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Coordinator

Information Society in Brazil

Green Book

Brasilia

Ministry of Science and Technology

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Implementation Group of the Information Society Program

(*Programa Sociedade da Informação - SocInfo*)

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*“...never [...] fully mature, neither in ideas nor in style,
but always green, incomplete, experimental.”*

Gilberto Freire,
Tempo Morto e Outros Tempos, 1926

Presentation

Knowledge has become, more so now than in the past, one of the main factors for the overcoming of inequalities, for the accumulation of wealth, for the creation of qualified employment and for the spreading of well-being. The new reality has had an impact on the economic and political systems. The sovereignty and autonomy of nations are being viewed in a new light the world over, and their preservation – which is essential – clearly depends on knowledge, education and scientific and technological development.

The Information Society is being directed and overseen in several countries. In Brazil, Government and society must work together in order to assure the prospect that the positive aspects of such a society effectively benefit all Brazilians. The advent of the Information Society is the base from which arise new forms of organization and production on a worldwide scale, redefining how nations position themselves in the world and in the global economic system. As a result, new demands are being made on the Government regarding its efficiency in public administration.

In the Internet era, the Government must advance the universalization of access and the ever-increasing use of electronic means of information to generate an efficient and transparent administration on all levels. The setting up and upkeep of fair and universal customer services are among the priorities in the government area. At the same time, it's up to the political system to promote policies of social inclusion, so that the technological leap forward may have quantitative and qualitative parallel results in terms of human, ethical and economic development. So-called “digital literacy” is a key element in this state of affairs.

In order to bolster the development of the New Economy in our country, we must encourage the utilization of these technologies in Brazilian businesses, which is the goal of the Information Society Program - one of the most ambitious programs of the “Advance Brazil” development plan and the result of efforts initially undertaken in 1996 by the National Science and Technology Council. Its main purpose is to establish the foundations of a nationwide strategic project to integrate and coordinate the development and employment of advanced computer, communication and information technologies and their applications in society. This endeavor will allow the government to further research and education, as well as assure that the Brazilian economy is capable of competing on the world market.

The Ministry of Science and Technology (MST) is presenting society with the Green Book, containing the goals for the implementation of the Information Society Program in Brazil and providing a compact summary of the possible applications of Information Technology. The Green Book is based on a study carried out by the Program's Implementation Group, formed by representatives of the MST, private enterprise and the academic world, under the coordination of Dr. Tadao Takahashi; all to whom I am deeply grateful.

This book analyzes a series of actions to advance and foster the Information Society in Brazil in all of its aspects: expansion of access, means of connectivity, training of human resources, incentives for research and development, electronic commerce, development of new applications. This goal is a challenge to be met by the Government and Brazilian society.

The Green Book of the Information Society in Brazil is being published to be amply distributed in order to fuel a debate among other government Ministries, the business sector and the scientific community. In upcoming months, the ideas here presented should also be discussed with the segments of Brazilian society more directly involved. With the incorporation of the suggestions received through this public scrutiny, it will be possible to trail a path in the direction of establishing clear political lines of actions to be followed and strategic activities to be developed.

Ambassador Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg
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Contributions

At our invitation, nearly 150 specialists from around the country divided up into Thematic Groups and have regularly attended the scheduled meetings. Several of these individuals were involved in more than one Group, helping the Program integrate the various studies being undertaken on parallel discussion fronts.

Throughout the 13 months of this endeavor, the Program also benefited from technical comments, critical suggestions, technical-administrative support and, even, simple encouragement from countless numbers of people in Brazil and overseas, either through official and unofficial meetings, informal conversations, or via the Internet.

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Preface

In May of last year, at the invitation of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MST), a discussion group began to meet in Brasilia to consider the possible outlines and guidelines for a plan of action aimed at strengthening an Information Society in Brazil. Such a program would translate into concrete projects for the initiative approved by the National Science and Technology Council, in December of 1998, and that influenced many of the actions proposed by the MST and included in the federal government's 4-year development plan – the 2000-2003 Governmental Plan (*Plano Plurianual*).

From the onset, the magnitude of the challenge that such a program would pose became evident to everyone involved in the discussions, not only in terms of content *per se*, but also (and mainly) because the need to get all of Brazilian society involved in the creative process to outline a program.

The group proposed to the MST that a new program be conceived, by taking advantage and integrating the actions already underway within the ministry and actions proposed in the Governmental Plan, but employing a model of planning and implementation that would include three stages: *preliminary studies*, leading to the formal presentation of the Program; *detailed proposal*, to be synthesized in the *Green Book*; and *widespread consultation with the general public*, culminating in a detailed plan of execution for the Program, to be described in a White Book.

Accepting the suggestion, the MST formed the Implementation Group of the so-called *Information Society Program in Brazil*, which initiated activities in August of 1999 with unparalleled enthusiasm. On December 15th, the Program was official launched by the President of Brazil. Beginning in January of this year, the group began to work on the preliminary detailed proposal of the Program, through the creation of Thematic Groups for discussion, the contracting of studies, the analysis of experiences abroad, etc.

This Green Book is the result of this effort, which counted on the participation of more than 300 individuals in Brazil and overseas in various ways and in varying degrees. Of these, around 150 split up into 12 Thematic Groups and, throughout endless meeting, contributed with their opinions and suggestions in their areas of expertise. The acknowledgment of these individuals with the listing of their names, on pages x to xiii, is only a simplistic editorial solution that doesn't do justice to the dedication and enthusiasm of these collaborators.

The Green Book, now being presented to the MST, is, without a doubt, a source of great pride for the Implementation Group, because it resulted from the input of so many people and from such laborious effort to conceive and outline the proposal. It should be noted that the document has at least two unusual characteristics, if compared to similar endeavors of other nations: 1st) the Group's proposal attempts to cover, in an integrated and comprehensive manner, all of the aspects considered relevant to the Information Society in Brazil, from R&D to applications, from the government to the private sector, from advanced technologies to social impact; 2nd) the Group's proposal seeks to reach the level of *concrete actions*, aimed at fostering and enriching subsequent discussions for the consolidation of a final plan in the White Book.

Brasilia, September of 2000
Implementation Group
Information Society Program
Ministry of Science and Technology

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