

Panel on Revitalization of Local Community and Ubiquitous Network Society
Summary of Minutes (3rd Meeting)

1. Date and Time

Monday, January 22, 2007, 14:00 to 16:00

2. Location

Special Conference Room 3, Mita Kyoyo Kaigisho

3. Attendees (honorifics omitted)

(1) Panel Members

Shimizu (Chair), Ohyama (Deputy-Chair), Aida, Iizumi (proxy: Machida), Uemura, Kotani, Kondo, Shimada, Sudo, Tsubota, Tsuyuki, Nagayoshi, Hatano, Muraki, Wasai (proxy: Tanaka)

(2) Observers

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

(3) MIC Representatives

Katsuno (Deputy Director-General of Minister's Secretariat), Imabayashi (Director-General of the Regional Communications Development Division), Nakata (Deputy-Director of the Regional Communications Development Division)

4. Minutes of the Meeting

(1) Opening

(2) Introducing the panel members and checking the documents distributed (Secretariat)

<Attendance of the members>

- Absent members: Kiyohara, Taki

- Proxy: Machida for Iizumi, Tanaka for Wasai

<Checked the documents distributed>

(3) Summary of minutes of the last meeting (Secretariat)

Reviewed Reference 3-1 as the summary of minutes of the last meeting.

(4) Agenda

<MIC's initiatives in FY 2007 to promote ICT in regional communities (Secretariat)>

The secretariat made a presentation based on Reference 3-2, which was followed by a question and answer session.

[Questions and Answers]

- (Projects to build regional ICT-use models) should be entrusted to a wide variety of entities, taking regional characteristics and the size of the cities into consideration.

<Strategic policies to promote ICT in local communities (Secretariat)>

The secretariat made a presentation based on Reference 3-3, which was followed by a question and answer session.

[Questions and Answers]

- The targets and programs of ICT use are to be studied. We should work out the framework for the ex post evaluation of projects to build regional ICT-use models. Conducting surveys to assess user satisfaction is one possible solution. We should set an objective index as well.

<Presentation by Ms. Aida>

Ms. Aida made a presentation based on Reference 3-4, which was followed by a question and answer session.

[Questions and Answers]

- Four to five employees of the Ohmihachiman city government, which is introduced in the reference, are teleworking, and specific results (of the economic effects) will be produced in the coming years. What matters is not the number of people who are teleworking, but developing an environment that enables people to choose telework and making telework available as an option. The only city and prefecture that are trialing telework are Ohmihachiman and Kochi, respectively.

- People want to acquire teleworking skills for different reasons, depending on what generation they belong to and the age of their children. For example, women in their 20s and 30s, many of whom have young children, want to acquire teleworking skills not because they want to work in customer support at call centers, but because they want to sell what they make as a hobby or want to know how to do so over the Internet, or want to gain income through web site affiliate programs. We are developing an environment in which these aims can be achieved.

<Presentation by Ms. Kondo>

Ms. Kondo made a presentation based on Reference 3-5 and VTR material, which was followed by a question and answer session.

[Questions and Answers]

- When I talked about the initiatives in Kobe city at the last panel meeting, I referred to the existence of so many SNSs. Seven SNSs are cooperating with SNSs in other cities but not with SNSs in Kobe city. It is unclear for whom and for what purpose these SNSs exist. If you can find and address the visible and immediate needs in your community, you can reduce the administrative costs. Community organizations without a clear direction disband within six months or one year. We must find a framework to make the most of community organizations that have already been created through considerable effort.
- In Kaisei-cho, 12 community associations are starting independent and proactive initiatives, such as voluntary disaster drills. In contrast, most of their counterparts in urban areas rarely conduct such activities. Community associations play a vital role in developing or revitalizing local communities. We should discuss how to use IT to support their activities.
- We once held a lecture about the possibility of an earthquake with its epicenter in Minami-Kanto, which drew an audience of over 100 people. While some people seem to think participating in the activities of community associations is rather troublesome, they are likely to be very interested in activities related to disaster prevention.
- There are two key members who mainly lead the Routeku Project's activities. They work on a project basis, although the projects are small. Including casual participants, approximately 100,000 people participate in our network.
- Programs in which elderly volunteers teach their peers how to use personal computers are being implemented across Japan. While many researchers study information and communication related to disabled people, only a few research projects have focused on the

elderly in the information and communications field.

<Exchange of opinions>

- MIC has conducted several experimental initiatives on local SNSs since last fiscal year, and will conduct further trials in more areas this year.
- Establishing advisors to promote ICT in local communities may be helpful in regard to initiatives such as certifying or developing leaders to promote ICT locally. We should further discuss whether a certification system is feasible, or more flexible system is desirable, as well as requirements for leadership.
- If an ordinance were established, it would be possible to freely use resident registry cards. Currently, however, there are various issues in terms of operation.
- ICT skills are most required by schoolteachers. These days some children have higher IT literacy than their teachers. This leads to many security issues, such as management of servers in rooms where children have free access.
- One of the advantages of ICT is the capability to horizontally connect diverse players. Since the government should make concerted efforts, MIC wishes to cooperate with other ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).
- MEXT has been aggressively promoting the use of ICT in schools. While accelerating the use of ICT for school administration by setting the target of providing one computer to every teacher, we are making concerted efforts to improve the teachers' capabilities to teach using ICT.
- As the budget for ICT use at schools is appropriated from the national taxes allocated to local governments, clear reasons for the necessity of ICT use must be stated. Through discussions MEXT has been trying to clarify the reasons for introducing ICT into school administration so that they can be finalized by March this year.