Global Communications Newsletter

August 2002

Presentation and Greetings from the New Editor

By Joan Garcia-Haro, Editor

Dear ComSoc members, dear readers, dear friends,

When in April 2002 Nelson L. S. da Fonseca appointed me Editor of *IEEE Global Communications Newsletter*, I only had a vague perception of the challenges I would face. I collaborated with *GCN* as Regional Correspondent since its creation. During all this time, I regularly sent contributions related to telecommunications in my country and some of its regions. I witnessed the improvements introduced by the effort of its three first editors, Andrzej Jajszczyk, Byeong Gi Lee, and Nelson L. S. da Fonseca, the labor of all GCN correspondents, and the collaboration of a considerable number of ComSoc members and professionals. But I only had a glimpse of the tree, and was unable to understand the entire forest.

Now, I am beginning to be conscious of the extreme difficulties of at least maintaining the level, the prestige, and the status achieved by the previous Board and additionally try to go further. It is really difficult to perform better than the solid foundation achieved by A. Jajszczyk, the development of the current *GCN* conception by B. Gi Lee and the intensification in globalization carried out by N. Fonseca. It is also impossible to compare with these special people, friendly, hard workers, well educated, intelligent, and exceeding in talent as well as technical, scientific, and management skills.

In addition, two and a half years ago I left my former position in a consolidated well-known Spanish university to collaborate in the creation of a new one (Polytechnic University of Cartagena), in an objective 1 region of the European Union (with a development level under EU average). Why is this relevant? I believe it means that I have to be used to hard work, responsibilities, and difficult tasks; and therefore, it is a challenge but also a great honor to serve as the new Editor of *IEEE GCN*. It also means that, as an engineer, professor, and researcher, I can understand how close teaching, research, development and innovation to human dreams and utopias are (and have been through history). Therefore, let us continue dreaming and try to reach a global audience: students, professionals, professors, and researchers, to help in the dissemination of information and key data related to telecommunications, informatics, and media in their convergence in the so called information and knowledge society all over the world. Let us try to do something more than simply compile international events, to feel global and belong to the same common "house," especially in the current economic and political crisis worldwide.

Furthermore, all these facts help me to understand that this is a an enterprise where individuals are important, but working as a team is crucial. In this sense, I would like to introduce Associate Editor Professor Francisco Javier Gonzalez-Castaño of University of Vigo in northwest Spain. Professor Gonzalez will share the editorial work and duties with me, and the responsibility for collecting and editing *GCN* articles. Dr. Jacob Baal-Schem will be in charge of the Chapters Corner section. We will continue relying on a set of active, efficient, and valuable Regional Correspondents and their timely contributions.

Finally, extending GCN contents will not be possible without the essential role and participation of all of you, reflecting the nature of true globalization.

Consequently, and following the right steps of Professor Fonseca, I want to remember that *GCN* was created for the benefit of our readership, and *GCN* is open to all of you. I want to invite and encourage *GCN* readers to submit contributions to either joang.haro@upct.es or javier@det.uvigo.es. Average article length is 1200–2000 words, in plain ASCII or MSWord format. Pictures can be incorporated. Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- National and regional developments in communications technology and services
- Pilot experiences in telecommunications
- Worldwide communications research, development, and innovation
- Telecommunications convergence, regulatory, and legal matters
- Information and knowledge society
- New telecommunications technology applications in politics, health, education, commerce, security and defense, surveillance, agriculture, standard of life, handicapped people care, industry, tourism, space, transportation and navigation, environment, sustained development, globalization, and so on
- Market trends
- Education in telecommunications
- Reports on key workshops or conferences
- ComSoc Chapter activities

Many thanks in advance to you all; please keep in touch with us and take your place in your common *GCN* house, were you are always welcome.

Technology and Communications Strategy at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games

By Andreas Veglis and Andreas Filippopoulos, Greece

Cable television, fiber optics, telecommunication and direct broadcasting, satellites, high-speed data transmission, video text, video broadcasting... The list of new techniques for the transmission and reproduction of images and the spoken and written word seems to grow longer every day [1].

With technology evolving at a rapid rate, the Olympic Games have become the mirror of the newest tested leading-edge technologies, and they combine all available media in a coherent whole, where each component complements the others. The coverage of the Athens 2004 Olympics, in the form of text, images, and sound, will exploit all technological means, both old and new, for the former must infallibly reach all parts of the planet, even those that have not fulfilled the standards of contemporary technology so far.

Technology Exploitation During Preparatory Sessions of the XXVIII Olympic Games

Athens 2004 has embraced technology, which is going to cost almost 22 percent of the total expenditure for the Games [2]. Some estimates are 25,000 fixed phones, 15,000 mobile phones, 13,300 TETRA technology phones, 15,000 data lines, 1500 network equipment devices, 12,000 TVs and VCRs, 17 video boards, 9 video projection systems, 11,000 PCs, 600 servers, 55 million printouts, and, last but not least, 11.5 billion hits, which are expected on the Athens 2004 Website (http://www.athens2004.gr).

Computing technology is employed at every stage of the event, from the preparatory sessions to the design of new sporting facilities, the production of promotional materials, the scheduling of the sporting events, and, with the advent of widespread use of the Internet, dissemination of event information via the Web.

To be more specific, in the preparation stage, technology contributes decisively to the organization, management, planning, and support of the Athens Organizing Committee (ATHOC), the education and training of almost 50,000 Games volunteers, as well as technical support of sporting events performed before the Games in order to test the venues. Concerning timing and scoring, Athens 2004 has already developed the initial milestone time table for the ATHOC IT and Swatch framework of cooperation, and has completed a 10-day venue survey with Swatch technicians, sports managers, venue technology, and Olympic works staff. Regarding the venue technology, the Athens Organizing Committee has finalized requirements of technology space for the venues, determined environmental specifications, usage, and placing, finalized the naming of technology spaces in venues, and created the first version of the general technology specifications for the Olympic venues (specifications for structured cabling, cabling pathways, and general specifications of interconnections between the rooms). A current program in process is cooperation with Olympic premises and Swatch as far as the planning of venues and infrastructures. Regarding Games Management Systems (GMS), Athens 2004 has installed the GMS Baseline Lab, a small network that will be used for installation, analysis, integration, testing, and training before launching each Games application in production. ATHOC is in the stage of gap analysis for the Staff Information System (SIS), elaboration of the time schedule, initial steps of the information system for accommodation, and elaboration of a particularized agreement and responsibility matrix between Athens 2004 and SEMA. In addition, an overhaul of ATHOC's networking infrastructure has already been completed, and the new scheme provides increased infracompany security and a massive expansion in total network capacity. ATHOC also delivered the Baseline Laboratory for SEMA's applications. This lab environment is used to analyze the gap between the applications used in Sydney and Salt Lake and ATHOC's user requirements [2]. A current program in process is the transition of central systems from small company layout into professional business layout with installation of a storage area network, a business reception system of secure copies, and a fiber optic network among servers. Also, ATHOC is completing the central system of fax management as well as the final agreement on its Integrated Information System.

Technology Use During the Athens 2004 Olympic Games

During the XXVIII Olympic Games, the basic roles of technology are media practitioners' usage of information and telecommunication systems, carrying communication to every place on Earth, security, accreditation, timing, recording of scores, and publication of results of all events at the Games [2]. Some applications of information technology and telecommunications for the XXVIII Olympic Games are:

- Timing and scoring systems
- Results per athletic facility
- Broadcast of results
- Systems to coordinate participants
- Technology of facilities
- Information systems within the company
- The Internet

Finally, ATHOC is going to take advantage of the experience of NBC in Sydney to exploit the convergence of the Internet and TV. The ultimate purpose is the creation of multimedia about the Games on the Internet using combined data, images, exchanges, text, and words, hence consummating television images of the sport events.

Communication Technology Use for the Promotion of the XXVIII Olympic Games

Furthermore, ATHOC — via its Department of Communication, Press and Mass Media — has thoroughly perceived the vital role of mass media in shaping public opinion. In order to provide continuous public as well as media information, the following primary objectives of communication strategy have been defined, for the Olympic Games are linked to the global publicity, development, and improvement of the country that stages them:

- Strengthening of relations with national and international media representatives
- Establishment of relations of mutual confidence
- Promotion and publicity of ATHOC's activities and preparations in general

Aiming to successfully achieve the aforementioned communication targets, Athens 2004 has decided to proceed according to a strict time schedule for the following actions:

- Frequent organization of television, radio and press interviews, publication of press releases on ATHOC's latest actions and achievements through the Athens 2004 Website, and organization of special informative seminars and presentations for all accredited journalists who cover the Olympic Games.
- Massive publication (CD-ROM, print, videos) of informative material entitled "Infokit" for journalists regarding both the conduct of the Games and progress on the Olympic premises.

(Continued on next page)

Technology and Communications Strategy at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games (cont'd)

•Creation of E-libraries and databases to facilitate journalists' and public information concerning the latest progress in Olympics preparation.

•ATHOC intends to create special Web pages at the Athens 2004 Website that will contain information addressed to specific groups of users such as sponsors, journalists, and volunteers.

•Creation of a Multimedia Press Kit containing printed and photographic material, which is going to be distributed regularly to media representatives. Material such as photos, special editions, presentations, and broadcast of press conferences in real time can be found at the Athens 2004 Website.

•Creation of a five-minute radio broadcast about the Athens 2004 Olympics.

•Publication of an Athens 2004 newsletter in three languages (Greek, English, and French).

* Publication of an Athens 2004 magazine in printed and digital format as well as soon via the Internet.

•Intermittent publication of informative material in digital (CD-ROM) and printed form concerning Olympics preparations for selected groups of readers (IOC, International Sports Federations).

•Three publications until 2004 of the Athens Training Guide in digital (CD-ROM and Internet) and printed form.

•Publication of a historical almanac in three languages (Greek, English, and French).

•Branding in the new international airport of Athens named Eleftherios Venizelos.

•Advertising presence of Athens 2004 in selected national and international media of special interest to the Olympic movement.

•Annual national quantitative tracking survey on the information and image of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.

•Creation of a main press center (MPC) aimed at establishing and employing strategies and policies that will contribute, as best as possible, to supplying services to media representatives concerning their work as well as their accommodations within the MPC.

•Creation of a main photo laboratory (MPL) that will collaborate with international photo agencies in order to effectively organize a place for users of both traditional and digital technology.

•Creation of an Olympics news service (ONS-Info 2004), which is going to establish a special digital information network (intranet) accessed by media representatives. Games results, statistical and historical data, personal resumes, and various declarations will be provided through ONS-Info 2004.

•Establishment of an info-kiosks network in collaboration with Greek municipalities. A special information point is going to be created according to the needs and constraints of the sacred place of Olympia.

•Organization of international informative fora on technology, environment, Olympics venues, and volunteerism.

•Creation of an international media desk that has already formed a database of foreign journalists to whom press advisories are posted, as well as translated press releases and informative press kits in English and French. The former is done in close cooperation with press agencies of the Balkan region in order to provide immediate information to neighboring countries.

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Telecommunications Regulation in Croatia

By Dinko Begusic and Dina Simunic, Croatia

Croatia is a southern-central Mediterranean European country with about 4.5 million inhabitants. The telecommunication sector in Croatia has undergone significant changes in the last decade. Till 1990 the telecom sector in Croatia was developed as a monopoly of the PTT, the only state-owned network operator and service provider. The state-owned company Nikola Tesla was the main telecommunications equipment manufacturer. The Universities of Split and Zagreb have developed quality study programs in the area of telecommunications engineering. During the last decade of the 20th century important structural changes in the telecom sector took place.

The processes of deregulation, liberalization, and privatization were enabled by new regulations. In 1999 the new Telecommunications Law was passed by the Croatian Parliament. The orientation toward the development of the telecommunications market following the directives of the European Commission was fully adopted. In 2000 Croatia signed the WTO Marakesh Agreement. The major results of market opening are: two mobile network operator licenses (CRONet and ViPNet) have been issued, 51 percent of the Nikola Tesla company has been sold to Ericsson, 51 percent of Croatian Telecommunications has been sold to Deutsche Telekom, and new Siemens facilities have been opened in Croatia. Besides, a number of small ICT companies have emerged. According to the Telecommunications Law of 1999, the Croatian Institute for Telecommunications was defined as the main authority for regulation of the telecommunications market.

Further developments were defined by amendments to the Telecommunications Law in 2001. An important change introduced by these amendments was the introduction of a new independent telecommunications authority, the Telecommunications Council. The main responsibilities of the Telecommunications Council include planning and license awarding, and regulation of the telecom market. The Telecommunications Council has seven members and decides by majority of votes. Operative support to the Telecommunications Council is provided by the Croatian Institute for Telecommunications. The Telecommunications Council started operation in March 2002. Since then it has considered a number of different cases, including disputes between operators and license awarding for telecommunications services. The major upcoming issues include planning license awarding for new mobile and fixed network operators.

The Croatian Telecommunications Council is highly interested in collaborations with telecommunications regulators from other countries. It has already established useful contacts with regulators in Austria, Belgium, and the United Kingdom.

Can the Baltic Region Meet the Challenge of Globalization, Digitalization, and Partnerships?

Jørn W. Phigalt

This article intends to reflect the enormous potential that the Baltic ICT community showed at the recently held Baltic IT&T 2002 conference and exhibition in Riga, Latvia. The Baltic Information Technology Industry, and particularly the software sector, need to face the reality of international competition, awareness, and speed in time to market. Branding the sector, the region, and individual enterprises is key to accessing the huge international market and bringing success and opportunities to the three countries in the region.

It is puzzling to arrive at Riga's beautiful and well-functioning airport in a nearly empty BalticAir plane, ignoring where all the other foreign business executives are. The three Baltic states only rank as number 29 in a recent study regarding penetration plans for large and medium-sized companies in the ICT sector, despite of the fact that there is a huge talented group of ICT professionals in well-organized and fully qualified companies who could make a difference in the global ICT business community.

The Baltic IT&T Conference organized by LITTA — the dynamic Latvian trade association for the ICT industry — provided an excellent forum for international guests to meet and discuss business opportunities with more than 400 Baltic representatives. But very few had actually found their way to Riga in early April, and this was a shame.

Underestimating Branding Factors

It can always be discussed who didn't take the initiative and decision to search for new opportunities, but in the case of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the lack of branding of their region, industry, and individual companies was the major and dominant factor. Modern trade policy includes awareness building initiatives, and when more than 15 countries and regions share the same qualities, skilled workforce, and drive to create a better infrastructure and history, government, associations and companies need to differentiate from the rest. As one executive said, "Why should I go to Latvia? I don't know anything about the region, their competence and their business moral and values."

Many Baltic companies are excluded from dialog, even before preevaluation, just because the mature business communities do not know enough. This leaves a frustrating gap for everyone who wants to increase their business and trade.

If you are not in a dialog you can't blame the others; the opportunities are just not there. Most successful ICT companies do have international business plans highlighting a globalization strategy, a rich use of digitization, and, mainly, a focus on creating business through long lasting partnerships with many foreign companies in cultures where localization is a must. But very few are taking chances in transition economies and candidate countries to the European Union, simply because they are not informed enough in the sectors' specialties and focus areas. The Baltic ICT sector is lacking the understanding that it is not the more proactive companies in the mature economies who are investing in research to locate, evaluate, and find suitable business opportunities. Also, the ICT sector needs to focus on a few (competitive) fields of expertise and direction. Here the trade associations should play a major role in shaping the industry through a focused work on three or four selected niche areas, supported by government and educational institutions.

The Branding Gap

In the branding gap not only are enterprises and trade associations players, but also the governments' foreign commercial service, national IT advisory bodies, and quality and certification institutions, combined with technical schools, universities, technological research and development parks, and a solid infrastructure. Bridging the gap is a goal that the Baltic countries need to attain through increased focus on the important task of profiling their industries before success can be secured for the region. And branding is a team effort that, carried out properly, will not only project a better profile of the region's possibilities, but also increase the spirit in the sectors, increase the structure between the universities and the business community, avoid brain death in the region, and increase profitability in the sector.

Can the Baltic Countries Do This?

Yes, they can. All the elements needed for this effort are present in the three countries, and an enormous and enthusiastic business industry is behind the initiatives. Now it is up to the government and associations to launch the work, and to make a joint effort to support this business-creating event.

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Global Communications Newsletter
www.comsoc.org/pubs/gcn

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A publication of the
IEEE Communications Society