

ELIAC

Established 1989

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*The tools of the future are Information, Knowledge and Wisdom. They are more valuable than Gold and Oil.
This is true empowerment. Our lives should be Un-metered and free*

We would like to thank the current Minister of Communications Mr Yunus Carrim for this opportunity to present ideas, comments and suggestions toward the drafting of the Green paper

South Africa is a very rich country and there truly is enough for everyone. To predict and therefore plan for what the future may hold is never an easy task, but if we except that change is what needs to be dealt with then we need people at all levels that can learn how to adapt to change

Answers on Policy Questions:

With regards to giving each citizen an address one must again consider the question of being able to Port an email address, this might also be a good driver for competition. Also perhaps to have a system in place for long term email addresses available at no charge

The Local Loop was targeted to be sorted out by 2011, it still remains to be, keeping the market closed is not helping anyone, in fact it serves to do the opposite. Without going into detail we believe that the formation of a not-for-profit maintenance company to look after the LLU hardware would go a long way to helping some of the fundamental problems, it would also go some way to unbundling Telkom. Again having a national asset like the local loop under utilised is very bad, its long past the time for other players to come into the market and try and get things moving before even more damage is done

ICASA should oversee the frequency spectrum regime.

The FOSS policy has sadly seen very little traction and needs to be looked at long and hard with regard to how it can achieve the success it deserves.

The one item that stands out in regard to Low income users and their access to ICT is the high cost of out-of-bundle mobile data. Time and time again this gets overlooked, for many years now the out of bundle rate by Cellc, Vodacom and MTN is way higher than the 'special offers' – We stand to be corrected but on a standard prepaid package all three seem to have the same out-of-bundle charge of R2,00 per megabyte!!!! It seems a rather high jump when some charges can go down to 15 cents a meg, and then for that same data its now costing nearly seven times more. The net result is that unless people know the details of a data bundle purchases they are going to end up paying a lot more. Also should they exceed their amount the net result is that it eats into their airtime money at the rate of knots. We (Eliac) have stated this before, with the dropping prices of data and communications offering below or frozen inflation related prices is not offering much value at all.

With regard to the question of Universal access for all or most citizens, we feel it needs to be built from the ground up first, yes its nice to have broadband and all the devices that go with it, but this cannot be created from a vacuum. The starting place is with what is already there, mobile phones. The difference being that you need to have Mobile phones using browsers like Opera Mini, this allows access to most web pages and not just mobile sites, it enables basic inexpensive WAP phones like the V360 and e250 to act like smart phones, in fact a lot of smart phones use Opera Mini. It is well suited and proven to work in rural areas, the people have the devices, the infrastructure is already in place. Tablets and Smart phones on the other hand are not only expensive but are lucky to last a day without needing to be charged. Maintenance, repairs and spares for most mobile phones are also inexpensive, with a new battery for a V360 costing as little as R35,00