Digital Content: Critical challenge towards building information society in developing countries

Shahid Uddin Akbar
Coordinator, ICT4D, SEBA
ICT Consultant, KATALYST
Bangladesh

SEBA

Roadmap

- Why content is so important?
- What are the major challenges?
- Bangladesh experiences
- Conclusions
- Recommendation

Why content is so important?

"It's very unlikely that a teacher in central Africa, a doctor in the Andes, or a small merchant in Central Asia cares about root servers or how IPv6 addresses should be distributed. But they do care about the cost of access, whether they can get technical advice on how to connect to and use the Internet, whether the Internet is secure and reliable, and whether there is **useful Internet content and services** in their native language."

Internet Society Statement – 22 September 2005, WSIS PrepCom 3 Sub-committee A on Internet Governance

What are the major challenges?

- Enabling environment – Unicode, Legal framework for using digital content
- Availability of relevant and updated content
- Delivery channel and mode (Internet, Mobile and Broadcasting media)
- Lack of 'sustainable content provider'
- Limited capacity (both HR and finance)
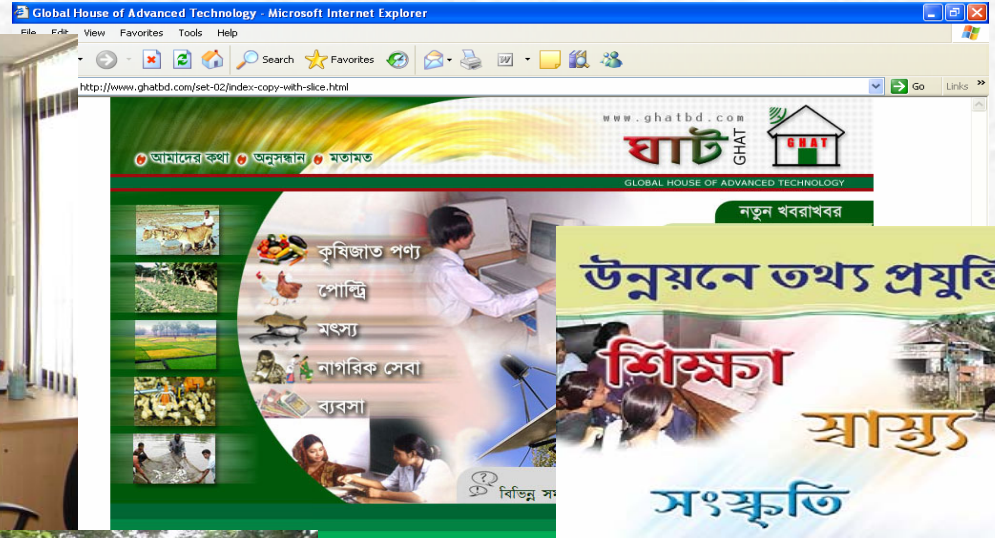- Participatory content development by users

Bangladesh experiences

- Scale up of establishment of telecenters
- Coordinated effort to bring all stakeholders in a common platform
- Stimulating demand among the users to use 'digital content'
- Developing a sustainable mechanism to provide content to the recipients
- Promote digital off-line content - CD

SEBA

Rural ICT Centers or Community Information Centers

Bangladesh Experience - Snapshots

Conclusion

- **Initiatives required in the field to bridge the 'literacy gap'**
- **Need for 'digital content' is increasing**
- **Commercial content developer is emerging**
- **'Alternate connectivity' should be promoted**
- **Resource mobilization for capacity building**

SEBA

Recommendation

Formation of Digital Content Forum

a common platform to work at national, regional and global level to support developing countries

- to build capacity at national level
- advocate for enabling environment
- coordinate and promote content development

SEBA

Thanks

shahid@seba-bd.org

shahiduddin.akbar@swisscontact-bd.org