

Making the Internet Connection Count

Effective Use of the Internet in Seven Steps

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Leland Initiative

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Produced by the Leland Initiative Team,
Research and Reference Services (R&RS) Project, in cooperation with
the Support for Advocacy and Research in Africa (SARA) Project.

For more information:

Leland Initiative
Research and References Services Project
USAID
PPC/CDIE/DI/RRS
Washington, DC 20523-1820
E-mail: leland.initiative@usaid.gov
Web address: <http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland>

The Leland Initiative is a five-year, \$15 million U.S. government initiative administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Its goal is to extend full Internet connectivity to 20 or more African countries. As part of its mandate, the Initiative team develops and conducts Internet awareness training workshops, from which the material in this manual is adapted.

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PREFACE

Log onto the Internet! Gain unlimited access to information! Communicate with colleagues and funders in other countries without worrying about high phone charges and time differences! Showcase your products and services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week!

Wait a minute....

True, the Internet can bring these benefits and more to your organization, but only if you use it to your advantage. Getting there can be confusing. You must decide whether you need new computers or telephone lines and how much these items will cost. You must ensure that your staff feel comfortable with the technology and make efficient use of their time in front of the computer. And with an array of Internet tools available to retrieve and disseminate information, you must understand which applications are most relevant and cost-effective for your organization.

Equally as important as the technical aspects, you must be able to plan how your organization can take advantage of the Internet to achieve its goals. This manual, *Making the Internet Connection Count*, takes you, your organization, your work team, or any groups you intend to collaborate with through a process of examination and discovery. You will think about how you use information now, how you could use it in the future, and how you plan to introduce or expand the use of the Internet in your organization consistent with your organization's needs.

Making the Internet Connection Counts intended for decision makers and staff of NGOs, educational institutions, and government

agencies that currently do not have, or have very limited, access to the Internet. Chances are, if you are reading this book, you have decided that you want to introduce or expand the use of the Internet in your organization. You may be a senior manager who is giving this book to someone on your staff to make it happen. Or you may suddenly find yourself in a lead role as your organization's "Internet champion," getting your organization online.

The information and exercises in this manual are adapted from a series of hands-on workshops conducted throughout Africa by the Leland Initiative. The Leland Initiative is a five-year, \$15 million U.S. government effort to extend full Internet connectivity to 20 or more African countries. Administered through the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Leland Initiative supports policy reform; facilitates low-cost, high-speed Internet access; and helps build networks of users working toward sustainable development in Africa.

The Internet is not an end in itself but a tool to help you accomplish your organization's goals as you work toward sustainable development. This manual will streamline the process to help you and your colleagues connect to the Internet to send and receive information in a way that furthers your organization's goals and objectives.

The Internet has proven to be a great help to many organizations, but it cannot serve as the only means to communicate with others. Consider it a new tool—but only one of many that you have and will continue to use. Tools that range from posters to street theater to informal meetings will always play a vital and irreplaceable role in the work of development organizations.

In fact, after reading this manual and working through some of the exercises, you may decide that the Internet is not a technology that your organization needs at this time. You may find that the benefits to your organization will not outweigh the costs associated with setting up Internet access and training the staff to use it. No matter how you proceed, this manual will enable you to make an informed choice.

One publication cannot teach everything there is to know about the Internet, a technology that is changing every day. This manual



Many development organizations have found that to introduce the Internet successfully, they must take into account both technical and people-related concerns. Planning beforehand helped them reduce costs and stress in the long term.

does not cover specific instructions or training about how to access the Internet on your computer. Other resources provide that information, including many online that you can link to through the Leland Initiative Web site (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland>). We also provide some additional background in the appendices.

Rather, this manual will take you through a seven-step process to—

1. build awareness of how the Internet might benefit your organization;
2. assess your organization's information needs;
3. find answers to your technical questions about getting connected to the Internet;
4. train staff so they feel comfortable with the Internet and understand its potential;
5. create an action plan to define how the Internet will further your goals;
6. implement the plan; and
7. review what you have done and how you have done it so far and decide where you should head in the future.

Above all, we have tried to include exercises and examples that combine creativity with common sense. The Internet is an amazing way to communicate with people around the world, share information, and transact business. It can change the way your organization operates—in big ways, in small ways, or somewhere in between. Be prepared for frustrations, since frustrations are associated with any change to the usual way of doing things. Learning about and using the Internet is an ongoing process for beginners and experts alike. One of the most important things that you will be called upon to do is to maintain your enthusiasm and encourage your colleagues to think big—not necessarily in terms of large amounts of money, but in terms of new, creative ideas.



For more information on technical aspects of the Internet, refer to the appendices in this manual or to the Leland Initiative Web site (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland>).

OVERVIEW

Effective Use of the Internet in Seven Steps

Information exchange has always been an important component of international development. It is becoming even more so as the world moves toward an information-based economy. Accessing information enables organizations to learn about new ideas, funding opportunities, and relevant conferences and publications. Disseminating information increases an organization's visibility and impact on its target audience. Communication with other people and groups increases understanding. The Internet is a new, valuable tool to communicate with others and to retrieve and disseminate information—one of many tools that organizations in both the public and private sector are now using as part of their everyday business.

This manual is designed to help decision makers and staff of NGOs, educational institutions, and government agencies take advantage of this powerful technology to achieve their organization's objectives. Planning how you will use the Internet and understanding its technical and financial requirements will help you find the most cost-effective way to connect to the Internet. Planning will also help you make best use of the Internet once your organization is connected to it.

This manual outlines a seven-step process to understand the big picture about how the Internet can help achieve your organization's objectives. With the materials and exercises in this manual, you, along with others on your staff or in your work group, will have a "do-it-yourself" way to plan how your organization can achieve its objectives through use of the Internet.

We recognize that readers and their organizations will be coming to

this book with a range of experience. Some will already be regular users, perhaps have their own Web site, and live in places where they can take advantage of relatively fast and inexpensive Internet access. Others may not yet be connected to the Internet and, when they eventually are, will only be able to access it through unreliable and/or expensive telephone connections. We hope this manual is useful to this range of users so that they can pull from it the information they need.

If you need more in-depth information on the technical aspects of the Internet, refer to the background section in the appendices of this manual or go to the Leland Initiative's Web site (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland/>), which has a list of resources and links to access them. This section of the Web site was set up to complement the information in this manual and allow frequent updates to it.

What Is the Internet?

The following definition comes from a fact sheet published by the U.S. National Research Council's Board on Science and Technology for International Development (BOSTID):

The Internet is a cooperative computer network of networks that links governments, schools, libraries, corporations, individuals, and others to each other and to vast information resources. The Internet protocol links many disparate and independent networks together so that they appear as a single network to the user.... About 149 countries have connections to some sort of an international computer network; of these, about 63 countries have direct connections to the Internet [1997 statistic].

The Internet is an open network. Anyone or any group is welcome to use it, as long as that person or group has a terminal or a computer with the correct software and the ability to pay the costs.

No single organization owns or operates the Internet. Several thousand organizations administer their own individual networks and these combine to form the total Internet.

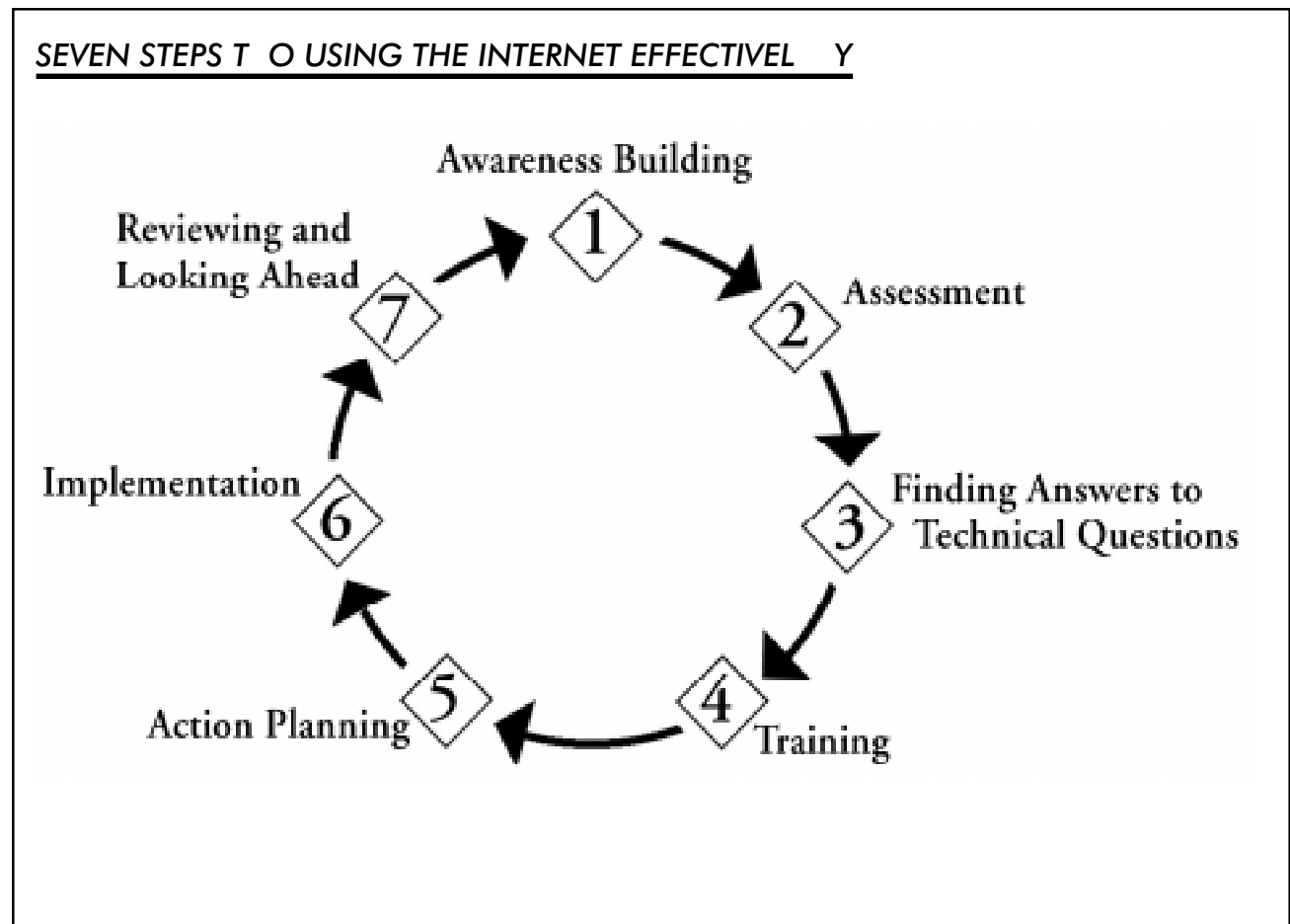


Before you go any further, if you need more information on what the Internet is or does, refer to the background section in the appendices of this manual.

The full text of this fact sheet and others on Internet basics can be accessed through the Leland Initiative Web site or, for those who do not yet have Internet access, by writing the BOSTID Information Services Network at 2101 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20418, USA.

Seven Steps to Using the Internet Effectively

In planning to use the Internet, organizations are faced with human, technological, and organizational considerations. Perhaps your first questions should be: How can this tool be used to help my organization





People are finding hundreds of different ways to use the Internet. As just one example, the University of Zambia Medical School's Web site (<http://www.zamnet.zm/zamnet/health>) has an online dictionary that translates common medical terms into five indigenous languages. Health workers can refer to the dictionary to carry on at least basic communication with patients in their own language.

do its job? How can I make my colleagues feel comfortable with a new way of sharing information? Once they have accepted the innovation, how should the organization determine what new equipment it needs? How should the Internet be integrated into everyday operations or used for new ventures?

We suggest a seven-step process in planning for the introduction or the expansion of Internet usage in an organization. Work through all the steps, or refer to the step most useful to you.

What do these steps entail?

Step 1: Awareness Building (see page 17)

Cultivate a general appreciation and knowledge of what the Internet is and what it can do for your organization.

Step 2: Assessing Your Organization's Use of Technical Information (see page 23)

Identify factors involved in creating a positive environment for the use of the Internet within your organization.

Step 3: Finding Answers to Technical Questions (see page 35)

Plan and carry out practical steps for connecting to the Internet.

Step 4: Training Your Organization to Use the Internet (see page 45)

Develop hands-on knowledge of Internet tools useful in achieving your organization's goals.

Step 5: Action Planning for Use of the Internet (see page 51)

Produce a plan for integrating the Internet into your organization's work.

Step 6: Implementing Your Action Plan (see page 67)

Begin to implement the action plan.

Step 7: Reviewing Progress and Looking Ahead (see page 71)

Determine the level of success of your Internet activities and identify your next steps for using it.



Although we present these steps in sequential order, you may find it more appropriate to do them in a slightly different order, or perhaps do two at the same time. For example, you may concurrently train your staff (Step 4) and work with them to develop an action plan (Step 5).

Applying the Process

This manual takes you, your organization, your work team, or any group you intend to collaborate with through a process of examination and discovery. You will think about how you use information now, how you could use it in the future, and how you plan to introduce or expand the use of the Internet into your organization, consistent with your information needs.

To illustrate how an organization might apply the seven-step process, you will follow the progress of a fictitious organization, HEALTHLINK 2000. Although every organization has its own specific needs and conditions, we hope that you will recognize some common issues and constraints while following the HEALTHLINK 2000 example.

The following box introduces HEALTHLINK 2000, a medium-sized (15 people on staff) health education organization located about 200 kilometers from a capital city.

ABOUT HEALTHLINK 2000

HEALTHLINK 2000 seeks to promote positive public health and nutrition practices using the most effective and practical available channels and technologies.

It is located in an agricultural area about 200 kilometers from the capital city. Since being founded 10 years ago, it has relied on traditional communication methods (such as publications and presentations) to keep its target audience and funders informed of its activities, to promote its programs, and to conduct research for program development and public awareness activities.

HEALTHLINK 2000 publishes a quarterly newsletter of health tips and news about its activities. It would like to publish more often, but due to the high cost of printing, postage, and printing supplies, it must limit the frequency of publication.

HEALTHLINK 2000's single telephone line works most of the time. It relies on faxes for the majority of its immediate communication needs, such as arranging meetings and presentations to schools and providing updates and frequent reports to government ministries and its funding sources. HEALTHLINK 2000 has one computer, a Wintel 486 with 8 megabytes of RAM and a 540 megabyte hard drive. It is used primarily for word processing, light desktop publishing (the newsletter), and managing the budget and a database for the mailing list.

HEALTHLINK 2000 has a small resource

center, where it keeps books, magazines, training materials, and other resources accumulated over the years. The organization would like to have more information available in the office, but books and magazine subscriptions are expensive, so it does not order a lot of new material. There is no public school or university library in the area. A university is located in the capital city, so HEALTHLINK 2000 uses the mail and fax to contact university faculty or the university library when it has specific information needs. In order to stay in contact with its colleagues in similar organizations around the world, it receives several professional journals through surface mail. One year, using special funding, HEALTHLINK 2000 sent a representative to a health education conference in Switzerland.

HEALTHLINK 2000 has a full-time staff of 15 people, including the president, several health education specialists, an information specialist, and several support staff.

The president of HEALTHLINK 2000, Joan Jones, heard that it was now possible to connect to the Internet in the village where the organization is located. She thought that it might help to improve her organization's activities and possibly enable it to reach more people. But she was also wary of the Internet because she was concerned that it might cost a lot of money, which she did not have, to get a new computer that might become an expensive toy.

Joan asked Tina Tomorrow, the HEALTHLINK 2000 information specialist, to find out more about the Internet. Tina began reading a great deal about the Internet and became very enthusiastic about its potential as an information tool. She also attended a Leland Initiative Internet Awareness Training workshop.

After the training, Tina returned to work excited about what she had learned and with lots of ideas for using the Internet on the job.

Her enthusiasm was only a little tempered when her boss, Joan, reminded her of the organization's limited budget. Tina reminded Joan that part of HEALTHLINK 2000's purpose was to share information as much as possible, and she always tried to find better ways to do this. As a matter of fact, when Tina talked to people about HEALTHLINK 2000's mission, she often emphasized that the organization tried to use "the most effective and practical

means of communicating." Tina also emphasized that there were many ways to benefit from the Internet. Many of the people and organizations with whom HEALTHLINK 2000 communicated had Internet addresses, and it could pay for a certain amount of connection time with just the savings from not having to send faxes to these organizations.

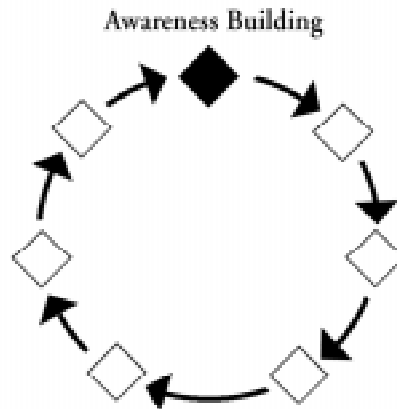
"I agree that it might be a good idea, Tina," said Joan, "but there are just too many things I don't know about. I guess there are a lot more questions that I'd need answered before I feel comfortable doing this."

To answer Joan's questions (and those of the rest of the staff), Tina facilitated the seven-step process described throughout this manual. She began with Step 1, raising awareness of the Internet within HEALTHLINK 2000, and, as you will read, assumed the role of "Internet champion" for the organization.

As You Begin to Use This Book

A few more words about this book before you start work:

- ◆ First, this process requires at least one person or a small team to take the lead as the Internet champion for the organization. You need to show your colleagues how the Internet can improve how they do their jobs and contribute to your organization's overall mission. People may be reluctant to take the time to think through what they want to achieve with the Internet. However, investing the time in the beginning to brainstorm and plan as a group (with feedback and acceptance from the senior leadership) will result in far more time and money saved later on.
- ◆ You may find that, because of your situation, you spend more time on some steps than on others.
- ◆ Internet technology itself is changing rapidly. That is part of its power! What seems difficult today will probably be easy one month or one year from now. Be creative in imagining what the Internet can do for you. If Internet technology has not caught up with you yet, chances are that it will soon.



The Internet is a huge and ever-growing network that links computers and computer networks around the world. The network is fast, especially considering the technical complexity to connect, for example, a computer in Cape Town with one in Washington, D.C., or in Accra. (For a visual depiction, see the map in the background section of the appendices.) Complicated as the global network is, however, it starts with the basics: a computer loaded with Internet access software, access to the Internet through an Internet Service Provider (ISP), a modem or other method of connection, and an open telephone line to make the connection.

Just as important, access to the Internet starts with the initiative and willingness of one person or a group to experiment. Remember, any new idea or technology takes time to become accepted. People often need many opportunities to hear about and observe change before they start to include it in their realm of “doing business.” Your initial job as the Internet champion in your organization may be to build awareness so that people see how the Internet can help them.

Overview: Building Internet Awareness

By building awareness of the Internet within your organization, you will cultivate a general appreciation and knowledge of what the Internet is and what it can do. You need to think about each person you will be talking to and make the discussion or demonstration relevant to his or her job responsibility and level of technical expertise. Some strategies to do that include the following:

STEP 1

Internet Awareness Building

Cultivate a general appreciation and knowledge of what the Internet is and what it can do for your organization.

1. Show it! Demonstrate the Internet to your colleagues, giving key features and introducing different possibilities for using it. If your office does not already have Internet access, perhaps you can visit a nearby place that does.
2. Provide concrete, relevant examples of what can be done with the Internet. Again, you can use the examples in this book, or better yet, share examples from organizations your audience already knows.
3. Consider carefully how you will launch this Internet introduction. In some organizations, it's better to start with senior management first; elsewhere the whole staff should be involved from the start.
4. Make it fun. Don't get bogged down in overly technical explanations of how the Internet works or in other specifics.



How would you describe a car to people who have never seen one? Would you focus on the details of how it runs? Probably not. Instead you would first tell them how much easier it makes getting from point A to point B. Think of your first descriptions of the Internet in the same way. Get people thinking about how the Internet can enhance what they are already doing.

Starting the Discussion

At this early point, your objective is to transfer some of your own enthusiasm and curiosity to others. Combine group discussions, either at a regularly scheduled or special staff meeting, with conversations and demonstrations with just one or a few people at a time. Identify others in your office most inclined to favor connecting to the Internet and enlist their support. Conversely, identify the people resisting the change and learn more about why they are reluctant to use it. Think about ways to address this resistance.

Get people acquainted with what they can find on the Internet. Someone working on health issues might want to know about education materials easily available from the World Health Organization or about statistics that can be downloaded from a country's health ministry. A human rights activist may be interested in resources available from the Red Cross or Amnesty International. The person in your organization who has to address and send your mailings may be most interested in communicating with constituents via e-mail or a Web site.

A list of Web sites, organized by topic, is available on the Leland Initiative site, or you may already have some sites that you want to

show others. Below, too, are short descriptions of some Internet applications that interest many people.

A Wealth of Possibilities

The Internet is an interactive network that allows people to receive and send information. These capabilities have resulted in a range of applications, and you will want to share these as you build awareness of the Internet with others.

Communication

E-mail, or electronic mail, is the most common use of the Internet. Your organization—or each of the people who work there—can have a unique e-mail address that allows people to send and receive messages from others. You can save on long-distance phone and fax charges and not worry about the time differences and busy schedules that sometimes hinder communicating with others.

In addition, people can subscribe to e-mail discussion groups, in which they exchange information with dozens or thousands of people with similar needs.

Publishing

If your organization publishes newsletters, brochures, special reports, or other printed documents, you can publish them on the Internet—with all their graphics or just the text. You can reach a potentially unlimited audience, without having to pay for postage and printing costs, update addresses, or do time-consuming mailings. Internet publishing does not substitute for traditional paper publishing, but it can expand your audience at a very low marginal cost.

Research

Various tools are available to help people do research on the Internet. The amount of such information is astounding. To sort through it all and select what is potentially most relevant, powerful



The Internet can expand your audience without regard to the costs of postage and printing. For example, the Programme for Development Research (PRODDER) in South Africa (<http://www.prodder.co.za>) set up a free, weekly e-mail service for the development community in southern Africa. Each week, subscribers receive an e-mail message with news about programs, events, training courses, and job openings.



Examples of creative uses of the Internet:

The Centre for African Family Studies Web site (<http://www.cafs.org>) has an online catalog of its training courses. It also has summaries of research reports and an easy way to e-mail the Kenya-based NGO for full texts.

The Uganda Coffee Federation (<http://uganda.co.ug/coffee/>) became a savvy Internet user within one year. It began with e-mail, then a Web site. A few months later, it hosted a coffee-tasting event in Kampala and Washington, D.C. via the Internet.

“search engines” have been developed that automatically search millions of Web sites when a person types in a keyword or phrase.

Fundraising and Marketing

Many organizations use the Internet to research funding opportunities, requests for proposals, and other means of raising money. Others have what is called a “presence” on the Web—a site that presents general information in an attractive format—to supplement their brochures and other marketing materials.

Teaching and Training

Schools, NGOs, and others are now using the Internet to expand their distance learning programs. Some offer formal courses with mandatory assignments that offer academic credits; others are less formal. A few examples include classes for health workers on how to process, submit, and access health statistics; advanced training for teachers on the latest pedagogical research; and online “agricultural extension” for farmers.

Commerce

More and more businesses and organizations are selling products and conducting other transactions over the Internet. They can post photos or drawings of their products, answer questions, and take orders when a customer supplies his or her credit card information. Although the technology is sophisticated (particularly to ensure that financial transactions are secure), companies are turning to the Internet as a way to substitute for or supplement their more traditional means of selling.

If you do not have access to the Web, you can still access lots of information and connect with people with similar interests. For example, there are hundreds of thousands of online discussion groups on every possible topic, as well as text-only sites with many organizations’ resources. For information on some of these text-based sites, send an e-mail to leland.resources@rrs.cdie.org.

BUILDING AWARENESS AMONG HEALTHLINK 2000'S STAFF

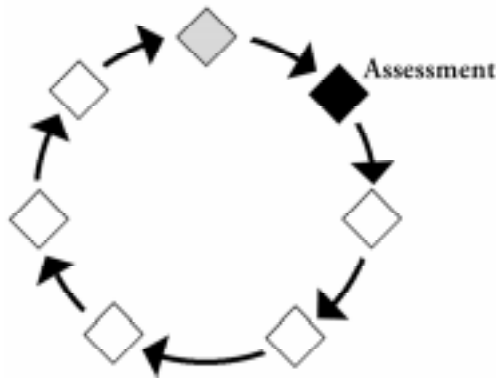
Tina, HEALTHLINK 2000's information specialist, wanted to introduce the organization's president, staff, and board to the Internet. Her challenge was to make the demonstration vivid, and she knew that just showing them copies of her printed materials would not catch their interest. But she had no way to show them on the office computer.

A colleague from another organization suggested asking a local Internet Service Provider (ISP) to set up a demonstration, since in effect he would be marketing his services. Tina did a lot of preparation to make the session a success. First, she worked closely with the provider to make sure that he tailored the demonstration to HEALTHLINK 2000's needs. Together, they developed a list of Web sites that the staff would find exciting and relevant, and Tina looked at each one beforehand. Tina also held a brief introductory session with the staff to find out if people had specific questions or concerns before they went to the ISP's office for the demonstration. She relayed these questions to the ISP representative so that he could research any answers he did not already know.

Tina had worried that the field trip might not go well, but the session was a success. Although a few people cancelled at the last minute because of schedule conflicts, those who attended were excited and curious to learn more. Best of all, the people who did not attend later came up to Tina and asked if she could arrange another demonstration.

Are You Ready for the Next Step?

Do you feel that your colleagues have a good sense of the possibilities of the Internet? Has your supervisor given his or her okay to move ahead, if such approval is needed in your situation? In Step 2, we suggest that you facilitate an assessment of how your organization currently uses information. Understanding your information needs will help you make decisions about how the Internet can help fulfill those needs.



This section gives you tools to discuss the mission and function of your organization and examine how information is used. Taking a look at how your organization uses information to achieve its goals can help you understand the relevance of different types of information to your organization and the processes involved in getting and giving them. It can also help you plan how the Internet can improve these processes.

Information is an important aspect of any type of work. The farmer needs to know the current prices and availability of specific crops to decide what to cultivate and send to market. The chief executive officer of a corporation must keep informed about competitors' activities, new ways to manufacture and market products, how much customers are paying, and what is and is not selling. The university professor must stay in touch with colleagues and understand what research is taking place in his or her field. And, as you will read, HEALTHLINK 2000 needs to keep abreast of scientific and political developments, new funding opportunities, and initiatives by partner organizations. All of this information and more can be transmitted via the Internet.

Overview: Conducting an Assessment of Your Organization's Use of Information

In conducting this information-oriented assessment, you will complete a series of exercises. The exercises serve as a starting point to

STEP 2

Assessing Your Organization's Use of Information

Identify factors involved in creating a positive environment for using the Internet within your organization.



As you do this assessment, remember that you are working toward determining how the Internet will further your information and communication efforts.

help you define your organization's purpose or mission, analyze its information use, and provide some important input in developing an Internet action plan. The information use analysis here in Step 2 will show clearly the relationship between the purpose of your organization or business, the type of information you use, and why you use it. Later you will determine which Internet applications can best meet these needs. Here is what you will do in these exercises:

1. Define succinctly (20 to 30 words) your organization's purpose or mission. (If your organization already has such a statement, use it rather than create a new one.) You will link how your organization uses information to its purpose.
2. Identify how and with whom you share information to accomplish your organization's purpose.
3. Identify what information you share with your target audiences and why you share it.

Worksheets for creating your own information use analysis are located in the appendices. You—ideally in collaboration with others in your organization—need to think through the questions on the worksheets, using HEALTHLINK 2000 as a guide. Whether you develop the first draft of these worksheets by yourself or with others, remember to make sure that everyone in the organization, at all levels, agrees with your responses.

What Is the Purpose of Your Organization?

The way your organization or business uses information is naturally tied to what your organization does. Some companies have already developed what are called mission statements, vision statements, or statements of purpose. What does your organization do? What are its objectives? See the box on the next page for other organizations' statements and the completed worksheet on the following page for HEALTHLINK 2000's statement. As with all the exercises in this manual, a worksheet filled out for HEALTHLINK 2000 is included in the main text, and a blank worksheet for you to photocopy and fill out is located in the appendices.

Exercise 1: Describing Your Organization's Statement of Purpose

Write one sentence (20 to 30 words maximum) describing the purpose of your company or organization on the Organization's Statement of Purpose worksheet. A blank version appears on page A-17.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

What is at the heart of your organization's activities? The following are a few real-life examples of the purpose statements of some organizations, taken from their World Wide Web sites.

Centre for African Family Studies

"To strengthen the capabilities, capacities, and effectiveness of organisations and individuals providing sexual reproduction and family health services which encourage responsible exercise of rights and promote higher quality of life in Sub-Saharan Africa."

*Educational Service Unit #11
(Holdrege, Nebraska, U.S.A)*

"The mission of ESU #11 is to provide visionary leadership and quality educational services in partnership with member schools to achieve excellence in education."

*Upper West Commerce Association
(Ghana)*

"A non-profit chamber of commerce initiative promoting business and economic development for the Upper West Region of Ghana."

Dialogue on Diversity Inc. (a nonprofit membership organization)

"[Promotes] intercultural exchange and constructive dialogue among communities of diverse national and ethnic heritage in the U.S. and around the world."

International Medical Corps

"IMC's mission is to save lives and relieve suffering while providing the critical knowledge and skills to help people help themselves, thus fostering self-reliance and recovery."

Organization 's Statement of Purpose

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

1. Consider and discuss the answers to these three questions:

What is the basic purpose of your organization?

What is the reason for all your activities?

What is at the heart of your organization's programs?

2. Write down (in 30 words or less) the basic purpose of your organization, based on your discussions:

HEALTHLINK 2000 promotes positive public health and nutrition practices in the southern region of the country.

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page A-17.)

With Whom Do You Share Information?

Whether you are looking for ideas on how to improve your program or whether you are sending funding proposals to potential donors, every organization has specific places and people, or certain types of places and people, with whom they regularly share information. To develop a comprehensive information use analysis, it is helpful to think consciously about the organizations and people with whom you share information.

These are the important questions to answer:

- ◆ To whom do you give information?
- ◆ From whom do you receive information?

Exercise 2: Sharing Information

Fill out the following Information Sharing worksheets—Giving Information and Receiving Information—for your organization. It is important to include the general type of organization with whom you share information (e.g., libraries or public agencies). If you have time, also list the specific places that fall into those categories (e.g., under “libraries,” you might list the names of the libraries you regularly access, or under “other organizations,” you might list specific groups or coalitions with whom you work regularly).

The next two pages show how the HEAL THLINK 2000 staff used the worksheets to determine how they give and get information. Blank worksheets are found in the appendices (pages A-19 and A-21).



Sharing information is the primary purpose of the Pan African News Agency (PANA), and the Internet has enhanced its efforts. Based in Dakar, PANA gives information about Africa to the media and other interested people, both within and beyond Africa. It receives information from contacts throughout the continent. The Internet has helped PANA both give and get information much faster.

Information Sharing: Giving Information

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

We give information to—

1. *Our target population:*

Health educators

Community health workers

Women's groups

2. *Funding sources that currently sponsor our programs:*

XYZ Foundation

ABC Corporation

Mr. Smith (an individual contributor)

Other businesses and individuals

3. *Potential future funding sources*

4. *Primary health care workers*

5. *Child health specialists*

6. *Researchers at the university*

7. *Similar organizations in different parts of the country and world*

8. *Government ministries in the country and in the region*

9. *HEALTHLINK 2000 employees*

10. *International organizations in health-related fields*

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page A-19.)

Information Sharing: Receiving Information

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

We receive information from—

1. *Libraries*

National university library

University libraries within the region or overseas

Libraries of international organizations

2. *Publishers and publication vendors*

3. *Books on related subjects (not often, because of high cost)*

4. *Magazines and periodicals (also expensive and difficult to get since mail is unreliable)*

5. *Newsletters of similar organizations, associations, etc.*

6. *Experts in nutrition, reproductive health, water and sanitation*

7. *Ministry of Health*

8. *USAID, WHO, and other organizations*

9. *International Health Education Network*

10. *Colleagues and other individuals, both locally and in other regions and countries*

11. *Conferences and meetings on—*

Nutrition

HIV/AIDS

Child health, etc.

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page A-21.)

What Information Do You Give and Receive—and Why?



While there are many factors involved in analyzing information use, answering the WHO, WHAT, and WHY questions are the most essential to lead to appropriate opportunities for using the Internet.

To complete this information use analysis, you need to look at two other important factors: 1) why you give information to a specific organization or person, and 2) what information you give them.

HEALTHLINK 2000 considers its target population and its funding sources to be the two most important groups to which it gives information. The two most valuable places from which it receives information are experts in the field and libraries.

In the following Information Use Analysis, HEALTHLINK 2000 analyzed its information giving to its target population and its information retrieval from experts in the health education field. Ideally, HEALTHLINK 2000 should fill out similar sheets for the other primary audiences that it identified on the two Information Sharing worksheets.

There are clearly more factors involved in using information than simply who, what, and why—everything enters into the total picture, from how you give or receive information (over the telephone? in publications? by searching databases?) to when you give or receive information (every day? once a year?). But the who, what, and why are the basic questions that must be answered to determine appropriate directions for using the Internet. The Internet itself will be one way that you change the “how” in exchanging information.

Exercise 3: Information Use Analysis

Fill out the Information Use Analysis worksheets for each of your organization’s major targets and sources of information to get as complete an analysis as possible. Another way to look at the question “Why is the information needed?” is to think of what the information will be used for. What is the end result that the information will help you accomplish?

Information Use Analysis

What information is shared and why (Giving Information)?

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

Giving information to—

Target population of health educators, community health workers, and women's groups
(insert name or type of source or target)

What information is shared?

Information about what HEALTHLINK 2000 does.

New services available.

HEALTHLINK 2000 newsletter.

Information about national, regional, and international legislation affecting them.

Information on HEALTHLINK 2000's health education programs.

Information on nutrition, sanitation, and behavior change.

Information about what they could do to promote healthy behaviors.

Why is information shared?

To inform them of HEALTHLINK 2000's services and activities.

To better achieve HEALTHLINK 2000's goals.

To keep them aware of progress in creation of laws that assist or impede their cause.

To provide them with materials and resources to use in their own programs.

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page A-23.)

Information Use Analysis

What information is shared and why (Receiving Information)?

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

Receiving information from—

Experts in the health education field

(insert name or type of source or target)

What information is shared?

New information on health practices.

Research on behavior change.

Contact information for other people and organizations doing similar work.

Ideas for health education programs.

Funding sources and organizations supporting programs to promote behavior change

Why is information shared?

To keep current with new developments.

To discover innovative program ideas.

To contact people and organizations for information or assistance directly.

To seek information for further funding.

To maintain contacts for future recruitment for jobs or consultancies.

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page A-25.)

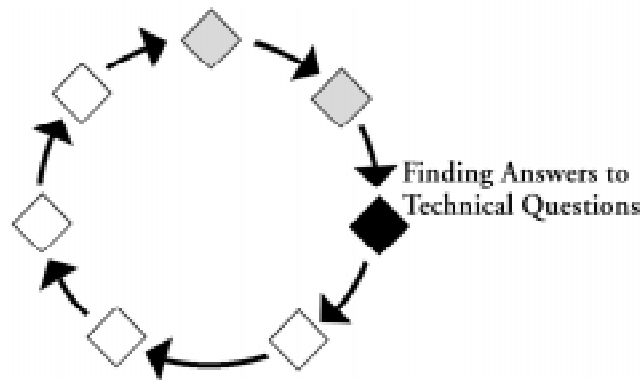
Are You Ready for the Next Step?

If you have worked your way through the exercises in Step 2, you will have completed an information use analysis. These exercises should have started you thinking about the information you share and who you share it with, both as a giver and as a receiver.

In Step 3 you will consider the technical aspects necessary for your organization to connect to the Internet. Understanding the extent of your information needs will help you recommend the purchase of an appropriate level of Internet service and equipment—not too much so that you spend more money than you need to, but enough so that you are not taxing your organization's computer and electrical systems.



Other organizations that have successfully introduced the Internet into their operations will be some of your best sources of information. Most will be happy to share with you how they did it. And once your organization is successful, you can share your expertise with other groups just starting out.



Many organizations delay using the Internet because they are unfamiliar with the equipment needed, confused about the terminology used, concerned about the cost, or unsure about how complicated it is to set up the connection. In fact, with a computer and a telephone line you are well on the way to accessing the Internet.

However, you will still need to obtain some equipment and software and acquire an Internet connection through an Internet Service Provider (ISP). In this section you will learn the basics of getting connected and what to expect when selecting and working with an ISP.

Overview: Finding Answers to Your Technical Questions

The intent of this section is not to turn you into an Internet logistics expert, but to provide the basics so that you can understand and ask questions of the people who will be providing you with Internet access. Here is how to start:

1. Inventory your current equipment and phone system. After reading in the next few pages about the equipment needed for an Internet connection, fill out the worksheets to estimate your organization's costs to connect to the Internet, and compare these costs to some of your current communication costs.
2. Interview one or more ISPs to learn the levels of service offered and the costs involved. In addition, interview some of their customers to assess their satisfaction with the service they are receiving.
3. Make arrangements to acquire your Internet connection. Keep in

STEP 3

Finding Answers to Technical Questions

Plan and carry out practical steps for connecting to the Internet.

mind that you can build a flexible system so that you start small and expand if warranted. For example, you can begin by connecting only one computer in the office to the Internet.

So What Do You Need?



The appendices include references (page A-9) and a list of Internet-related terms (page A-10) for more technical information.

Now that you have read about and seen some of the wonderful things you can do with the Internet, you are wondering how to connect to it. Below is a summary of what you will need to connect an individual computer to the Internet.

Computer

You will need a computer, but it can be one used for other office functions, such as word processing or database management. If you are purchasing a new computer, buy one with as much hard disk capacity and RAM (random access memory) as you can afford. A more powerful computer will help you to do many Internet functions faster.

Modem

A modem converts the digital signals of a computer to audible analog signals that can be transmitted on an ordinary telephone line. A modem can be either external to your computer (connecting to the computer with a cable) or internal (a small card with circuitry and computer chips installed inside your computer). Modems can transmit at different speeds. To connect to the Internet, you should have a modem that can transmit at a speed of at least 14,000 bits per second, but faster is far preferable. (Modems with speeds of 28.8, 33.6, and even 56 thousand bits per second are becoming standard.)

As part of your decision about what kind of modem to purchase, you need to consider—

- ◆ any local rules or regulations about what kind of modem you can use;
- ◆ the modem speeds that your local ISP can support; and
- ◆ the transmission speeds (bandwidths) that your telephone company can support.

If your office runs on a local area network, or LAN, and you want to connect the entire LAN to the Internet, you will need more than a simple modem as described here. If you are interested in a LAN Internet connection, you will probably need to contact a local ISP, telephone company, computer consulting company, or another organization that has gone through the process to see what local services are available to support this more complex connection.

Uninterruptible Power Supply

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) provides your computer with some degree of protection from electrical failures. A UPS will usually smooth the flow of power to your computer or system, preventing damage from power surges, and it will store a limited amount of electricity. When the power goes down, most UPSs give a warning sound so you know that you have a few minutes to shut down your equipment properly to avoid any damage or loss of data. It is also a good idea to have a device called a surge protector, which protects your computer from power surges and lightning strikes.

Internet Software

The computer needs special software to log on to the Internet, send and receive e-mail, and access text and graphics files. Your software decisions will be based in part on local capacity for connecting to the Internet. Rather than list the many software packages available, we recommend that you talk to your ISP to find out which software is most compatible with its capacity. In many cases, an ISP provides basic Internet software at no or minimal cost.

Internet Service Provider

What is an Internet Service Provider, or ISP? How do you find a good one?

An ISP is a company that provides the connection between your computer and the vast Internet network. In some places, only one ISP operates; elsewhere, many companies offer Internet access. You will have to choose one, just as you select where you purchase other products and

services. Get recommendations from other organizations about reliable, knowledgeable ISPs that provide service to your geographical area.

Here are some considerations in making your choice:

Service costs

- ◆ What is the first-time connection fee?
- ◆ What are the recurrent costs?
- ◆ Does the ISP offer different pricing plans, based on how many hours you spend online?
- ◆ Does the ISP give away or sell Internet software? If there is a cost, how much?

Telephone charges

- ◆ Is there a charge per local call? If so, are you charged by the length of the call?
- ◆ What are the monthly charges?
- ◆ Do different fee structures exist (flat fee, fee per minute or hour, etc.) and can you change to a different system of payment if it is more cost-effective later on?

Training, maintenance, and support

- ◆ Does the ISP offer training? What types? How much does it cost?
- ◆ How long will it usually take to fix service problems, and how much will it cost?

Interviewing an ISP

You may have one or more ISPs to interview about their services and fees. Hopefully you have recommendations from several other organizations that are already satisfied customers. Either by phone or in person, you need to ask a representative of an ISP some questions:

What modem speeds does the ISP support?

The minimum is 14,000 bits per second if you want access to the World Wide Web. The faster, the better—your connections will be quicker and, if you are paying per minute, cheaper.

How many dial-in modem lines does the ISP have? How many users are currently signed up to use these lines? What is the projection for the next six to twelve months?

Make sure that the ISP is not overloaded. If it is, you will have persistent problems trying to access the Internet.

Does the ISP offer communications software as part of its service?

If so, find out from other users whether or not the software is reliable. Is it free or do they charge for it—and if they charge, how much? If they do not provide this software, find out what kind you should obtain yourself that is compatible with their systems. Eventually, you may download enhanced communications software from the Internet itself, but you need something to start with.

Does the ISP provide service and installation support?

Will the ISP set up your system and help fix it when problems occur? If so, how much will it cost? How quick is the response time? (If they provide free service but it takes two weeks before they can come to your office, you may want to consider another provider.)

What evidence does the ISP have of good service?

Ask current customers about their level of satisfaction with this ISP. Get several references from the ISP itself or check around with people from other organizations that are already use the ISP.

You may find it helpful to use a list or chart to compare ISPs and select one at the end of the interviewing process. Also, a note about the technical terminology: If you are not a technically oriented person, do not be put off or intimidated by Internet jargon! Feel free to ask as many questions as you like. Refer to the glossaries of terms in the appendices and on the Leland Initiative Web site. You want to make sure that you are spending your organization's money wisely. An inadequate ISP will hamper your connection.



ISPs offer a range of services beyond actual Internet access that may be useful for you. For example, Swaziland's M-Web hosts the Swazi NGO Page (<http://www.realnet.co.sz>) for the Coordinating Assembly of NGOs in Swaziland.

Can You Save Money with the Internet?

You may look at all these costs, as well as the time it takes to get everything together, and wonder: Is this all worth it? Are we going to save money?

Now that you have learned the one-time and recurring costs of Internet connectivity, you can analyze current costs and potential savings. Although the following worksheets do not quantify intangible costs and benefits, such as more efficient use of staff time or a wider network of professional contacts, they can give you (and others in your organization, if they are the ones who approve the funding decision) an idea of what you might save over the long run. These worksheets on the next pages contain HEALTHLINK 2000's costs; yours will of course vary. You will see how Tina looked at some current costs to determine how the Internet might save money over the medium to long term.

HEALTHLINK 2000 ESTIMATES AND COMPARES ITS COSTS

HEALTHLINK 2000 estimated it would cost \$875 to get set up and connected to the Internet for one year. (See the worksheet Estimating Costs.) How did Tina and her team estimate this cost?

Tina purchased a 33.6 modem to install inside the computer for \$200. Although she could have saved money by buying a slower modem, the team decided that a faster one was worth the investment. Internet access cost them \$50 per month (\$600 per year), with a \$75 setup fee. The ISP provided Internet software as part of the fee.

Budget restrictions required that HEALTHLINK 2000 use its existing computer, a 486, and start out using its existing phone line rather than add a new one.

When Tina and her colleagues reviewed current communication costs, they saw that they spent about \$500 per month on local phone calls and faxes, long-distance calls and faxes, postage, and printing. They compared these costs with the costs of various Internet services. (See the worksheets entitled Can You Save Money Using the Internet? on pages 42 and 43.) Although this exercise does not take into account such intangibles as saving time, it provides a way to measure costs and potential savings in using the Internet.

Preparing for Connectivity

	Minimum	Preferred	Cost
Computer	386 processor	486 or better	<i>(HEALTHLINK already has)</i>
Modem (and any connectors needed)	14.4 Kbps (kilobits per second)	28.8 Kbps or better	<i>US\$200</i>
Software (other than operating software and software for your normal work)	-Telephone dialer and TCP/IP software -E-mail client software -Web browser software	Minimum software generally provided by ISP. Once you have an Internet connection, you can download additional software	<i>free from ISP</i>
Telephone line	With a dial-in connection, you can use the same line you use for telephone and fax.	Separate dedicated line	<i>separate line (annual cost)</i>
Internet access	Provided through an ISP	Provided through an ISP	<i>\$50 per month; \$600 per year</i>
Account start-up fee	Some ISPs charge a one-time fee to start a new account.		
Computer maintenance	Cost per repair visit	Ongoing maintenance	<i>Staff will do (annual cost)</i>
Total			<i>HEALTHLINK 2000: \$875</i>

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page 27.)

Can You Save Money Using the Internet?

Reviewing Your Monthly Bills

How can you save money using the Internet? Use the chart below and on the next page to help you compare how much you currently spend on communications charges with what it would cost you to do the same thing on the Internet.

Refer to your telephone bills for as far back as you care to go to help you find the following information.

How much did we spend on...	Last month?	Two months ago?	Three months ago?	Earlier months?
Local phone calls?	\$15	\$12.50	\$19	
Local faxes?	<i>Part of costs for local phone calls</i>			
Long-distance phone calls?	\$175	\$180	\$128	
Long-distance faxes?	<i>(part of costs for long-distance phone calls)</i>			
Postage?	\$100	\$67	\$55	
Printing and paper for newsletters, brochures, etc.?	\$200	\$250	\$200	
Other costs of communications?				
Total	\$490	\$509.50	\$402	

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page 29.)

Can You Save Money Using the Internet?

Reviewing Potential Internet Operating Costs

You should also consider the following factors in adding up the costs of using the Internet.

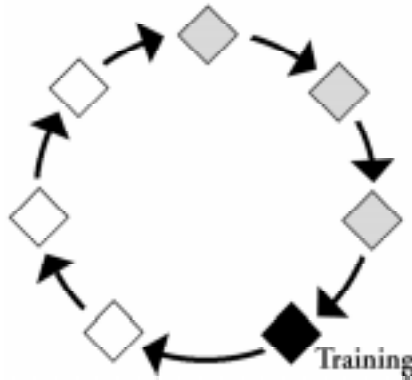
How much is...	Cost?	Per what unit (each, per minute, etc.)?
Local phone call:		
Cost per single call	<i>\$0.10</i>	<i>Per local call</i>
Cost per minute	<i>No charge per minute, just per call</i>	
Other charges	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Internet fax service:		
Monthly (or other) fee	<i>\$12</i>	<i>per month</i>
Fee per fax page	<i>Depends on destination and length of fax</i>	
Other charges	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Internet-to-phone service:	<i>(HEALTHLINK decided not to pursue this service until they are more accustomed to the technology)</i>	
Monthly charge	<i>No monthly charge</i>	
Charge per call	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Charge per minute	<i>\$0.15 per minute for international calls</i>	
Other charges	<i>One-time charge of \$50 for software</i>	
Other potential services		

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see [Pg 31](#).)

Are You Ready for the Next Step?

Now that you have either completed the technical requirements for getting connected to the Internet or are almost ready to make the necessary decisions, it is time to consider how your colleagues will use the Internet.

In Step 4, we look at training and suggest ways to ensure that you get a quality training experience. You will find that once your colleagues have greater familiarity with Internet applications, they will come up with all sorts of ways to use them! And their good ideas and enthusiasm will be just what is needed to do the planning that comes in Step 5.



Once an Internet connection is established in your organization, training the staff in how to use it is an essential and worthwhile investment of time and money. When people know how to log onto the Internet, send and receive e-mail, and conduct a search for specific information, they will feel more comfortable exploring on their own.

Overview: Training Your Organization to Use the Internet

Training may take place in your organization in stages. For example, you may provide a general introduction to the entire staff and then more in-depth training to the people who will use the Internet daily. Or you may decide that everyone should have an introduction when the organization first gets Internet access, give people a chance to experiment, and then do a more targeted training once they have specific questions and requests. Here are a few ways to begin:

1. Once you have an Internet connection, provide hands-on training.
2. Begin with the basics. The objective is to give people enough information so that they feel comfortable with the technology and can use it as a normal part of their jobs. More advanced training and applications will come in time.
3. If you do not feel comfortable conducting the training on your own, ask for help.
4. During training sessions, identify fast-track applications of the

STEP 4

Training

Plan for training that can develop a hands-on knowledge of Internet tools useful in achieving your organization's goals.



There is a saying:
“When I hear, I forget. When I see, I remember. When I do, I understand.”
In training people to use the Internet, make sure they do as much as possible.

Internet—aspects of the technology that could be used immediately and with minimal effort, but that will have significant impact. For example, establishing one e-mail account that the office will share will give you a great start in access to the Internet, while developing your own Web site will require a lot more time and effort and is a longer-term project.

Making the Training Worthwhile

To offer good training, you need a good trainer (whether it is you or someone else). You want a trainer who gives participants the opportunity to do things for themselves, rather than just lectures at the front of the room; a trainer who allows enough time for questions but is also well-organized and moves along quickly; and a trainer who knows the Internet well and can explain it to novice users in a clear and noncondescending way. You also want a trainer who makes using the Internet and learning about its possibilities exciting and fun.

Where you hold the training is important, too, whether it is in your offices or someplace else. You need as many computers as possible so that everyone can participate. Ideally, each person should have his or her own Internet-connected computer to use, or share a computer with just one other person. A computer support person should be available to help with any computer problems. The trainer should have access to a flip chart, slide or overhead projector, and other materials he or she might need. The training room should have enough light and ventilation for people to feel comfortable working intensively at computers.

Participants should plan to devote their attention to the training and not interrupt the session to go back to their offices to attend to other work. Schedule breaks so that participants can make phone calls or just relax for a few minutes. Serve snacks and beverages for breaks and either ask them to bring lunch or make it easy for them to get it. You want them to work hard—and breaks and a midday meal will keep them alert during the training sessions.

Sources of Internet Training Expertise

With more and more organizations and companies going online, you will probably be able to locate a capable trainer in your community. Here are a few places to look:

- ◆ Your ISP may either have its own training capability or be able to recommend someone to you.
- ◆ Local colleges or other educational institutions. Someone who teaches Internet topics or who is able to organize a training for you may be available.
- ◆ Individual consultants or companies. Training companies in your area may provide Internet training as one of their course offerings.
- ◆ Computer or information specialists from organizations that are already using the Internet.
- ◆ Local branches of the Internet Society, a membership organization dedicated to supporting the growth and evolution of the Internet worldwide.

Once you have located a trainer, ask for references. If possible, observe a training session held elsewhere. Make sure the trainer's style will fit with your organization and that he or she can tailor the training to your organization's needs.

There are many sites on the Internet that offer training materials, tips, and techniques. Ideally, you will have an on-site trainer who can answer your questions and provide a personal touch. Online resources can supplement training workshops and provide additional or more specialized information after the in-person sessions. Or, if necessary, adapt online resources to your own organization's needs and put on your own training. The Leland Initiative's Web site (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland/resource.htm>) has its own training materials and a list of good training-related online resources.



As an example of a two-day training session, the Leland Initiative Internet Awareness Training includes the following: introduction to the Internet, use of a World Wide Web browser and other tools for accessing and using Internet resources, and an introduction to resources relevant to participants' specific interest areas. Participants also go through the planning steps outlined in this manual. Training is hands-on, with a maximum of two people per computer. For more information about the agenda and materials, go to the Leland Web site at <http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland>.



The Internet Society is a membership organization for anyone interested in the Internet and may be a good resource for you. Visit its Web site (<http://www.isoc.org>) for a list of chapters around the world, as well as information about technical and policy-related aspects of the Internet.

Learning About Internet Tools and Features to Assist You in Your Job

In the training sessions and as you begin to explore on your own, you will learn more about the features that are part of the Internet. As you become acquainted with each new feature, you may get ideas for how it can help you. For example, because you can send an e-mail to more than one person, maybe you could send your newsletter to 200 people at the same time via e-mail—thereby saving on postage and printing costs and getting each issue to them that much sooner. Or, once you learn how to do a search on the Web, perhaps you could compile a list of organizations that offer training courses on a particular topic. You will get other ideas about how the Internet can benefit you. Jot these ideas down, as Tina did for HEALTHLINK 2000 on the following worksheet. Or, you can distribute the worksheet at a training session so that participants can go back to their ideas as your planning continues in Step 5.

Are You Ready for the Next Step?

If you have successfully conducted or arranged training for your colleagues, congratulations! Remember that training—either formal or informal—is an ongoing process. Continue to make sure that you, as your organization's Internet champion, and others in the office keep abreast of new Internet developments and master already existing tools.

In the meantime, draw on people's knowledge and enthusiasm to take a good look at how you can use the Internet to further your organization's mission. Step 5 offers a way to carry out that planning.

How Can the Internet Assist Us in Our Work?

As you learn about new Internet features—either through training or through independent exploration—ideas about how your organization can use the Internet will come to mind. (Below are some of HEALTHLINK 2000's initial ideas.)

Write down your ideas here. As you get closer to developing an action plan and beginning implementation, you will have your ideas close at hand.

Remember, if you are unclear about what any of these features are, read through the background information and terminology in the appendices (page A-3), or check out the Leland Web site (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland/resource.htm>).

E-mail:

Send out newsletter via e-mail; communicate with colleagues in other countries

Electronic discussion groups (mailing lists, listservs, newsgroups, forums):

HEALTHLINK staff can participate in various health-related groups, depending on their specific area of interest.

File archives (FTP archives):

Upload HEALTHLINK educational materials to FTP site; download information from libraries when doing research.

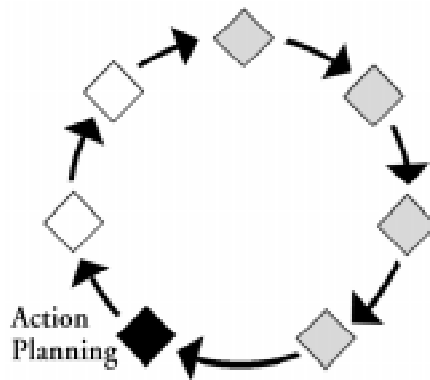
World Wide Web:

Have a HEALTHLINK 2000 Web site.

Other:

Use an Internet fax service.

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page 33)



In Step 1 (Awareness) and Step 2 (Assessment), you introduced the Internet to your colleagues and analyzed how your organization receives and gives out information. In Step 3 (Finding Answers to Technical Questions) and Step 4 (Training), you explored the technical aspects of getting Internet access and training colleagues on how to use the Internet. You have now had a chance to try some of the Internet's most used and useful features, and you have gained some sense of how these features can contribute to your mission.

Step 5 focuses on how the Internet can be used to accomplish tasks important to your workplace—communicating with nearby or distant associates, publicizing your organization, selling products and services, and conducting research, among others. Simply purchasing the equipment and connecting to the Internet will not bring about results. To take full advantage of this new tool, you need to develop a plan to introduce it into your organization and devise concrete steps to apply it to achieving your development objectives.

Overview: Developing an Internet Action Plan

The best action plans are written by the people who will implement them. After all, they know their jobs, the work environment, and the constraints under which they operate. They are in the best position to anticipate problems and solutions encountered in doing something different.

STEP 5

Action Planning for Use of the Internet

*Produce a plan for
integrating the
Internet into your
organization's
work*

You will need the good ideas and the support of your co-workers, even though occasionally it may seem less time-consuming just to write the plan yourself. Depending on your organization and your position in it, you will need the support of your supervisor, your employees, or your board of directors. We suggest involving your colleagues in a three-phase planning process:

1. Conduct a brainstorming or dreaming session that allows people's imaginations to roam free. What would you do to reach your organization's goals if there were no barriers to sharing information? How would you change your program? Exercise 4 gives you a framework to facilitate this dreaming.
2. Then, return to reality, but with a sense of the possibilities that the Internet can bring to your organization now or in the future. Develop action goals for introducing the Internet into your work (Exercise 5).
3. Draft an action plan to achieve the goals. The action plan will carry you beyond the dream phase of Internet access into the realm of practical use. A well thought-out plan will detail the resources required, time frame, people responsible, and evaluation procedures needed to accomplish your goals (Exercise 6).

Dreaming

Although you may be reluctant to spend time on a dreaming session, it is worth your time. Why?

This session enables you and your colleagues to think of new ways your organization could do business if the communication barriers it currently faces were removed. How might your organization use the features of the Internet in an ideal world?

What if you could send your newsletter to all its readers—for free? What if you could instantly tell your entire board of directors about a new policy development? What if you could instantly access the most up-to-date information on any subject? How could your organization take advantage of these and other things that could result from a world without communication barriers?

Dreaming will help you see how to use the Internet in creative ways that further your organization's mission and goals. Do not make it a long exercise—perhaps 30 or 60 minutes at most. Have fun!

When this exercise has been introduced in Leland Initiative Training workshops, participants have found it very useful. Dreaming is an important phase in planning how you can take advantage of this new tool. It allows you to think beyond the way things are now and to imagine the way things could be.

Exercise 4: Dreaming about the Way Things Could Be

Think about the Internet features you now know about, as well as some of the features that you have not experienced firsthand but have heard about.

Take a few minutes and dream about what your organization would do differently if all communication barriers were removed. Write your ideas on the Dreaming worksheet, just as Tina and the other staff of HEALTHLINK 2000 did in the following example.

Dreaming

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

What would you do to reach your organization's goals if there were no barriers to giving and receiving information? How would your program change?

Establish a regional network of experts on health education that exchanges information and lessons learned on a regular basis.

Create a network of organizations that are involved in nutrition, reproductive health, child health, etc.

Send our newsletter to many more people.

Share ideas and work more closely with experts all over the world, including having them peer review articles that we want to submit to international journals.

Develop an exchange program for people doing similar work in other organizations allowing them to work with us for some time and vice versa.

Connect every village health center to the Internet in order to conduct weekly online discussions where all participants can see each other and give live demonstrations of health education techniques.

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page 35.)

Action Planning

Now you will bring together your organization's statement or purpose and the information use analysis you generated in Step 2, the cost estimates you calculated in Step 3, the worksheet in Step 4 about how specific Internet features can help you do your job, and the Dreaming worksheet that you just worked on. Exercises 5 and 6 will take you through the process of using these resources to set goals and develop your action plan. The chart on the next page shows how all these various steps come together in the development of an effective action plan.

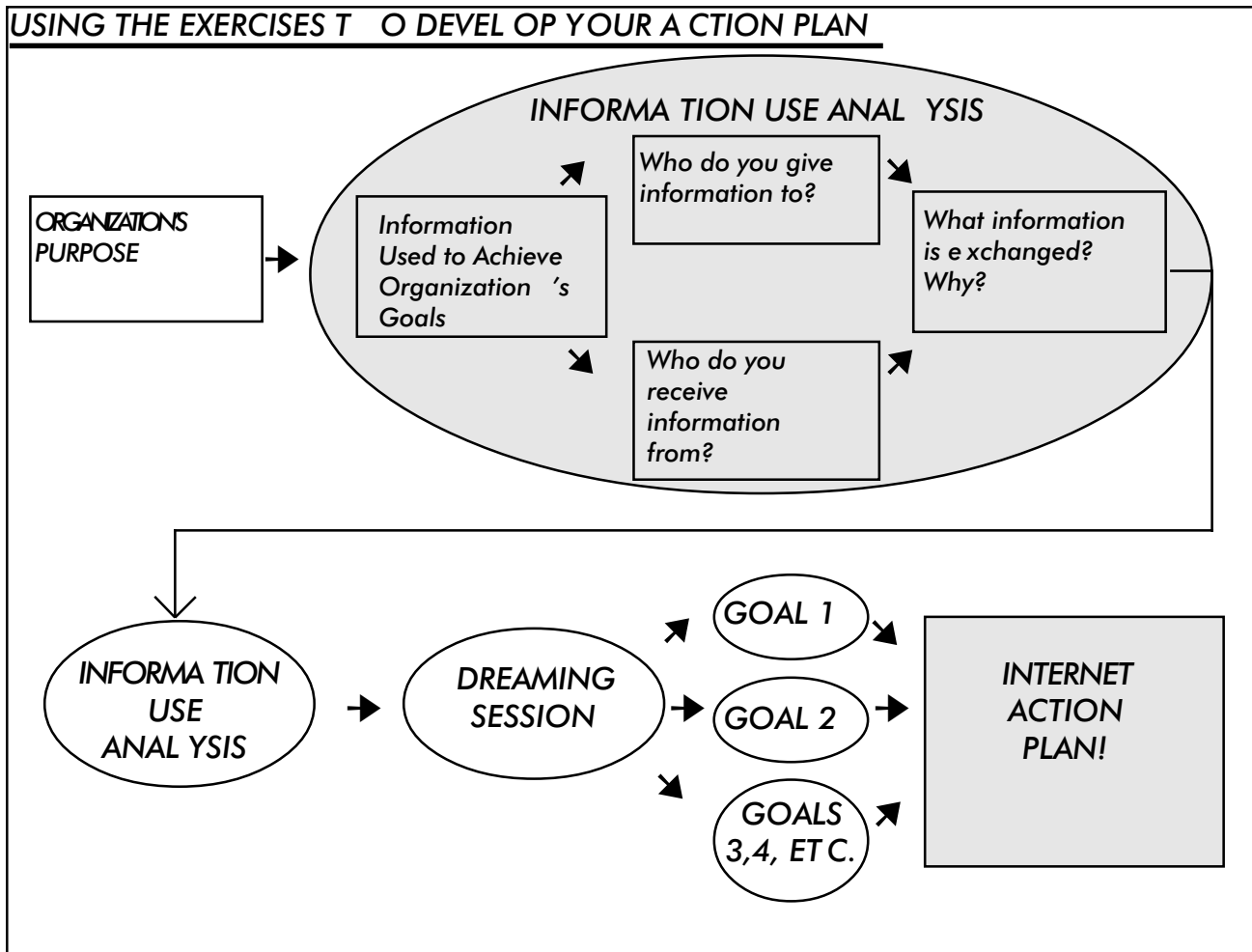
What Is an Action Plan?

An action plan specifically outlines how you intend to achieve a goal or set of goals. A well thought out action plan can help organizations plan ahead when implementing projects. It can help them get the resources they need and make the necessary changes in the way they currently do things. Ideally, an action plan is developed by the people who will be implementing it. It is approved by the people or body that normally gives the final go-ahead to proceed with a project. This could be a board of directors, a company president, a supervisor, or a group of peers in a team environment.

The information that an action plan contains is far more important than the way it looks or the specific document format used to present it. Action plans can be produced in many different formats. It is important for the people developing the plan to choose a format that makes sense to them. The box on the following page shows the basic elements of an action plan.

You may already have a procedure for developing an action plan, and you may want to use it or a version of it that works best for you. Remember that action plans can be used to look ahead at all kinds of things. In this case, though, we are looking specifically at developing goals and determining how the Internet can help achieve them.

One of the strengths of an action plan is that it helps you think realistically about each of the "must have" elements. You cannot have a



complete action plan without thinking about how much a specific step will cost, how much time it will take to accomplish, who will do it, and how you will know if you have accomplished the task.

Another useful thing about an action plan is that you can change it as work progresses, as your access to resources changes, or as other circumstances of the project change. No action plan is set in stone—it is meant to be a practical guide that reflects the current realities you are facing at a specific point in time. So if you find that work is progressing more quickly than you originally thought it would, or you are spending more money on a specific part of the project, you can modify your action plan to reflect that change.

Exercise 5: Developing Action Goals

How can you use the Internet to help your organization achieve its purpose? This exercise helps you set goals and decide on projects.

Now is the time for your dreams to meet reality. Take another look at the Information Use Analysis you did in Step 2 and the Dreaming worksheet that you just developed. Refer to your comments on the worksheet entitled How Can the Internet Assist Us in Our Jobs?

Next, think of specific ideas from each of these worksheets that you could realistically implement in your organization. Keeping in mind the resources of your organization (as well as your ability to acquire additional resources, possibly by combining efforts with another organization, creating grant projects, etc.), think of several ideas that you would like to implement to bring you closer to your dreams. Use the Action Goals worksheet to write several specific projects or action goals that you think your organization could realistically accomplish and that would contribute to achieving its overall mission.

The goals for HEALTHLINK 2000's action plan are on the worksheet on the next page. In this example, HEALTHLINK 2000's goals correspond to the steps outlined in this manual. The goals challenge the staff without creating impossible expectations. The goals are small and realistic, but very important. They are also logical in terms of where HEALTHLINK 2000 is now, and they contribute to the organization's mission. Moreover, they create a solid foundation for expanded uses of the Internet in the future.



The West African Enterprise Network (<http://www.waen.com>), formed in 1993 to promote economic growth in West Africa, developed three realistic, pragmatic goals related to the Internet: improve the availability of trade information to its members, strengthen the capacity of its information center, and increase its members' Internet connectivity.

Action Goals

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

Goal 1. Introduce the Internet to the HEALTHLINK 2000 staff in a way that will help the staff plan creatively and realistically for using the Internet in their work [corresponds to Step 1].

Goal 2. Get connected to the Internet and begin to use it for HEALTHLINK 2000 work [corresponds to Steps 3 and 4].

Goal 3. Make HEALTHLINK 2000's quarterly newsletter available electronically to regular readers who have access to the Internet [corresponds to Step 6].

Goal 4. Reduce by half the amount of money spent on international telephone calls and faxes by taking advantage of e-mail and Internet fax services [corresponds to Step 6].

Goal 5. Determine the overall effectiveness of the other goals of this action plan [corresponds to Step 7].

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page 37.)

ELEMENTS OF AN ACTION PLAN

GOAL 1

The overall goal of what you 're trying to achieve.

Purpose

Why this goal is of value to your organization. This should be closely related to the mission of your organization.

Action Step 1

- ◆ *Resources required*
- ◆ *Time frame*
- ◆ *Responsible party*
- ◆ *Evaluation method: How will you know you have accomplished this step?*

Action Step 2

- ◆ *Resources required*
- ◆ *Time frame*
- ◆ *Responsible party*
- ◆ *Evaluation method: How will you know you have accomplished this step?*

Action Step 3

- ◆ *Same as above*

GOAL 2, GOAL 3, up to perhaps four or five goals in total)

(There are usually several different goals in an action plan. Each goal is developed using the same elements outlined above.)

Exercise 6: Write Your Action Plan

Once you have established your goals and determined that they are appropriate for your organization, you can begin to write your action plan. As your organization's Internet champion, you are probably the person who will take responsibility for gathering ideas and drafting the plan. By involving everyone in the organization and incorporating their comments and feedback into the plan, you are most likely to get the support and commitment necessary to succeed. Don't try to save time by avoiding discussion about it with others—particularly the people who make the decisions about your budget or oversee your program's activities. Although this internal review process takes time, it will be worth it in the end.

Remember that an action plan does the following:

- ◆ Describes how you intend to achieve a goal or set of goals.
- ◆ Is developed by the people who will be implementing it.
- ◆ Can be in any format that makes sense to the people developing and implementing it.
- ◆ Helps you to think realistically about a project.
- ◆ Can be revised as work progresses to accommodate changing circumstances.
- ◆ Can help turn your dreams into reality.

Action Plan

HEALTHLINK 2000

(name of your organization or business)

Goal 1:

To introduce the Internet to the HEALTHLINK 2000 staff in a way that will help the staff plan creatively and realistically for the use of the Internet [Step 1: Internet awareness].

Purpose:

The purpose of this goal is to enhance HEALTHLINK 2000's ability to communicate information about its programs and services to its target audience, colleagues, and funding sources and to allow HEALTHLINK 2000 to take full advantage of trends and research in community-based health education and information resources available on the the global Internet.

Action Step 1:

Give a presentation about the Internet to the staff to make sure that they all know what it is and some of the ways that it is currently being used, as well as how they might use the Internet to enhance their work. This could be done in a half-day presentation. The main

resource required here is Tina 's time in planning and facilitating the session. It would be nice, though not essential, to enlist the help of a local ISP or another organization that has a connection to the Internet for a live demonstration.

Resources Required:

Staff time

Time Required:

Three and one half days staff time to prepare, half day to deliver the training

Responsible Party:

Tina

Evaluation:

(See under Step 2 below.)

Action Step 2:

Get specific ideas from the staff on how they could use the Internet in their work, as well as any problems and concerns that

(For a blank copy of this worksheet, see page 29.)

they can foresee in using it. Once staff are aware of what the Internet is, we could have another group session to get ideas on how we could use the Internet in our work.

Resources Required:

Staff time

Time Required:

Three hours, plus two hours afterwards for an informal survey of staff needs.

Responsible Party:

Tina

Evaluation:

These two action steps can be evaluated together by answering these questions:

- Do HEALTHLINK 2000 staff have a basic understanding of how they might be able to use the Internet and how it could affect their work?*
- Do we now have some specific ideas on how HEALTHLINK 2000 can use the Internet and what specific difficulties we need to be aware of when we get connected?*

Goal 2:

To get connected to the Internet and begin to use it for HEALTHLINK 2000 work [Steps 3 and 4: Internet technical answers and training].

Purpose:

To establish the process that HEALTHLINK 2000 will use to connect to the Internet.

Action Step 1:

Get an Internet connection. Review worksheet Planning for Connectivity. Purchase equipment and services that are still needed to get connected (a modem and an Internet access account from an ISP). Tina will purchase the modem and arrange for help installing the software on the computer.

Resources Required:

Tina's time and funds to purchase the modem and Internet access service.

Time Frame:

Two weeks to get the modem and activate the account.

Responsible Party:

Tina will purchase the modem and arrange for help installing the software on the computer.

Evaluation:

This step will be completed when one HEALTHLINK 2000 staff member (Tina) can successfully call up a Web page, send and receive e-mail, visit a telnet host, and use FTP to send and receive documents.

Action Step 2:

Train HEALTHLINK 2000 staff in basic Internet tools and functions. Tina will do

most of the training, and she will ask people from the local ISP, as well as other organizations, to come in to give presentations on specific parts. Since not all HEALTHLINK 2000 staff are completely comfortable using the computer, some of them will also need basic computer training before they can participate in the technical training. Because they have only one computer and one phone line, they anticipate that the training will be mostly one-on-one, and it will only be for about an hour each day, since all staff members have other work to do.

Resources Required:

Staff time.

Time Required:

Three to four weeks to plan the training and arrange for outside help and then

another three to four weeks to conduct the training. Training will be an ongoing process.

Responsible Party:

Tina will be the main trainer for the organization, although other staff may help once they are trained.

Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when—

- Each staff person can successfully log onto the Internet through the local ISP, go to a specific Web page, and use a search engine to find information on the Web.
- The person designated to get the e-mail for the office can log in and retrieve the organization's e-mail.
- Tina feels comfortable training staff to use the World Wide Web.

Goal 3:

Make HEALTHLINK 2000's quarterly newsletter available electronically to regular readers with access to the Internet [Step 6: Implementation].

Purpose:

This will allow HEALTHLINK 2000 to distribute its newsletter to more people without any additional cost and eventually to reduce by half the cost of printing and distributing the hard copy of the newsletter.

Action Step 1:

Research the best (and lowest cost) way to distribute the newsletter electronically.

Can we use our ISP's FTP server or gopher site? Would the national university or another health organization be willing to host a distribution list? In what computer format should we distribute an online newsletter? Should we consider setting up our own Web site, hosted through the local ISP?

Resources Required:

Staff time (newsletter staff, with assistance from Tina).

Time Frame:

Three days to perform research (on the Internet) and make contacts at local university (through e-mail).

Responsible Party:

Newsletter editor.

Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when HEALTHLINK 2000 has enough information to make decisions regarding the best way to proceed with production of the electronic newsletter.

Action Step 2:

Compile a list of e-mail addresses of our regular newsletter readers.

Resources Required:

Staff time.

Time Required:

Total three days and ongoing as staff discover additional addresses.

Responsible Party:

HEALTHLINK 2000 circulation manager.

Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when 500 good e-mail addresses of newsletter readers (half of the normal distribution of 1,000) are compiled.

Action Step 3:

Plan changes to the newsletter and the production schedule to reflect new electronic edition distribution.

Resources Required:

Staff time of newsletter staff.

Time Frame:

One week, intermittent staff time.

Responsible Party:

Newsletter editor.

Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when HEALTHLINK 2000 has a specific plan for publishing the electronic newsletter and knows approximately how many readers will no longer require the hard copy newsletter.

Goal 4:

Reduce by half the amount of money spent on international telephone calls and faxes by taking advantage of e-mail and Internet fax services [Step 6: Implementation].

Purpose

HEALTHLINK 2000 spends a lot of money each month on local and international telephone calls and faxes that are necessary to its work. By substituting e-mail for as many long distance phone calls as possible and by using an Internet

fax service, we could reduce the amount spent on telecommunications.

Action Step 1

Add e-mail addresses to the regular contact information kept on each colleague, business associate, or organization that we communicate with.

Resources Required:

Staff time: Each staff person is responsible for collecting e-mail addresses of the people with whom he or she communicates.

Time Frame:

Ongoing.

Responsible Party:

HEALTHLINK 2000 program assistant.

Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when each person sends e-mail more frequently than he or she makes toll-charge telephone calls.

Action Step 2

Research and subscribe to an Internet fax service.

Resources Required:

Staff time, possibly an initial deposit and ongoing payments.

Time Frame:

Expect to be subscribed within one week.

Responsible Party:

HEALTHLINK 2000 business manager .

Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when the number of toll-charge faxes originating from the HEALTHLINK 2000 office is reduced by 50 percent.

Goal 5:

To determine the overall effectiveness and value to HEALTHLINK 2000 of the other goals of this action plan [Step 7: Reviewing and Looking Ahead]. Questions to be answered include: Were the individual goals successful? What worked well and what went poorly? How could the activities in each goal have been improved? Should they be continued? What, if any, additional information communication goals should be planned? What other ideas for using Internet technology should HEALTHLINK 2000 consider?

Purpose

To evaluate the overall effectiveness of HEALTHLINK 2000's Internet-related activities in order to learn from the experience.

Action Step 1

Decide on evaluation criteria (i.e., questions that need to be answered and how they will be measured).

Resources Required:

Staff time, possibly some assistance from someone in another local organization experienced in evaluation.

Time Frame:

Approximately two days total time.

Responsible Party:

HEALTHLINK 2000's evaluation team (to be decided on by consensus of

HEALTHLINK 2000 officers, staff, and board of directors.

Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when HEALTHLINK 2000 officers, staff, and board of directors agree that the criteria and their measurement will yield meaningful information.

Action Step 2

Conduct an evaluation and present findings and recommendations.

Resources Required:

Time of evaluation team members and the people responsible for other goals.

Time Frame:

Ongoing throughout the implementation of the individual goals.

Responsible Party:

HEALTHLINK 2000 evaluation team.

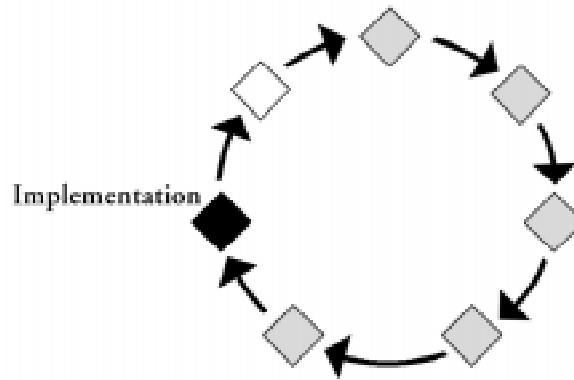
Evaluation:

This step will be considered successful when the evaluation process and the report of the evaluation team—

- *Provide input to improve future projects.*
- *Provide input into developing ideas, goals, and techniques for implementing future information communication projects that contribute to HEALTHLINK 2000's overall goals.*

Are You Ready for the Next Step?

It is time for implementation! Recognizing that an action plan is flexible and should be revised over time, do you and your colleagues feel comfortable with the goals you have set and the steps to achieve them? Has everyone needing to review the plan done so? Have you established goals that are within your means at this time? If you have answered yes to these questions, you are ready to carry out your plan. In Step 6 you will read about HEALTHLINK 2000's implementation (it was not completely problem-free!) and get some suggestions for how to make the action plan you developed a useful, working tool.



The action plan that you crafted in Step 5 comes to life as the Internet becomes integrated into your everyday business. Although every organization shares some common uses of the Internet, each will adapt it in a slightly different fashion.

In this section, you will see how HEALTHLINK 2000's implementation of Internet use took place. Although some of what occurred will sound familiar to you, your organization's experience will be unique. Some of what happens will go smoother than planned; other things might not work out quite as easily. A few weeks or months from now, however, you will be amazed at how far your organization has progressed as a member of the Internet community.

Overview: Implementing Your Internet Action Plan

As you incorporate the Internet into your normal operations, keep these suggestions in mind:

1. Be patient. You cannot accomplish everything immediately.
2. Be flexible. Refer to your action plan as a guide, but remember that you may need to revise some parts of the plan as you implement it.
3. If you encounter significant problems, find out their cause. Is it a technology problem? Staff resistance? Or perhaps the goal is not as critical to your mission as you originally thought. A solution will be more apparent once you have identified the barrier.

STEP 6

Implementing Your Action Plan

Begin to implement the action plan.



No matter how much you have prepared your staff, introducing the Internet into your organization will have its stressful moments. Change is afoot. If you stay optimistic and focused on the goals of the action plan, your colleagues will work with you.

4. Continue to talk to (or e-mail) other organizations to learn how they are using the Internet and how they have solved problems they have encountered. The organizations described in these case studies illustrate some examples, but you will come across many more on your own.
5. Keep the big picture in mind. While you are implementing the plan, think of your overall goals and whether the Internet is helping you achieve them.

Using the Action Plan as a Guide

Because every action plan and every organization is different, we cannot predict exactly how the introduction of the Internet will proceed for you and your co-workers. We can predict that you will have some very positive achievements, along with some frustrations. It will help if you recognize this as you start the implementation phase. That way, you—as your organization’s Internet champion—will be better able to keep people focused on the fact that new systems take time to become part of the organization’s normal way of doing business. If you have set realistic goals and tasks in your action plan, the plan will point the way and allow you to track progress.

HEALTHLINK 2000 TAKES THE PLUNGE

After assembling a core team to develop an action plan, Tina shared it with Joan, HEALTHLINK 2000's president, and the staff. In fact, several of the goals had already been accomplished. But more work lay ahead.

For Goal 1, introducing the Internet, Tina worked with a local ISP that was recommended to her by a colleague. A representative arranged a 90-minute presentation at his office. Tina worked with him beforehand to make sure that he showed health-related Web sites and discussion groups during the presentation.

For Goal 2, introducing the Internet and beginning to use it, Tina checked with a number of vendors before making her decisions. Looking for equipment and services was more time-consuming than she anticipated, but after three months, the office had Internet access and an e-mail account set up on its one computer. The first time that Tina successfully sent and received e-mail from a partner organization in the United States was exciting for the entire office.

Training was also time-consuming. Without the budget to hire an outside trainer for the entire staff, Tina conducted the training. Moreover, with only one computer, she knew it was difficult to try to get everyone to crowd around it for any length of time. Therefore, she trained one or two people at a time, usually at lunch or early in the morning.

For Goal 3, HEALTHLINK 2000 was to begin distributing its newsletter via e-mail. Tina worked with Sam, the newsletter editor, on this. They decided that they still needed a hard-copy version, and would introduce the e-mail version over time. They began by making it text-only and sending it to a small group of HEALTHLINK 2000 supporters for their feedback. In the meantime, they and the rest of the staff began routinely asking their outside associates for their e-mail addresses. Sam started compiling them.

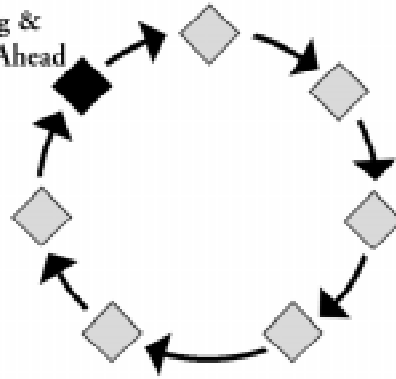
For Goal 4, reducing by half the amount of money spent on international communications, HEALTHLINK 2000 is making progress, but slowly. HEALTHLINK 2000's business manager, who watches over the budget, cannot wait for this to happen. However, people are still in the habit of sending and receiving hard-copy faxes. The fact that the organization has only one computer deters more frequent use of the Internet. If someone else is using the computer, a staff person in a hurry uses the phone or fax, rather than waiting. However, the business manager shared the monthly accounts with the rest of the staff, and seeing the numbers definitely made an impression.

For Goal 5, HEALTHLINK 2000 was to review its progress in accomplishing the other goals of its plan. A description of how HEALTHLINK 2000 approached this goal is in the discussion of Step 7.

Are You Ready for the Next Step?

As your organization begins to use the Internet, you will be evaluating the process as part of your normal routine. Is the Internet benefitting your organization as you intended? Are you saving the time and money that you envisioned? Are you getting information out to your members more efficiently? Some aspects of the implementation will be working very smoothly, while others will need improvement. In Step 7, we will suggest some questions to ask and ways to evaluate whether you are meeting your goals with the Internet. We will also look ahead at new ways that the Internet can benefit your organization.

Reviewing &
Looking Ahead



By now you are connected to and using the Internet on a regular basis. The action plan developed in Step 5 is coming to life as you use the Internet for communication, research, and the other purposes that you identified as relevant to your needs.

Now it is time to step back and look at the big picture of what you have accomplished. Has everything gone smoothly? Is there anything that you would do differently the next time, or that you would recommend to someone seeking advice? Now that you have some experience behind you, what ideas do you have about new ways to use the Internet to accomplish your objectives? We suggest evaluating what is working for you and what is not. By “evaluation,” we do not mean a data-intensive, lengthy procedure, but rather taking time to reflect—individually and as a group—and to think ahead to what you might want to do with the Internet in the future.

Overview: *Reviewing Progress and Looking Ahead to Future Uses of the Internet*

Think about each way that your organization is currently using the Internet: e-mail for correspondence, news groups to exchange information, etc. For each, do the following:

STEP 7

Reviewing Progress and Looking Ahead

Determine how successful your Internet activities have been and identify your next steps for using the Internet.

1. Determine how successful the Internet application has been within your organization.
2. Document ideas for improving future information or communication projects based on this experience.
3. Seek ideas for future information or communication projects from colleagues and from sources on the Internet itself.



Successful users of the Internet are always looking at “the next step.” For example, the Centre for African Family Studies (<http://www.cafs.org>) has its catalog of courses and training sessions online. In the future, the organization hopes to launch a system so that people can register for these sessions online.

When Is It Time to Evaluate?

You and your colleagues will actually be conducting an evaluation of your use of the Internet every day. When a colleague has a difficult time e-mailing an attachment, when another colleague comes across information on the Web that she can immediately put to use, when people are telling you that files seem to be downloading too slowly—this feedback should be part of your ongoing evaluation to determine whether you are getting the maximum benefits from the Internet.

This is what evaluation is all about: looking at where you are, how you got there, and what you have learned in view of what you really want to accomplish. It will give you a clearer picture of where to go in the future and how to get there.

When Things Are Going Well

For the most part, your organization’s use of the Internet should progress smoothly. With people generally satisfied, this might be a good time to revisit your action plan and look at the goals you set. Perhaps the most useful and proactive evaluation is to consider each goal and answer these questions:

- ◆ Did you accomplish the goal?
- ◆ Did accomplishing the goal achieve what you had hoped?
- ◆ Did accomplishing the goal have the desired effect on your progress toward your organization’s purpose or mission? (It is entirely possible to do a great job of implementing a well-designed action plan, only to find that your accomplishments really did not serve the larger purpose that you hoped they would.)

When Things Are Not Going as Planned

Problems do arise. By diagnosing the problem and thinking through the steps described in this manual, you will probably find that you can identify a solution. For example—

- ◆ If the connection itself is poor, review the logistics (computer, telephone line, ISP, etc.). Think about whether any of these components need to be changed or upgraded and determine who you can speak to about these technical problems.
- ◆ If a staff member is getting frustrated, review the training. Do you need to arrange additional training or just sit down for an hour or so with the person to address his or her specific difficulty?
- ◆ If you or others feel that the Internet is an interesting technology but not really helping much, review the information assessment and action plan worksheets that you developed. Did you accurately identify how and with whom you share information? If so, are you implementing your plan in the most effective way? Talk with people in other organizations or check out the Leland Initiative Web site for additional ideas and resources.

On the next page you can read how Tina and the rest of the HEALTHLINK 2000 staff reviewed their experience with the Internet and began making plans for what they would change and do in the future.



Finding solutions to problems is a natural part of the Internet process and one in which you can involve others. For example, the Southern Africa Environment Project at Rhodes University (<http://www.ru.ac.za>) introduced a function on its Web site so that visitors can search the entire contents of the site. They stated up front that it was a work in progress and invited feedback from visitors on how to improve it.

HEAL THLINK 2000 CONDUCTS AN EVALUATION

In developing its action plan (see Step 5), Joan, HEALTHLINK 2000's president, requested that conducting an evaluation be one of the five goals. In that way the staff's various experiences and perspectives would be combined and used. As noted in the plan, a small team would review the other goals to determine the following:

- ◆ *Were the individual goals (projects) successful?*
- ◆ *What went well and what did not?*
- ◆ *How could the projects have been improved?*
- ◆ *Should the projects be continued?*
- ◆ *What, if any, additional communication goals should be planned?*
- ◆ *What other ideas for using Internet technology should HEALTHLINK 2000 consider?*

The evaluation team consisted of Tina; Robert, HEALTHLINK's business manager; and John, one of the office's two assistants. Tina met with a staff person at a local environmental organization who had helped her along the way, showing her how his group conducted an evaluation of their Internet use. Then the HEALTHLINK evaluation team interviewed the staff people responsible for the implementation of each action plan goal and asked the full staff to identify any problem areas. Since

one of the goals dealt with reducing the costs of international phone and fax communications, the team reviewed the bills that had come in since HEALTHLINK 2000 connected to the Internet.

Some of the problems were easy to solve. For example, the team learned that many staff members felt that they were spending too much time searching for information online. As a result, Tina developed a training session on search techniques and also compiled a list of the most common Internet sites that HEALTHLINK 2000 staff used.

Other issues will take more time. For example, the staff wants to have more than one computer with Internet access. The team took up this issue with Joan. After some discussion, it was decided to work toward the purchase of a second computer and related Internet equipment over the next six to twelve months. Joan asked Tina to research (on the Internet!) various ways to fund the purchase.

The team spent two days determining an evaluation plan, interviewing staff, and writing up their findings. However, the evaluation did not end there. As they move ahead to new uses of the Internet, they will repeat the seven-step process, build on what they already have, and plan for and implement new ways to use the Internet in achieving their objectives.

Are You Ready for the Next Step?

What next step? As you might remember from the chart first presented in the Overview section, the process to introduce the Internet to your organization is a cyclical one. Just as you are evaluating one Internet application, you are building awareness of new ones. And so you can easily go from Step 7 back to Step 1....

The seven-step process outlined in this manual can be repeated as a guide for planning future use of the Internet. As your organization's operating environment and Internet technology change, you will find new ways to use the Internet. This manual can help chart a course that makes sense for your organization.

Whether you are the head of your organization, or one of many on the team, your communication needs are constantly changing, as is the technology and content on the Internet itself. How you use the Internet next year at this time will probably be different from how you use it today. Enjoy stretching the limits! Your colleagues will catch on to your enthusiasm and curiosity, your office operations will benefit—and best of all, the mission of your organization, and the people who you are helping, will be strengthened.

APPENDICES

Background Information About the Internet

A-3: Internet: A Tool for Empowering People in the Information Age

A-10: Important Internet-Related Terms

Worksheets

A-17: Organization's Statement of Purpose (Step 2)

A-19: Information Sharing: Giving (Step 2)

A-21: Information Sharing: Receiving (Step 2)

A-23: Information Use Analysis (Giving Information) (Step 2)

A-25: Information Use Analysis (Receiving Information)(Step 2)

A-27: Preparing for Connectivity (Step 3)

A-29: Can You Save Money Using the Internet (Reviewing Monthly Bills)? (Step 3)

A-31: Can You Save Money Using the Internet (Potential Internet Operating Costs)? (Step 3)

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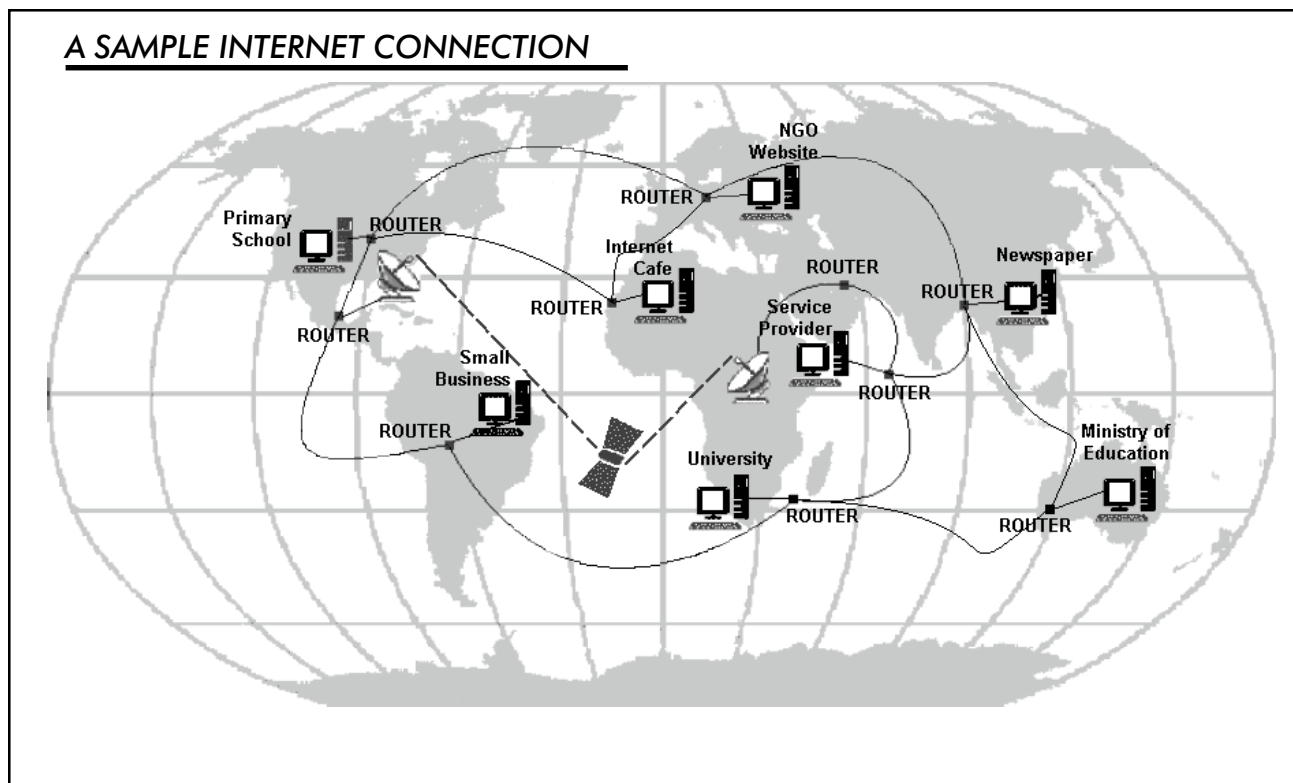
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The Internet: A Tool for Empowering People in the Information Age

The following introduction to the Internet is intended to give you just enough background to understand the Internet and what you might be able to do with it. Although you can refer to many detailed sources of information about the Internet, we hope that this introduction will spark your imagination so you can think of ways that the Internet can help achieve your organization's development objectives. Just as you do not need to know how a car works in order to understand its benefits, you do not need to know a great deal about how the Internet works, which buttons to push, or what software you need in order to begin thinking of what you can do with it. If you are aware of its possibilities, you can begin planning how it might help your organization.

What Is the Internet?

The Internet is a global network of computers. It is often described as a "network of networks," because it first began through the linking of existing local computer networks used by universities and governmental organizations. The Internet is a constellation of computers around the world that "speak the same language," so information travels seamlessly from one computer to another. When you connect to the Internet, your computer becomes part of this worldwide network of computers. The Internet is more than just a technological marvel. The pace is quick, with messages and information racing around the world in a few seconds, but the Internet is essentially about helping people communicate with each other. The diagram on the next page is a much simplified view of the Internet.



How Did the Internet Develop?

The Internet began in the 1960s when the U.S. Department of Defense began creating a computer network that would continue to function in the event of a major disaster. In 1969, four mainframe computers at U.S. universities were linked into a network that transferred data on dedicated high-speed transmission lines. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, new, similar networks were created to link educational institutions, government offices, and military centers in the United States and other countries. In the 1990s, as the Internet has grown, private business and other regional network providers have taken over the operation of the major Internet arteries, and the development of much of the information available online. Private businesses, educational institutions, organizations, and individuals now develop much of the information content available online.

How Does the Internet Work?

The Internet is a worldwide complex of smaller regional networks. To understand it, picture a major road connecting large cities. Smaller roads link the cities to small towns, where residents travel on narrow residential streets. The high-speed Internet is the major road in this scenario. Connected to it are smaller computer networks (functioning like smaller, less traveled roads) that can share data at high speeds. In order to enable different types of computers to communicate with each other, a standard “protocol” has been established for transporting data. This Internet protocol (called Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol, or TCP/IP) allows networks all over the world to communicate with each other on the Internet.

The Internet is a combination of computer hardware and software that allows computers to communicate with each other. If you have a telephone equipped with long distance service, you can call anyone in the world, provided you know the person’s telephone number. Likewise, if you have a computer connected to the Internet, you can exchange information with any other computer in the world that is connected.

What Can You Do with the Internet?

The Internet can transfer information in any digital form—text, sound, graphic images, and video. Over a mesh of dedicated data lines, telephone lines, satellite links, and computers, different software programs run that allow people to communicate. In some cases, such as when you use e-mail or participate in online discussion groups, you are actually communicating with a person. In other cases, such as when you visit Web sites, you are instead accessing information that is stored on another computer.

On the Internet you can—

- ◆ exchange electronic mail with other Internet users who have e-mail accounts,
- ◆ access and participate in discussion forums, which are real-time “conversations,”
- ◆ search databases,

- ◆ try different computer programs,
- ◆ purchase goods and services,
- ◆ watch video files,
- ◆ listen to audio files,
- ◆ exchange electronic documents,
- ◆ post information for other people to use, and
- ◆ find relevant information on almost any subject imaginable.

There are endless possibilities, all with a few clicks of a computer “mouse.” Many of the uses listed above are available free or at very low cost.

Why Use the Internet?

Speed . A letter or document that could take days to arrive by regular mail can be sent to the other side of the world in minutes or hours using Internet e-mail. Likewise, searching through a card catalog at a library can be a time-consuming, tedious process, but you can search an online version of the same catalog in a fraction of the time.

Breadth . The Internet gives you access to a vast (and growing) collection of databases, documents, computer software, and almost any other kind of information that can be stored electronically.

Cost saving . Exchanging information via the Internet is less expensive than using telephones or fax machines, especially where telephone access fees are high. Likewise, marketing your services or products on the Internet can be less expensive than using conventional printing and document-delivery methods.

Two-way communication . Audiences now have the means to respond directly to sources of information, research, and opinions.

Freedom . There are no bosses, no board of directors, no stockholders, and no political rules. Each group of people accessing the Internet is responsible for its own machine and operation of its own section of the network. The Internet belongs to everyone and no one.

Who's in Charge of the Internet?

No single authority controls the Internet, nor does one central computer power it. Whoever is in charge of, or operating, each computer connected to the Internet decides what information to make available on it. This design has reduced the costs for an individual or organization to get onto the network. However, this complexity can also make it difficult to navigate the Internet and find the information you want—especially as computers may have different commands for accessing and organizing their resources. Recently developed navigational tools and “maps” will help people find what they need on the Internet.

The World Wide Web

The World Wide Web, or the Web, is one of the Internet's most popular applications. It is a graphical, easy-to-use way to organize and present information, including text, images, movies, sounds, and more! The World Wide Web has generated tremendous popular interest in the Internet. In addition to an Internet connection, access to the Web requires a software program called a “browser.” Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer are currently the two most common Web browsers, but others are available, and they are all either free or very low-cost.

Future of the Internet

The Internet is getting bigger every day in terms of the number of users, the amount of information, and the number of services available. What seemed very novel only a few years ago has become more commonplace and widely available and less expensive.

In the future, computer networks worldwide may commonly feature three-dimensional animated graphics, radio and cellular phone links to portable computers, as well as fax, voice, movies, and high-definition television. Some of these services, such as three-dimensional navigation, wireless Internet connections, and Internet telephone service, are already commercially available. New, cost-effective ways to make Internet communication faster and cheaper are being developed

every day. With these increases in connection speeds, you can expect to see an explosion of online commerce, publishing, database distribution, collaborative research projects, video-conferencing, and 3-D worlds. All of these applications are already being used in some form or are under development.

Many companies already have secure Internet payment systems. And although security remains an issue, an increasing number of companies will sell products and services over the Internet that allow consumers to conduct payment transactions using credit cards, debit cards, or electronic cash.

There is no telling how far the Web will evolve, but the future looks promising. And as it becomes easier to use, more and more people will join this worldwide community called the Internet.

The Larger Picture

Most of the advances we hear regarding the Internet concern technical advances in computer hardware and new software programs developed for the Web. The biggest changes we will see, however, do not concern the machines and software programs that drive the Internet. Rather, the Internet's lasting impact will be in how it will affect us as individuals and as a society.

The Internet allows us to participate in information exchanges, develop personal and professional relationships, and share our experiences with others—and of course help us achieve our personal, professional, and organizational goals.

Here are a few societal changes the Internet, particularly the World Wide Web, may make possible in coming years:

- ◆ With the Web used increasingly as an election and campaign tool, online voting may be coming. People will have the opportunity to discuss issues, vote anonymously, and increase their participation in the workings of their governments.
- ◆ Online education and distance learning are already here, but their use should greatly increase in the years to come. People will learn new skills and knowledge to enrich their lives, with more flexibility in terms of location, time commitment, etc. Instead of having to

travel to attend a course or a training session, the education will “travel” to them.

- ◆ The Web can benefit the environment. Telecommuting and online shopping will increase, which could result in less urban congestion.

The Internet will not take the place of face-to-face personal contact, and it will never be the only way that we communicate with each other. However, it has defined and will continue to define new ways of meeting people, exchanging ideas, earning money, and many other things we do as part of our daily lives.

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Important Internet -Related Terms

Bandwidth

A measure of the amount of data that can be sent over a particular medium at a particular time, whether a telephone line, a dedicated data line, a satellite link, etc. The amount of bandwidth available determines the total capacity of the Internet to move data anywhere in the world, as well as the speed that data can be moved to an individual Internet user. Text takes a relatively small amount of bandwidth. Graphics, video, and sound require much larger amounts of bandwidth.

Browser

The software used to access and view sites on the World Wide Web.

E-Mail (Electronic Mail)

Messages sent from one person to another via a computer network. The same e-mail can be sent easily to one address or to many addresses. E-mail is still the most commonly used Internet tool.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP)

FTP is the most common method for transferring files—without viewing them as they're transferring—used on the Internet. It's fairly simple to set up and run an FTP server, and there are many FTP servers available for public use. Thus, it's a very easy way to “publish” information on the Internet. Many institutions maintain publicly accessible archives of information that they want to share with others.

Gopher

A method of making text-only material available over the Internet so it can be viewed online. Gopher servers were used widely before the advent of the World Wide Web, and there are still many in operation. They can be accessed through a Web browser, so many people think of them as a part of the Web.

Home Page

Originally this referred to the Web page that your Web browser is set to view when it starts up. It now also refers to the main Web page of a business, organization, or person or the main page of a collection of Web pages.

Hypertext

Text of a document that has been linked to other sections of the document or to other documents that give more information about the subject. Usually you follow these links by clicking on them with a computer mouse. Links can also be made to graphic images, to music, or to any digitized document. For example, in a hypertext document on health, you could follow links to definitions of specific terms, to audio files to hear the pronunciation of a word, and to the Web page of an organization that does work in a specific area.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)

This is the language that is used to create hypertext. It consists of various types of “tags” that indicate to a Web browser how specific text is to be displayed on the computer screen, as well as where in the document or where on the Internet to find a link.

Internet Conference

This can refer to several different techniques used to allow people to discuss topics of mutual interest. A conference can be as simple as sending the same e-mail to many different people or as complex as arranging to have people in 25 different cities see images of each other and hear each other talk in real time. All of these are possible, but the technology becomes more complex and the speed of the connection becomes more important as you go from text only to transmitting sound and video in real time.

Internet Connectivity

Several different levels of Internet connectivity are possible. The type of connectivity that you have will determine which features of the Internet you can use most easily. A direct connection to the Internet

means that you have full, complete, real-time access to all Internet services. An indirect connection to the Internet means that you are really getting a remote view of all your Internet services through the hardware and software of another computer. Some indirect connections are good for e-mail only, while others, known as shell accounts, make available a full range of Internet services. With an indirect connection, you will probably not be able to use graphics or customize the way you interact with the Internet as much as you can with a direct connection. Your local Internet Service Providers will be able to tell you what kind of connections they offer.

Internet Fax

A service that takes a special type of e-mail message and sends it to a fax machine specified in the message. With Internet fax service, you are not charged for a long distance toll call.

Internet Service Provider (ISP)

A company or organization that provides an access point to the Internet, usually for a fee. In order to connect to the Internet, an individual, a business, or an organization must go through an ISP.

Internet Telephony

A service where you can use the Internet as a voice telephone line. With some types, both you and the person you are calling must have an Internet connection and be online at the time you wish to talk. Some of these are free or inexpensive, though they have varying degrees of reliability. Some companies also offer Internet-to-phone services, where from your computer you can call any telephone in the world. If your organization spends a lot of money on long distance telephone calls, this might be a good option for you. There are a growing number of companies providing Internet telephony services.

Listserv

An Internet application that allows subscribers to send one e-mail message that will be received by all people who subscribe to the listserv. Subscribing to the list and all other transactions are handled

through e-mail. Listservs are a powerful and inexpensive way for people with shared interests to communicate quickly and cheaply with an entire group of people. Sending an announcement to a listserv is like immediately publishing or broadcasting your remarks. Many universities or non-profit organizations with computer facilities are happy to host listservs that conform to their interests. Because of the different types of software, you'll often hear listservs called by other names, such as listproc or majordomo

Log In and Log Out

Every computer network must have some way to identify who is online at any given moment and to make sure that they are all legitimate users. For that reason, you must log in to a computer system before you use it. This is usually simply a matter of giving the computer your assigned name and a password that you have chosen. You must also log out of the system when you are finished.

Modem (MOdulator/DEModulator)

A device that converts the digital signals of a computer into analog signals (sound) that can be transmitted over an ordinary telephone line.

Newsgroups

Newsgroups are one of the original ways that people with common interests share information or seek advice over the Internet. Newsgroups do not operate as e-mail, sent directly to an e-mail address, but as a feed that is sent to specific servers around the world. These feedshappen at specific times of the day, not when there is a new message posted to the newsgroup. The institution operating the computer system that provides you with access to the Internet, whether a university or an ISP, selects the newsgroups it wishes to subscribe to, and these are the only newsgroups you will be able to get.

Packet

The basic unit of data that is transmitted over the Internet. Every file, whether an e-mail message or a musical recording, is broken down into numerous packets of a specific size that follow a protocol appropri-

ate to the application being used. Each packet contains information about where its point of origin, its destination, its size and type, and data needed to verify correct receipt. The Internet is a packet switched network, and it uses all this information to ensure that each packet arrives at its destination as it was intended.

Router

A special-purpose computer that handles the connection between two or more networks. Routers examine the destination address of all packets going through them and determine where to send them next to get them to their destination.

Real Time

Simultaneous transmission and reception by the intended parties. In contrast to e-mail, where the receiver may actually read the e-mail many hours or days after it was written, a telephone conversation or a face-to-face meeting takes place in real time.

Server

A special-purpose computer that distributes data to other computers, either when requested to, or when it has been programmed to. Examples include World Wide Web and FTP servers.

Telnet

An Internet service that allows you to connect to a remote computer to use specific databases or other applications available on that computer. Telnet is one of the first applications widely used on the Internet. Many telnet applications are now available on the World Wide Web, where they are easier to use.

Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP)

The suite of protocols that defines how the Internet works. Much as diplomats follow certain protocols in communicating with ambassadors and other foreign officials, a network protocol lays the groundwork for how different devices on the network communicate with each other. The Internet uses many different protocols.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

The standard way to give the address of any resource on the Internet. This is the address you enter into the “go to” line of a Web browser in order to visit that site. The URL “<http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland/resource.htm>” represents the following:

`http://` indicates the type of protocol for the computer and network to use in requesting and receiving data from the server. In this case it is hypertext transfer protocol.

`www.info.usaid.gov` is the name of the actual server (computer) that you are contacting.

`/leland` is the name of the directory (or folder -the place on the computer) where the file you are requesting can be found. There may be several subdirectories, each separated by a slash (/).

`/resource.htm` is the name of the actual file, or page, that you are requesting.

Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)

If the electricity goes out while you are using a computer, many bad things can happen, including damage to your software or equipment. At the very least, you can lose data that has not been saved. A UPS provides you with some degree of protection from this. A UPS will usually both smooth the flow of power to your computer or system, preventing damage from power surges, and store a limited amount of electricity. When the power goes down, most UPSs give a warning sound, and you know that you have a few minutes to shut down your equipment properly, thus avoiding any damage or loss of data. It’s also a good idea to have a device that protects your computer from power surges and lightning strikes.

World Wide Web

The World Wide Web (WWW or the Web) is by far the most popular application on the Internet, and with good reason. The WWW integrates text in any format, sound, video, and virtually any kind of information that can be sent in a digital format. The basic language of the Web is hypertext markup language, which is used to determine what the information will look like and point to where you can find the

links. The Web makes it easy to use the resources of the Internet without using a lot of computer commands and knowing a lot about computers. Modern Web browsers, such as Netscape Navigator and Microsoft's Internet Explorer, can request and display the information from a Web server in exactly the way that the originator intended. As information on the Web gets easier to find, it is becoming more useful as a tool for conducting everyday business, as well as bringing the world of information to your desktop.

Organization 's Statement of Purpose

(name of your organization or business)

1. Consider and discuss the answers to these three questions:
What is the basic purpose of your organization?
What is the reason for all your activities?
What is at the heart of your organization's programs?
2. Write down (in 30 words or less) the basic purpose of your organization, based on your discussions:

Information Sharing: Giving Information

(name of your organization or business)

We give information to—

Information Sharing: Receiving Information

(name of your organization or business)

We receive information from—

Information Use Analysis

What information is shared and why (giving information)?

(name of your organization or business)

Giving information to—

(insert name or type of source or target audience)

What information is shared?

Why is information shared?

Information Use Analysis

What information is shared and why (receiving information)?

(name of your organization or business)

Receiving information from—

(insert name or type of source or target audience)

What information is shared?

Why is information shared?

Preparing for Connectivity

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Preferred</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Computer	386 processor	486 or better	
Modem (and any connectors needed)	14.4 Kbps (kilobits per second)	28.8 Kbps or better	
Software (other than operating software and software for your normal work)	-Telephone dialer and TCP/IP software -E-mail client software -Web browser software	Minimum software generally provided by ISP. Once you have an Internet connection, you can download additional software	
Telephone line	With a dial-in connection, you can use the same line you use for telephone and fax.	Separate dedicated line	(annual cost)
Internet access	Provided through an ISP	Provided through an ISP	
Account start-up fee	Some ISPs charge a one-time fee to start a new account.		
Computer maintenance	Cost per repair visit	Ongoing maintenance	(annual cost)
Total			

Can You Save Money Using the Internet?

Reviewing Your Monthly Bills

How can you save money using the Internet? Use the chart below and on the next page to help you compare how much you currently spend on communications charges with what it would cost you to do the same thing on the Internet.

Refer to your telephone bills for as far back as you care to go to help you find the following information.

How much did we spend on...	Last month?	Two months ago?	Three months ago?	Earlier months?
Local phone calls?				
Local faxes?				
Long-distance phone calls?				
Long-distance faxes?				
Postage?				
Printing and paper for newsletters, brochures, etc.?				
Other costs of communications?				
Total				

Can You Save Money Using the Internet?

Reviewing Potential Operating Costs

You should also consider the following factors in adding up the costs of using the Internet.

How much is...	Cost?	Per what unit (each, per minute, etc.)?
Local phone call:		
Cost per single call		
Cost per minute		
Other charges		
Internet fax service:		
Monthly (or other) fee		
Fee per fax page		
Other charges		
Internet-to-phone service:		
Monthly charge		
Charge per call		
Charge per minute		
Other charges		
Other potential services		

How Can the Internet Assist Us in Our Work?

As you learn about new Internet features—either through training or through independent exploration—ideas about how your organization can use the Internet will come to mind.

Write down your ideas here. As you get closer to developing an action plan and beginning implementation, you will have your ideas close at hand.

Remember, if you are unclear about what any of these features are, read through the background information and terminology in the appendices (beginning on page A-3), or check out the Leland Web site (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/leland/resource.htm>).

E-mail:

Electronic discussion groups (mailing lists, listservs, newsgroups, forums):

File archives (FTP archives):

World Wide Web:

Other:

Dreaming

(name of your organization or business)

What would you do to reach your organization's goals if there were no barriers to giving and receiving information? How would your program change?

Action Goals

(name of your organization or business)

Action Plan

(name of your organization or business)

Goal __ :

Purpose:

Action Step 1:

Resources Required:

Time Required:

Responsible Party:

Evaluation:

Action Step 2:

Resources Required:

Time Required:

Responsible Party:

Evaluation:

