

X February 2018

**EXTENDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION THROUGH OFFLINE INTERNET**

**SUMMIT REPORT AND COMMITMENT**

Digital technology offers unprecedented means to transmit, store, and utilize information. While a growing number of individuals and communities are able to benefit in numerous ways from the expanded opportunities that new technologies offer, there are nonetheless many populations and regions where Internet capabilities are weak to non-existent, resulting in loss of educational, cultural, economic, research, and social development. A growing number of independent organizations and individuals are devoting efforts to solving this problem of access to digital information to underserved populations. While making enormous headway, such organizations are often unaware of other efforts, opportunities, and technical advances that could be leveraged.

In order to explore these issues and to pursue solutions, Arizona State University Library and Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, with the involvement of IFLA, organized an international summit from January 29 to February 1, 2018, at the ASU Library in Tempe, Arizona, USA.

The terminology used at this meeting is "Offline Internet," i.e., the systems and services designed to bring Internet content to people and places without live network access, the ultimate goal being to connect the world to the global Internet. "Offline Internet" can be a key transitional step that enables users fully to participate in global communications, as well as a fallback if Internet connectivity fails in certain situations and regions.

Approximately 30 participants representing [XXX] organizations discussed the key factors affecting major aspects of providing "offline Internet information" to communities, institutions, and regions that currently do not have robust (or any) Internet access.

As a result of these discussions, the participants have agreed that:

\* Access to the information commons should be recognized as a fundamental human right. With other world organizations, we share a deep commitment to bringing meaningful, sustainable access to information resources to communities not well served by the commodity Internet and its devices.

\* We are forming a consortium that comprises people and organizations working together to identify common solutions and to leverage digital resources for communities that are not currently connected to the Internet.

\* Communities of interest to our consortium include mainly those the commodity Internet fails to reach: certainly remote locations, post-conflict situations, and refugee communities, as well as those whose disadvantage is political (governments do not support infrastructure and access), economic (communities without economic resources for easy access to broadband or data plans that support information access), and social (communities whose members do not have the education or experience to think of themselves as information consumers).

\* We recognize the value of experimentation and exploration in developing and creating hardware devices that can function effectively in challenged situations.

\* We share the belief that common development of standards and practices for software and content acquisition can help all interested parties to achieve their goals more easily and effectively.

\* We judge that open source and open access tools and content best meet the interests of the communities we seek to support.

\* We expect to work in the space of not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations, while welcoming conversations with, on the one hand, governmental entities and, on the other, commercial enterprises that can focus attention and resources on this work in ways compatible with our fundamental commitments.

\* We will not, at this time, seek legal standing. Our governance will emphasize participation and collaboration and be open to all organizations and individuals that share our principles and commitments.

\* We believe that this collaboration can help us identify potential funders and make the case to them that there are good reasons to invest in our activities.

\* Next steps are proceeding along three tracks:

(1) A governance group has been formed to propose overall structure and process as well as naming.

(2) Working groups have been formed to propose objectives and goals in areas of software, hardware, content, operations, and advocacy.

(3) Meanwhile, certain agreed tasks will proceed on an informal basis.

We warmly welcome additional players, participants, and collaborators in this crucial work.

[If a press release, include one-sentence quotes from ASU, BSF about the importance of this work?]

For more information, contact: [XXXX]

List of Participants in the Summit: