

AN ADDRESS

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AT

THE COMMISSIONING OF

THE

INTERNET EXCHANGE POINT

AT

PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE.

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PROTOCOL

It is my singular honour and privilege to give these few remarks on this occasion of the commissioning of the port Harcourt branch of the Nigeria Internet Exchange Point (IXPN). I am indeed delighted to inform this August gathering that this is the second in the series of Internet Exchange Points being put in place by the National Information Technology Agency (NITDA) in collaboration with the private sector. Today's event is a major outcome of NITDA's partnership with private sector stakeholders in enhancing Internet penetration in Nigeria.

An IXP interconnects Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in a region or country, allowing them to exchange domestic internet traffic locally without having to send those messages across multiple international hops to reach their destination.

Internet Exchange Point (IXP) do not only help save costs and free up international bandwidth, it also help local traffic become faster and cheaper. Cheap internet traffic greatly benefits the ICT sectors and help promote the development of internet services such as VoIP, Internet banking, Local content development and other internet related services.

The goal of the internet Exchange point include:

- i) Keeping local traffic local
- ii) Enhances and improves local internet activities
- iii) Reduces Internet Access cost to both the ISP and consumer
- iv) Promote Local content

IXP are crucial for the development of the internet in any country, they reduce the cost of internet traffic by keeping local traffic local, and more importantly they enable additional applications, which has a considerable multiplier effect on the economy. Global trends indicate that advanced countries has higher number of IXPs. For instance, United States has over 99IXPs.

The enormous benefits of the IXPs in Nigeria includes reduction in the use of foreign exchange to par 99IXPs.

The enormous benefits of the IXPs in Nigeria includes reduction in the use of foreign exchange to pay for bandwidth which translates to more money in the local economy and cheaper internet access for all consumers thereby leading to the provision of wide internet access.

Another major direct benefit of this regional IXPN intends to cover the six geo-political zones in the country therefore; the man power needed for the branch offices will be sourced for within Nigreja. The promotion of local Internet content will furthermore create more jobs, provide opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship for Nigerians as the hosting industry emerges will and consequently build technical skills and competency for our teaming youths.

In addition with better access, speed and lower latency, a range of new economic opportunities will open up at the local level. Because of this, there is likely to be a steady increase in the number of local domain names and locally hosted sites. A whole range of services will become possible that previously would have been impossibly slow. This might include video/Audio streaming, Video conferencing, Telemedicine, E-Commerce, E-Learning, E -Government and Internet gaming amongst others. The Port Harcourt Internet Exchange Point can therefore be leveraged on to promote educational related ICT initiatives such as the National Research and Educational Network (NREN) cluster within Port Harcourt and its environs.

It should be noted that the gains of IXPs can only be effectively achieved through the adequate partnership and collaboration amongst all stakeholders in addressing some challenges that may inhibit the modest progress already made. A major challenge is the cost of fiber transmission lines between the exchanges as well as the inadequate connectivity by Internet Service Providers.

I therefore enjoin all stakeholders in the IT sector in Nigeria to continue to collaborate to bring affordable, real time and effective Internet access to the door steps of all Nigerians in the country.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for being a part of the success story of today in our effort to effectively improve our access to the global information highway. I sincerely hope we will all work together to enhance the benefit of the Port Harcourt Internet Exchange Point which we are commissioning today.

Thank you all and God Bless.