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## Introduction

The Kenya Educational Network (KENET) initiative is an effort of the educational and research institutions in Kenya aiming at interconnecting all the institutions for the purposes of collaborating in knowledge delivery, sharing of resources and best practices, etc. The initial framework for the formation of KENET was based on the Leland Initiative, a US Government effort to extend full Internet connectivity to 20 or more African countries in order to promote sustainable development, (<http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/leland/>).

To date KENET has developed into an institutions based network with a well defined governance structure and a vision focused towards efficient delivery of educational content. Towards this endeavor, the initiative is guided by three main objectives:

- 1) to create an Enabling Policy Environment,
- 2) to create/build a Sustainable Supply of Internet Services;
- 3) to enhance Internet Use for Sustainable Development.

In the present day world of dynamic ICT driven solutions, Internet Services for education shall assist in the creation of an enabling environment



An instructor at **Daystar University** with students in a Computer Lab.

to facilitate electronic networking and access to Global Information Infrastructure technologies. This includes: ensuring the availability of reliable, competitive, and cost-effective services for accessing the Internet; and increasing broad-based utilization of the Internet to enhance the Government's sustainable development objectives in the education sector.

*"The Leland Initiative builds on existing capacity with the ultimate aim of facilitating Internet access throughout each country. "*

## Background of the Kenya Education Network

Following the signing of the MOU between the governments of Kenya and the USA, a USAID convened meeting of the stakeholders on April 23, 1999 saw the formation of the Kenya National Education Network (KENET) under the chairmanship of Professor Ratemo Michieka, the Vice-Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).

This network includes universities, professional training institutes, post secondary train-

ing institutions, schools, research institutes, and libraries.

In the same year, a Secretariat headed by Prof. Henry Thairu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (AA), JKUAT was established. With representatives from different organizations, this secretariat has since served as the steering committee of KENET.

This team developed an action plan in line with the objectives of the KENET initiative.



A satellite dish installation at Egerton University. It is still very expensive for educational Institutions to acquire Internet connectivity commercially.

**From the Editor**

Let us hear from you! Email your thoughts, articles and questions to editor@kenet.org, and we will endeavor to post your comments in the newsletter and news section of our website.

**Editorial Team**

Mr. Victor Kyalo - vkyalo@kenet.org

Dr. Jason Githeko-

Dorcas Muthoni -Layout and Graphics muthoni@kenet.org

**background of the Kenya Education Network cont..**

The initial focus of the action plan aims at the interconnection of all the universities and a selected number of tertiary and research institutions in Kenya.

The broad objectives of plan include:

1. Setting up a cost-effective and sustainable private high speed network with high-speed access to the global Internet.
2. Facilitating electronic communications among students and faculty in member institutions.
3. Sharing teaching and learning resources
4. Providing a platform and infrastructure for electronic teaching and learning.
5. Collaboration in research and training.

**Our Milestones**

- 1996** - Initial framework of KENET.
- 1999** - Signing of a Memoranda of Understanding between the US and Kenya Governments.
- 2000** - The KENET Trust is formed headed by the Vice Chancellors of Public and Private Universities.
- 2001** - The Official formation of KENET, a project expected to become the largest IP network in East Africa as the cost of bandwidth falls.
- 2002** - KENET's permanent secretariat is setup. All 16 Phase I institutions are connected to the Internet via Jambonet. Launch of the Radio link network to connect the remaining institutions. Launch of the new KENET website.

**KENET's Vision**

Our vision in KENET is to satisfy the ever evolving needs of knowledge broadcast through efficient Architecture Systems.

The members of the KENET community are committed to excellence in the capture and delivery of knowledge. The community's vision is to maintain the leadership role in educating and sharing information with all our students and all the members of the academic community countrywide.

This vision is effectuated through the deployment of a cost effective and sustainable infrastructure.

**Our Goal**

**Establish sustainable communication and networking among educational institutions in Kenya that will facilitate wide use of Internet technology in teaching, research and sharing of other information resources to the general populace at affordable cost.**

*"Our vision, in KENET, is to satisfy the ever evolving needs of knowledge broadcast through efficient Architecture Systems."*

**Objectives**

**Establish an Internet infrastructure.**

- Establish permanent high speed (minimum 2MB) internet infrastructure in 22 strategic institutions.
- Establish/improve node infrastructure within each strategic institution.
- Connect thirty (30) tertiary institutions to the backbone within 2 years.
- Expand to six hundred (600) secondary and primary schools within two years.

**Provide affordable tariffs**

- Negotiate lower tariffs with Telkom Kenya Limited.
- Negotiate for special regulations with CCK for Educational institutions in providing Internet services.
- Negotiate with government for tax exemption.



Students at USIU study via the Internet.

## objectives cont...

### Develop human resources in information content development, information management and communication technology to support, operate and manage KENET.

- Training for 100 people in Network administration, management, maintenance and operations.
- Training for 100 people in information resource management.
- Training for 100 people in content development and hosting.
- Training in Internet use.
- Facilitate awareness of telecommunication Internet policy.

### Develop and improve local content

- Develop and Host educational databases.
- Develop and host strategic institutions' web sites.
- Develop capability and capacity for distance learning.
- Repackage local content in electronic format.
- Develop online services.

### Develop and Improve Local Internet.

- Develop and host departmental educational databases
- Develop and host strategic institutions' web sites.



Students working in a computers lab. KENET hopes to make e-learning a preferred learning tool.

## KENET's Governance Structure

### KENET Board of Trustees

Formed in November 2000, the KENET trust board of trustees is the highest decision-making body in KENET. The original Trustees were drawn from the 5 Founder institutions, i.e. the University of Nairobi, USIU, JKUAT, Daystar university and Moi University.

Currently the trustees (incorporating private/public sector representatives) are:

1. Prof. Ratemo W Michieka (VC, JKUAT)
2. Prof. Crispus Kiamba (VC, UoN)
3. Prof. D.K. Some (VC, Moi)
4. Dr. Freida Brown (VC, USIU)
5. Prof. Stephen EJ Talitwala (VC, Daystar)
6. Mr. SK Chepkong'a (DG, CCK)
7. Mr. A Cheserem (MD, Telkom)

### Management Committee

The Trustees appoint the Management Committee, which consists of not less than five and not more than seven members from KENET member institutions. The main function of this Committee is to assist the Trustees in carrying out their duties. This committee is instrumental in ensuring that the objectives of KENET are realized effectively and efficiently.

### Secretariat

KENET currently has a full time Secretariat consisting of a Coordinator and two Assistant

Network Administrators. This team is supplemented by an a Finance officer for the day to day operations of the secretariat. The of the Secretariat include:

- (a) to assist KENET member institutions to configure servers, routers, firewalls, and LANs for access to the global Internet;
- (b) to operate a technical support help desk for all KENET member institutions;
- (c) to develop and maintain the KENET web site and mailing list;
- (d) to liaise with funding agencies;
- (e) to keep track of all projects relating to the Kenya Education Network;
- (f) to liaise with participating institutions in all matters of KENET;
- (g) to provide support logistics to the Kenya Education Network;
- (h) to run the Secretariat on a day-to-day basis.

Thanks go to the **Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK)** for supporting the initial setting up and running the KENET Secretariat. This has been possible through a grant of Ksh. 3 million per year for a period of two years.

*"Supporting our members is of utmost importance key MISSION at the KENET SECRETARIAT"*



Students from JKUAT in a Computer Laboratory.

# KENET

Kenya Education Network (KENET)  
P.O. Box 62000  
NAIROBI.

## Contact details:

offices: UoN, JKML LPO offices  
tel: 254-2-334244 xt. 28209/28058  
mble: 0733 424073 / 0722 316216  
email: info@kenet.org  
url: http://www.kenet.org

## BUILDING A STRONG EDUCATIOAL NETWORK

### THE KENET SECRETARIAT TEAM

**Victor Kyalo**, *Coordinator*

**John Ogutu**, *Network Administrator*

**Dorcas Muthoni**, *Network Administrator*

## Membership

The initial membership of KENET comprised twenty two (22) Educational institutions spread across the country. These were fully covered by the seed money from USAID and EDDI in terms of equipment and connectivity (for a limited period of time). These are now considered as the Phase I KENET project. Each of these founder institutions paid a one time membership fee of KSh. 150,000. Due to pressure from institutions wishing to join KENET, KENET Trustees at their first meeting, decided that other Educational institutions applying for KENET membership should be considered. These institutions will be considered as comprising the Phase II KENET project. It was also agreed that all KENET members including the initial twenty two Educational institutions pay Kenya Shillings one hundred thousand only (Ksh 100,000) as a one time membership fees and an annual subscription of Kenya Shillings twenty thousand only (Ksh 20,000). This will go towards sustaining the project. Member institutions in Phase II category are required to purchase their own equipment for connectivity. However they do enjoy lower tariffs (up to 50%) offered by Telkom Kenya for KENET member institutions.

KENET has so far connected 16 of the 22 strategic institutions. The remaining 6 institutions will be connected after the installation of the radio link system expected to be fully operational by March 2003.

Membership application forms and further information are available from the KENET SECRETARIAT.

## Beneficiaries



The Server, Router, Switch and UPS supplied to Western College – Kakamega (WECO) by KENET

The initial step towards implementation of the Kenya Education Network should start by developing capacity in strategic institutions to provide the backbone for the widest possible reach of KENET. The initial thrust of the Internet use in education should be directed to these institutions as they offer the best chance of growth. They would also become the role models for the rest of the educational fraternity in Kenya. The key beneficiaries were:

- All Universities (both public and private),
- National research institutions,
- Middle level colleges, including Polytechnics and Institutes of Technology,
- Secondary schools,
- Primary schools,
- Post-secondary management and business training institutions,
- Libraries,
- Other institutions, e.g. teacher training colleges, village polytechnics, etc.

### Current KENET Projects

**Infrastructure development-** The project is building the necessary infrastructure to ensure Internet connectivity of the 22 strategic institutions which will form the backbone of the network.

**Training activities-** The overall objective of the training project of KENET is to build adequate capacity in KENET member institutions in order to in the implementation and maintenance of the infrastructure.

**Content development-** Content development and sharing across the network is a primary objectives of KENET. Developing capacity in content development and hosting activities are currently being organized.

**Educational network policy issues-** To effectively participate and contribute to the national ICT policies formulation and implementation, KENET members need to develop capacity in this area. This initiative will also develop a policy framework document and encourage the sharing of best practices in education delivery and management.