



The Offline Internet Consortium

Newsletter #3 October 2018

This continues our periodic series of updates on developments in the domain of offline internet and our proposed consortium, following on the Tempe summit of February 2018. For any readers unfamiliar with our work, the web site at offline-internet.org has relevant material.

The provisional steering committee (Jérémy Lachal, Jim O'Donnell, Ann Okerson, Muy-Cheng Peich) meets via Skype monthly.

IFLA-WLIC Participation:

IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations, through its annual World Library and Information Congress (WLIC), offers one of the best places for genuinely international and global encounter of librarians, information professionals, and their colleagues and friends. IFLA met in Kuala Lumpur from 24-30 August, with over three thousand participants. Most notably, the local organizers had facilitated participation by no fewer than 1100 Malaysian librarians. (One of the great things about the congress is the way it brings library/information leaders to places where local and regional participants can relatively easily attend a meeting of extraordinarily high quality. This was evident in Cape Town in 2015, where a large number of sub-Saharan participants had the similar opportunity.)

The Offline Internet Consortium was represented by the steering committee members, Ann Okerson (who is on the IFLA board), Jérémy Lachal, Muy-Cheng Peich, and Jim O'Donnell, as well as Laura Hosman from Arizona State and her new program coordinator, Kristen Linzy, and Japri Masli from Sarawak, who was also working hard as a coordinator of the very large and impressively effective corps of volunteers who made the conference run so smoothly. We had an OLI breakfast to catch up on progress. Ann, Jérémy, Muy-Cheng, and Laura, were all on the program speaking about our initiatives. Future coordination with IFLA was discussed with IFLA staff during the meetings.

Next year's IFLA WLIC will take place in Athens 24-30 August 2019: an open program sponsored by our consortium is provisionally planned. We invite any of you as volunteers to help organize this program!

Software Working Group:

The Software Working Group has been concentrating on the development of a platform that will facilitate the interoperability of existing offline solutions, thanks to the support of the Share-IT accelerator. Its main features will include a mutualized search engine that will operate across apps, a single-sign-on feature that will enable users to connect to offline apps using a single username and a single password, and the ability to update content and apps in an incremental way. Different technologies have been tested to ensure the right balance between performance and the possibility to install the software on any type of device. These tests have been successful, and a beta version of the software will be available for experimental deployment early next year.

And **we are delighted to announce** that the Offline Internet Consortium will continue to benefit from the support of the Share-IT accelerator for another cohort. We were indeed part of the second cohort of the program. And given the ambitions of our project and the interest that it has garnered, we were offered the opportunity to join the third cohort, which will start in February 2019.

Fundraising updates:

We have submitted several proposals to fund the work of the Offline Internet Consortium:

- A proposal has been submitted to the Diamond Foundation to support the development of the offline internet platform.
- A note has been shared with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs describing the work of the consortium and requesting support for the organization of a second Offline Internet Summit in Paris, which would allow us to convene again and plan further progress.

We invite you to share any ideas for financial support or pro bono support with the steering committee. We would be happy to collaborate on proposal submissions with you.

P4PA (Partnership for Public Access):

Don Means has been putting together a P4PA (Partnership for Public Access) meeting in Paris on 13 November, in association with the Internet Governance Forum. At the moment, P4PA intends to stage an open event that would include local members of the library, as well as folks in town for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). A draft program is in development. The key concept here is for P4PA to serve as a hub for the three mutually reinforcing approaches to providing universal inclusion:

- Public Access Centers/Libraries
- Community Networks
- Offline Internet (which closes the loop to allow us to advance one or more public access approaches that can reach anyone)

Each will be presented in the context of how they interrelate, how they address one or more of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (eg. #'s 4,5,9,17), and key enabling policies like Universal Service Fund and spectrum reform

These also represent distinct formalized groups that are focused on their own specific objectives, not to mention the many activities of various individual P4PA members. In aggregate they represent a formula that can not only [Connect and Enable Next Billion\(s\)](#) but also even the last billion.

The event will last from 7:30-9:30 p.m., with a 30-40 minute program starting around 8 p.m. So far, the event has sponsorship commitments from: ISOC, IFLA, GLN & Facebook France(!), offering more than enough to cover projected costs. Any surplus will be used to enable P4PA to develop communications capabilities such as a blog and twitter account. Right now P4PA has no public face; that should be remedied.

There are other relevant related IGF sessions/events, before and after this one, which can either promote this event or be promoted by it. See, for example, this initiative of the IEEE: <https://internetinitiative.ieee.org/>

Membership:

We have continued to identify possible partners and co-conspirators. Since our last round-robin, it's worth calling attention to addition of Omoh Atsenokhai of the Nigerian Library Association; Joseckya Kweya Olala of the Kenya National Library; Eric Nitschke of Wakoma (based in Cape Town); Ngozi Ukachi of the University of Lagos; and Nick Sabato of Education for Humanity at Arizona State University. (Nick's team works to deliver ASU's "Global Freshman Academy" (gfa.asu.edu) to refugee populations in Africa and the middle east and is working with Laura Hosman on a project to deliver a course in agri-business.) We continue to prospect for others working in this space.

Formalizing:

We hosted a conference Zoom call on 17 September to update those who could participate on developments and to present a draft document for giving some definition and semi-official structure to the consortium as a whole. The main idea is that we will define ourselves as a consortium, the better to support awareness, recruitment, and fundraising, but we will not have an incorporated structure or handle money at this time. We will shortly be inviting all who have participated at this point to signal whether they wish to participate as members of the consortium (endorsing the Tempe Declaration and agreeing to be identified as members) or as affiliates (this status mainly for individuals and organizations that are not in a position to take official positions without complex further approvals). We will shortly be approaching all with that invitation. For now, we append to the newsletter the current draft of the consortium document.

WE WELCOME other reports of news and activities relevant to our common interests from members of the group.

Offline Internet Consortium (OLI)/[French version?]

www.offline-internet.org

Mission/Purpose

The Offline Internet Consortium supports research, development, and implementation supporting strategies to bring the benefits of networked information to users who are unable to make use of Internet-based information. The Consortium recognizes a great diversity of needs and tactics and exists to develop the maximum beneficial cooperation and collaboration without imposing a single set of solutions to users' needs.

Organization

The OLI consortium is an informal association with no corporate identity or structure and holds, manages, and distributes no funding. Membership is open to institutions and groups. Membership offers interested and committed parties the opportunity to share information and collaborate with others, but also allows the consortium to speak more persuasively in public venues on relevant issues.

The direction of the Consortium is provided by a Steering Committee, which in turn communicates regularly with the members of the group on progress and plans and consults with members on issues of common interest. The Steering Committee will coordinate fundraising efforts and will consult all members of the Consortium on questions arising.

The Steering Committee will include representatives of sponsoring organizations. Initially it consists of Jérémy Lachal and Muy-Cheng Peich (both of Bibliothèques sans Frontières), Ann Okerson (Governing Board, International Federation of Library Associations), and James O'Donnell (Arizona State University).

Membership

Membership is open to interested organizations and institutions. The Steering Committee will discuss membership with interested parties to confirm mutual understanding and alignment of interests. (At the outset, commitment to the Tempe Declaration [see below] will be expected.) Where formal membership is not judged appropriate (e.g., organizations for whom formal membership would require complex governance decisions that may not be feasible), affiliate status may also be offered.

Meetings

The Consortium will meet physically (but with virtual participation available for all) once a year, but there will also be at least one other mainly virtual meeting of all at a convenient time halfway through the year. There will be an informal meeting at the annual World Library and Information Congress of IFLA. A periodic newsletter for members and affiliates will continue the work of keeping members informed and advancing discussion of issues.

Committees

Miscellaneous

There are no dues or fees for membership at present.

The Consortium will develop a logo whose use will be supervised by the Steering Committee.

INSERTS/ATTACHMENTS:

- Tempe Declaration
- one-pagers about each sponsoring organization
- application for membership (both for now but for others who emerge)

**Offline Internet Consortium
Request for Membership**

1. Name of group or organization
2. Physical address
3. Contact person(s)
 - a. Name, institutional affiliation, email address, phone?
 - b. More blank lines with note at end: if there are other email addresses within your organization to which we should send newsletters, please list here
4. URL of organization
5. Short description of organization
6. Organization's current or future projects of interest to the work of the Consortium
7. On behalf of _____, I declare our commitment to the principles of the Tempe Declaration and request membership in the OLI consortium
SIGNATURE/DATE
8. If not requesting full membership: On behalf of _____, I confirm that we are interested in the work of the OIC and request that we be listed as an affiliate organization.
SIGNATURE/DATE