

# Editorial

Launched with the aims of narrowing the digital divide and contributing to socio-economic development in developing countries through ICTs, *ICT World Today* presents its third issue, Summer 2009. *ICT World Today* values the novel spirit of King Sejong who created *Hangeul*, the Korean alphabet in the early 15th century: to allow everyone to learn easily and benefit broadly by writing and expressing their thoughts. Under the spirit, we make sure of selecting topics for each issue of *ICT World Today* that are most commonly needed for developing countries and can also be helpful for the world's leading ICT countries to provide the developing world with support in the right place at the right time. In the Inaugural Issue, we extensively examined the socio-economic influence of ICT, along with cooperative efforts to address the digital divide. In Spring 2009, the second issue, we covered discussions and review of climate change as one of the world's greatest problems as well as the role of ICT in facilitating green growth.

In the current issue of *ICT World Today*, we follow the theme of "Broadband and Mobile Communications for Development," in which we observe various benefits of broadband penetration and mobile networks in our life. Today, a handful of countries, most of which are OECD members – the U.S., Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the EU – are investing money ambitiously to build broadband and mobile networks and create jobs in the related fields in an effort to stimulate economic recovery. Mobile communications are increasingly becoming the means adopted by the developing as well as the least developed world to overcome poverty, boost economy, and achieve socio-economic development.

We particularly focus on various applications and related projects in healthcare, education, financial services, and civic media as they have shown the most concrete and visible outcomes with immense potentials in the future. Besides, we look at how mobile phone networks are utilized in delivering food aid for Iraqi refugees in Syria; resolving the issue of realizing harmonized co-existence between wild animals and local inhabitants in Kenya; and contributing to promoting the social and economic status of African women in examples of a female human rights campaign in Zambia and a mobile payphone business in Uganda. In addition, we provide case studies from Italy

and the U.K. regarding construction of broadband networks to revive their industrial regions as part of the Lisbon Strategy for building a knowledge society in the EU, while observing how far broadband networks have gone in the Asia Pacific region.

As globalization progresses rapidly around the world and begins to reshape the international order, the socio-economic gaps between regions, classes and countries seem to become inevitably widened. However, with the emergence of network-enabled ICT solutions, people have become more aware that the goal of bridging the socio-economic disparities and achieving co-prosperity is viable with ongoing collaborative projects worldwide.

ICTs, especially broadband and mobile networks, are a prime example of general purpose technologies. Like electricity and steam engines, they will make endless progress in current and future activities with profound impacts. These are also neutral technologies whose usefulness and outcomes will change significantly depending on how we use them.

*ICT World Today* considers both competition and cooperation. Competition is an essential element that increases efficiency under given conditions (resources) and accelerates social and economic activities that ultimately bring about innovation. In the meantime, cooperation, as another essential element in this globalization era, enables mutual prosperity and paradigm shifts by extending the horizon of resource constraints. *ICT World Today* will spare no efforts to bring about gradual changes in people's perception of ICT and help them achieve mutual prosperity through the use of ICT. We kindly ask our readers to hold continued interest and make active participation.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sang-yirl Nam'.

**Sang-yirl Nam, Ph.D.**

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