captioning of live programs. In April 2002, the study group compiled its findings as a report. The outline of the report is as follows:

Chapter 1. Need for closed captioning

- Bridging the digital divide is an important policy issue upon promoting the IT society.
- Currently there are six million people with hearing difficulties, 350,000 people with hearing and speech disabilities, and 26,000 children with hearing and speech disabilities. The number of people with hearing disabilities will increase due to an increase in the elderly population.
- Many of the elderly living with their families have difficulties listening to TV sound in their everyday lives.

Chapter 2. Actions taken to promote closed captioning

1. Measures taken to diffuse the closed-captioned content

(Broadcaster)

- Ratio of the closed-captioned broadcasts to the total broadcast hours
NHK: 19.8%, five key commercial TV broadcasters: 3.3% (as of FY2000), the U.S.: 90%, and the U.K.: 50%.
- Ratio of the closed-captioned broadcasts to the broadcast hours feasible for the closed-captioned broadcasts (the target is 100% by 2007)
NHK: 67.6% and five key commercial TV stations: 8.6% (FY2000)

(Government)

- Amendment to the Broadcast Law (introduction of provisions containing obligation to make best effort);

Setting forth the targeted diffusion rate for closed-captioned programming (FY1997); a subsidization scheme for closed captioning (from FY1993); promotion of R&D on technology for automatically producing closed captioning (from FY1998)

2. Measures toward diffusion of closed caption receivers (closed captions) (Manufacturers)

- Cumulative number of sets shipped: approximately 2.05 million sets (1986 through 2001)
- Two types of TV set with built-in tuner and two types of external tuner are now under production.

Chapter 3. Changes in circumstances surrounding closed caption

- With respect to terrestrial broadcasting, digital broadcasting will start in the three metropolitan areas by 2003, and in other areas by 2006 respectively. After starting digital broadcasting, simulcasting will be started.
- With respect to news programming, realtime closed-captioned broadcasting has started from August 2001.

Chapter 4. Future policy for closed captioning -- Proposal toward enhancement and diffusion of closed captioning

1. Improvement in quality and quantity of closed-captioned programming

(Broadcasters)

- (1) Improvement in quality and quantity of closed-captioned programming in analog broadcasting

Broadcasters shall promote their own plans for improving closed captioned programming and to review their targeted figures. To this end, the following measures shall be promoted:

- To efficiently produce the closed captions: Further development of a closed captioning system such as staff and facilities, etc.; foster-

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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/>

- ing of skilled typing technicians
 - To save time upon closed captioning: Review of program production processes
 - PR activities for closed-captioned content: PR on websites, etc.; study on screen presentation method, etc.
- (2) Improvement of closed-captioned content in digital broadcasting
- Closed-captioned programming in analog broadcasting shall be closed captioned in digital broadcasting as well
 - Introduction of closed captioning for independent digital broadcast programming
 - Study on closed captioning by making use of merits of digital broadcasting

2. Diffusion of receivers for closed-captioned broadcasting

(Manufacturers)

- (1) Diffusion of receivers for analog closed-captioned broadcasting (closed-captioned broadcasting receivers)
- Establishing systems making it

- easier to buy receivers
 - Publicizing closed-captioned broadcasting receivers already in the market
 - Publicizing closed-captioned broadcasting receiving functions upon sales
- (2) Diffusion of digital closed-captioned broadcasting receivers
- All receivers for digital broadcasting are expected to be equipped with closed-captioned broadcasting receiving functions
 - According to the demand trend, the number of digital broadcasting receivers will reach 24.03 million sets by 2006, thus resulting in further diffusion of the receivers.

3. Role of government

- (1) Revision of the “targeted diffusion rate of closed-captioned broadcasting”: to revise the targeted diffusion rate, if necessary, by taking into account measures for enhancing closed-captioned content in digital broadcasting; with respect to live program-

- ming, such as news, etc., to revise the targeted diffusion rate, by taking into account the development of closed captioning technology in the future
- (2) Progress management for closed-captioned programming enhancement plan: request for understanding of the progress of closed-captioned programming improvement plan, its publication and improvement
- (3) Support for closed-captioned content production: subsidization of closed-captioned programming improvement plans; study on support measures, promotion of R&D into automatic closed captioning technology
- (4) Awareness campaign of closed-captioned content and its receivers for improving closed captioning: information provision through government publicity, etc.; approach to consumer groups, consumer electronics distributors, relevant organizations; where digital broadcasting receivers with built-in closed-captioned receiving functions do not gain popularity; study on measures for expanded use of receivers by referring to U.S. cases

Reference: closed-captioning improvement plan

Broadcaster	Ratio of the closed-captioned broadcasts to the total broadcast hours feasible for the closed-captioned programming		Ratio of the closed-captioned broadcasts to the total broadcast hours	
	Actual results for FY2000 <small>(note 1)</small>	Targeted figure for 2007 <small>(note 2)</small>	Actual results for FY2000	Targeted figure for 2007
NHK	67.6%	100% (to be achieved by FY2006)	19.8%	41.9% (FY2006)
Nippon Television Network Corporation	9.8%	84.2%	3.2%	28.0%
Tokyo Broadcasting System, Inc.	14.2%	85.3%	3.6%	35.3%
Fuji Television Network, Inc.	7.9%	88.3%	3.7%	32.0%
Asahi National Broadcasting Co., Ltd.	6.1%	90%	2.4%	32.3%
Television Tokyo Channel 12, Ltd.	4.8%	80.4%	3.8%	37.1%

Notes: 1. Figures for NHK were derived from a weighted average of one week survey (the first half survey) (July 24 through 30, 2000) and one week survey (the second half survey) (December 4 through 10, 2000). Figures for the five key commercial TV stations were derived from those for the second half survey of FY2000.

2. Figures affiliated stations were excluded.

3. Figures were prepared based on the regular broadcast schedule plan as of October 2001.

Establishment of the “e-Policy Support Network of Japan”

DO Site (Digital Opportunity Site)

On May 17, 2002, MPHPT established the “e-Policy Support Network of Japan” by launching a web site which provides the information and expertise necessary for ICT policy makers in developing countries to establish policies particularly suited to their requirements. This network initiative aims at helping bridge the global digital divide.

Support is provided to these countries through: i) the introduction of Japan’s and other countries’ leading-edge ICT policies and projects formulated to bridge the global digital divide, and ii) the provision of online advice in response to inquiries from ICT policy makers, and the like, in developing countries by a group of ICT experts drawn from government, academia, the private sector and NPOs.

This initiative is positioned as a Japanese Government project implementing the Digital Opportunity Task Force’s (DOT Force’s) Genoa Plan of Action. The progress of implementation is to be reported on at the 2002 G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada.

Structure

The “e-Policy Support Network of Japan” through the use of “Digital Opportunity Site (<http://www.dosite.jp>)” has two principal functions:

1. Information Provision Area (English and Japanese)

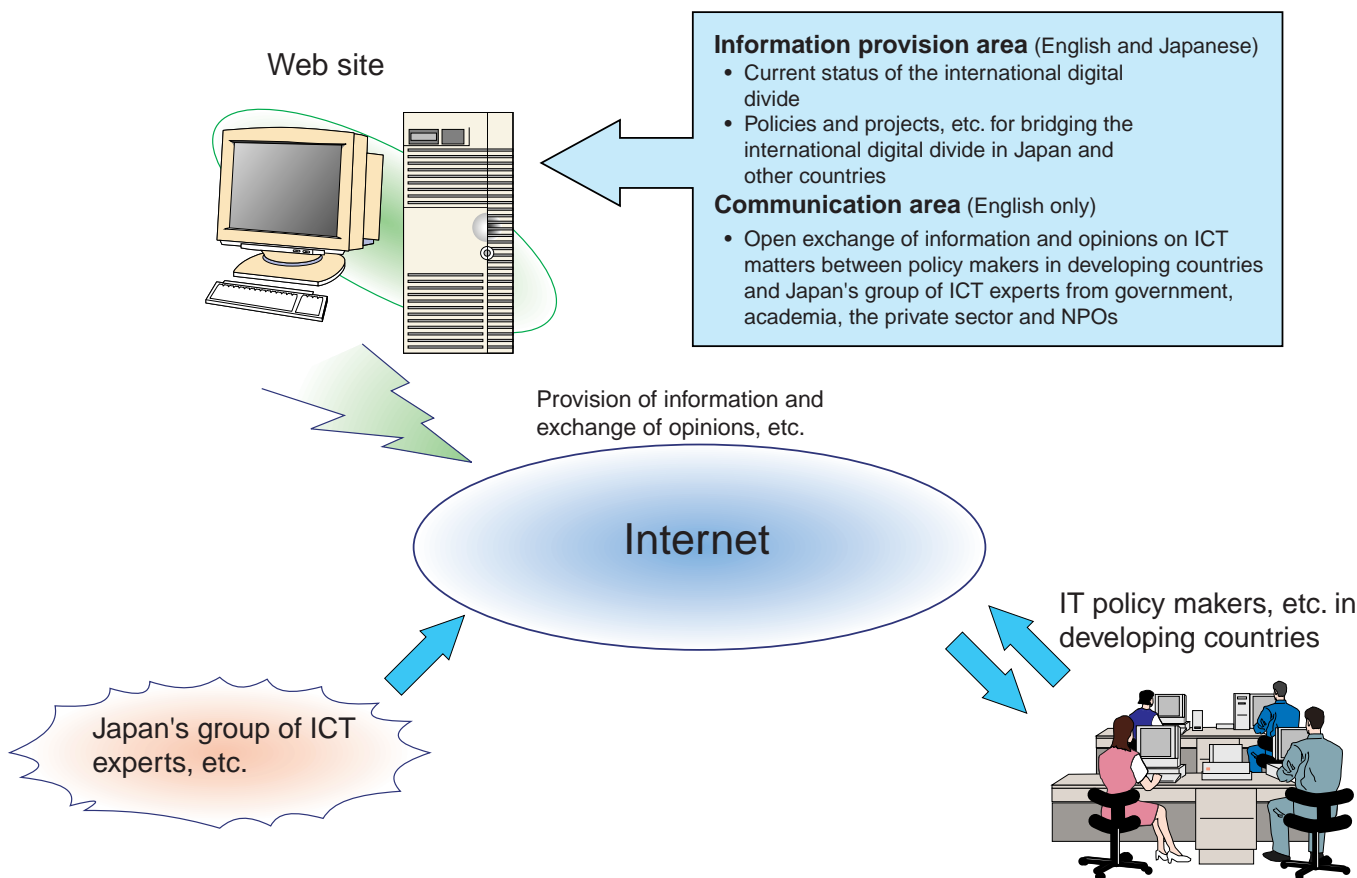
The web site provides the following information related to ICT policies:

- 1) Current status of the international and Japanese digital divide;
- 2) Japan’s policies and projects for bridging the international digital divide;

- 3) Policies and projects to promote e-government in Japan; and
- 4) Policies and projects conducted by other countries, international organizations, and the like.

2. Communication Area (English only)

The “Communication Area” facilitates the open exchange of information and opinions on ICT matters on the website. A group of ICT experts drawn from government, academia, the private sector and NPOs provide free advice in response to inquiries from ICT policy makers, and the like, in developing countries wishing to set up and implement ICT policies/regulatory frameworks in their respective countries.



3-D Route Guide Using 3D-GIS Demonstrated

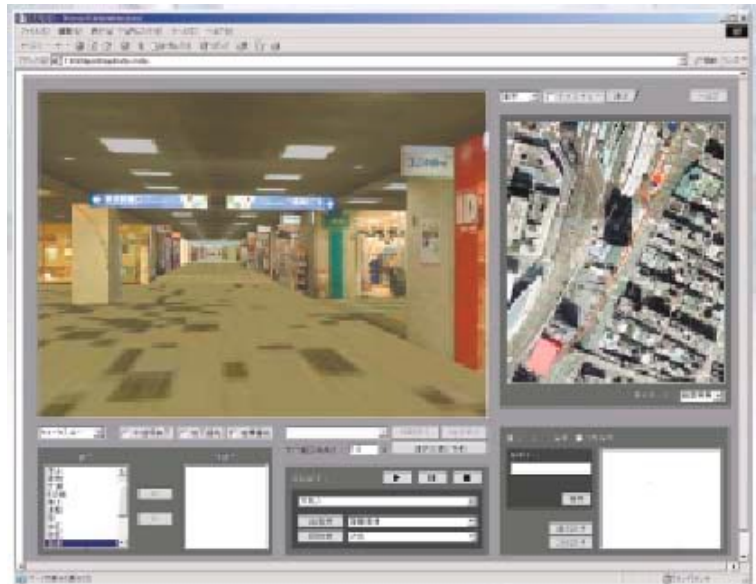
From May 28 through 31, 2002, MPHPT demonstrated the “three-dimensional (3-D) route guide using 3D-GIS (GIS: Geographic Information Systems)” at the Tokyo Station of East Japan Railway Co., showing 3-D underground and surface routes in the Tokyo Station and vicinity districts, to spectators visiting Japan for 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan, thereby introducing Japan’s information and communications technology to them.

[Stroll through the 3-D Map]

It is possible to enter the 3-D map and stroll to your destination, almost as if you were actually walking through it. You can also stop at a building or other facilities along the way, and observe the view from your position. The entire area landscape can also be seen from above, from a bird’s-eye-view.

[3-D Route Guide using 3D-GIS]

- Search for the desired destination



- using the 3-D route guidance and related data retrieval system at a kiosk terminal
- View walk-through display of routes that link surface and underground lo-

- cations
- View displays of facility information, URL’s, etc., and links to a range of related information

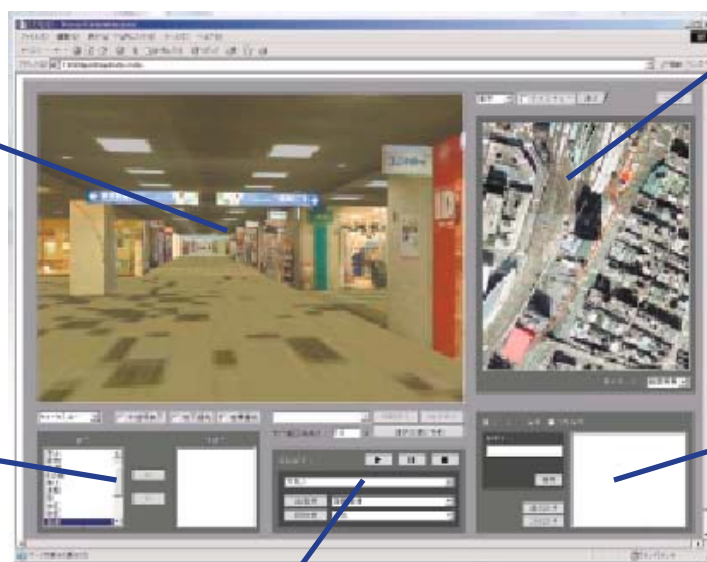
[Web Application Interface is employed]

1) 3-D view: Displays the target area in three dimensions

2) 2-D view: Displays the target area in two dimensions

3) Display target set-up: Sets the three-dimensional view display target

5) Search function: Set-up of content and address search conditions; display of search results



4) Route search controls: Sets point of departure and destination; route replay