FACT SHEET

The WiderNet Project, a service organization affiliated with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is improving digital communications in developing countries.

Launched in 2000, The WiderNet Project distributes millions of digital library materials via the innovative eGranary Digital Library, trains computer technicians, coaches, decision-makers, provides cutting-edge research on information technology for the developing world, and donates computer equipment to partner institutions. Since 2001, over 8,000 people have been through WiderNet Project's training programs.

The WiderNet Project provides a comprehensive approach to ICT in developing nations with these programs:

- eGRANARY DIGITAL LIBRARY — Developing and distributing a digital library (eGranary Digital Library) that provides Internet resources off-line to institutions lacking adequate Internet access. This innovative project downloads millions of pages from the Internet onto hard drives, that are then installed on Web servers across the developing world, giving schools low-cost access to much of the world's knowledge.
- DECISION MAKER PROGRAM — Providing technical, financial and organizational coaching for high-level administrators/decision makers who are installing their institution's ICT infrastructure. By serving as advocate and coach, this program assists its partners to identify best practices and cost-effective strategies.
- TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM — Training computer technicians by using low-cost 'on-seat' training methods so that each participating institution can train multiple technicians to install and maintain their computers and networks.
- COMPUTER DONATION PROGRAM — With strategic partners we collect, repair and ship used computer and networking hardware to scale access to computers in laboratories and classrooms.
- UNIVERSITY LINKAGES PROGRAM — Breaking down the digital divide with partners by broadening the teaching and research opportunities for institutions on multiple continents.
- COURSES PROGRAM — Offering courses on issues relating to computers and networks in developing countries. Correspondence courses are offered on such topics as the benefits of teaching via the Internet and the digitization of library materials.

ENDORSEMENTS OF THE WIDERNET PROJECT

"The group that conceptualized this WiderNet Project is doing a lot of good for higher education institutions in Africa. It is a positive means of bridging the gap in information between the 1st and 3rd/4th Worlds."
—*Digitization Workshop in Jos Participant*

"You and your organization are to be highly commended for your concern for developing countries like Nigeria in the area of ICT."
—*"Doing More With Less: Your Networking for You" Workshop Participant*

"This is a good start for IT in our nation. I am sure within the next two years we will get there and meet up with the rest of the world."
—*Wireless Workshop Participant*

"There is hardly any unit in the library that has not benefited from WiderNet. WiderNet has done so much."
—*University of Jos*

"As one of the units receiving part of the resources donated to Ahmadu Bello University by the WiderNet Project, Kashim Ibrahim Library wishes to register our profound gratitude to Cliff Missen and the WiderNet Project. The books we received from the WiderNet Project are the only new books the

library has received this year. Through the donation of these books, you have infused the breath of life into our collection. We are particularly happy with the four sets of the World Book Encyclopedia, some of which we have sent to our satellite libraries; the excellent hard cover science books, especially in biology and medicine; as well as the books in ICT/computer sciences."
—*Prof. Doris Bozimo, University Librarian Kashim Ibrahim Library , Ahmadu Bello University*

"We think what we have gained (from the WiderNet Project) needs to be available to other universities."
—*Prof. Lennox Liverpool, Chairman Nunet*

"With exposure to the possibilities, you can begin to drive your university forward. We have attained local connectivity; on that, we are very good. We have a lot to do; however, having tasted what can be done from experiences abroad. We won't stop!"
—*Wireless Workshop Participant*

"When playing soccer and there is no goal, it is hard to get a winner, thus, you will play forever", but going to Iowa and seeing the possibilities helped me to better assess our situation here and made me know that though I thought we were way ahead, there is still a lot to be done and a greater possibility still lies ahead."
—*Decision Maker Participant, University of Jos*

"The WiderNet technician training program has really been rejuvenating; the knowledge I've acquired will be very useful for my professional needs and equips me better to re-train my colleagues. There is an urgency to fund the program. It is a capacity building program that will revolutionize the information and communications technology world of Less Developed Countries. WiderNet: more power to your elbows."
—*Technician Training Workshop Participant*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2000 TO PRESENT)

- Created and installed the eGranary Digital Library, which includes more than 32 million educational documents (with an unlimited capacity), to more than 900 educational institutions throughout the developing world, giving at least 3,000,000 students and professors quick and free access to information over their local area networks (LANs). These Web page documents open 5,000 times faster from the eGranary than typical Internet connection.
- Gathered content for the eGranary Digital Library from more than 2,700 contributing organizations, publishers and authors who granted permission to distribute their works. Some of these include: Wikipedia, The Khan Academy, California State University, Carnegie Corporation of New York, U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Columbia University, Cornell University, MIT Press, NASA, National Cancer Institute, National Geographic, New York Times, UNESCO, U.S. Department of Education, World Bank and WHO.
- Conducted more than 800 WiderNet Project events (mostly in Africa) including conferences, training programs, hands-on workshops, consulting sessions, presentations and outreach activities involving more than 8,000 participants.
- 600 volunteers donated more than 25,000 hours of time to The WiderNet Project to test and prepare donated computer equipment, install digital library material, conduct field training, design databases and host African visitors.
- Raised and delivered more than $2,500,000 in hardware, software and cash donations to our partner institutions with 31 companies/organizations donating equipment or software.
- Shipped over 1,600 refurbished computers and over 26,000 books.
- Funded by grants from USAID, the US Department of State, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Hewlett Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, Intel Corp. and others.