

# Communication for Policy Influence

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**IDRC**  
International Development  
Research Centre



**CRDI**  
Centre de recherches pour le  
développement international

**DFID** Department for  
International  
Development

# Why communicate?

# Why communicate?

- Why not keep knowledge to ourselves?
  - After all, your research itself is quite interesting, useful to those who would read the reports
- Research, written in a reports only does not lead to positive action or outcomes
- We communicate to achieve results, to bring about a change
  - To increase awareness, to build partnerships, to convince adversaries, to obtain support
- To achieve a multiplier effect: the more people you influence, the greater the impact

– Catalysis

# What changes can happen if you communicate (your research) well?

- A change in policy
- A change in thinking among decision makers
  - Activating other actors who can affect policy
- A change in the capacity of actors

# **“Policy Influence”: what is it?**

# Possible way to think of type(s) of policy influence you want to achieve

Types of Policy Influence (Lindquist)		
<u>Expanding Policy Capacities</u>	<u>Broadening Policy Horizons</u>	<u>Affecting Policy Regimes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the knowledge or data of certain actors</li> <li>• Supporting recipients to develop innovative ideas</li> <li>• Improving capabilities to communicate ideas</li> <li>• Developing new talent for research and analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing policy makers with opportunities for networking or learning within their jurisdiction or with colleagues elsewhere</li> <li>• Introducing new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda, or stimulating public debate</li> <li>• Educating researchers and others who take up new positions with a broader understanding of issues</li> <li>• Stimulating quiet dialogue among decision-makers (and among, or with, those involved in knowledge production).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifying existing programs or policies</li> <li>• Leading to the fundamental re-design of programs and policies</li> <li>• Helping create a new policy regime in an emerging field.</li> </ul>

**Who do/should you  
communicate with?**

# Who do you communicate with?

- Government (policy makers/regulators)
- Citizens
- Donors
- Media
- Other researchers
- Private sector
- Others?

Different answers for different projects

# Prioritize

- Audiences are not the same for all projects
- Communicating takes resources: time and money
  - Addressing to one audience means less effort on another
  - If you insist all audiences are equal, you will not achieve your objectives

# E.g.1: Teleuse@BOP research → change in thinking → change in biz. strategy

- 6 country survey, repeated every 2 years
- A few insights gained:
  - “over 92% of the BOP use phones, frequently”
  - “the BOP use mobiles, even if they don’t own a phone of their own”
  - “they are willing to spend up to USD 5 per month on phone services, if initial barriers to entry can be lowered”
  - “they are far more likely to get information via the phone than via internet (telecenters)”

# Who do we communicate findings to? In what order (and when)?

- First released to private sector
  - They provide the phones
- Then to policy makers & regulators
  - They create the enabling environment
  - Can provide services (e-Gov) that other's can't
- And to other researchers/implementers
  - So they design projects that are accessible by the BOP
- Then to more "academic" audiences
  - To build models, enhance theoretical understanding



**Released to Media**  
**Continuously,**  
**opportunistically**  
-6 month proactively  
-After that more  
reactively

# Some results

- Getting private-sector telco to recognize value of BOP to company strategy
  - Previously focused on TOP
  - Later quoted saying “addressable market includes those earning under USD 100 a month”
  - Based on evidence (“those @ the BOP are willing to spend up to USD 5 per month on phone services, if initial barriers to entry can be lowered”); close to telco ARPU
- Another operator who already focused on BOP designed product
  - to share a mobile phone with many users and receive payment transparently

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## Types of Policy Influence (Lindquist)

### Expanding Policy Capacities

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### Broadening Policy Horizons

- Providing policy makers with opportunities for networking or learning within their jurisdiction or with colleagues elsewhere
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### Affecting Policy Regimes

- Modifying existing programs or policies
- Leading to the fundamental re-design of programs and policies
- Helping create a new policy regime in an emerging field.

# E.g. 2: Early-Warning: Change in thinking → change in projects/focus

- Sri Lanka's largest CBO, Sarvodaya
  - Previously focused on disaster recovery and relief
- Engagement with LIRNEasia's "National Early Warning System: Sri Lanka" concepts
- Change in thinking:
  - *'One of the biggest lessons we learned from the Tsunami was how lacking Sri Lanka was in terms of an emergency warning system..'* (p.73), Sarvodaya, post-Tsunami report
- Change in actions
  - Projects on disaster preparedness and early warning
  - Adopted risk-reduction strategy for organization

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## E.g.3: Mobile-Tax: Change in Policy

- Govt. proposes flat LKR 50 tax per month per SIM card
- LIRNEasia research data showed that
  - The poor are heavy users of mobiles (i.e., mobiles are no longer a luxury item, so this isn't a luxury tax)
  - The poor spend under LKR 300 per month on calls (so a LKR 50 flat tax would be a huge % increase of their cost)
  - The flat nature of the tax effects the poor disproportionately (richer spend more, therefore LKR 50 is v. small % of their bill)
- Media article → call from Telecom Minister → give him data (and give members of opposition data, educate them) → floor amendment to modify the tax

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# But **WITHOUT** a change in thinking

- One time success for us and consumers
- But thinking within government NOT changed
  - Still think mobiles as source of easy revenue (through taxation)
  - Don't account for: high tax rate → reduced usage → reduced overall revenue
  - Don't view phone as enabler of other economic activity
- Leaves more battles to be fought in the future...

# Communication strategy and implementation

# Communication Strategy (CS) is a map

- Think of an unmapped jungle
- Is it better to have an inaccurate, incomplete map versus no map?
- How often should you revise the map as you go through the jungle?
  - Or should you blame the jungle for not corresponding to the map?
- Can you postpone entering the jungle until accurate and complete maps become available?
  - Who will make them, if not you?

# A map

- Tells you how to get from point A to point B
- Good if it points to things that will help (e.g., sources of drinking water) or hinder (*cave hic dragones*)
- Best if it shows alternative paths and pros and cons

# When to get a CS?

- Right at the start
  - Need to think of possible policy impacts and how they can be achieved, when writing the proposal
    - Assume no one does basic research with IDRC money
  - Only way you will obtain money for communication is if you write it into the budget
    - Communication is costly
    - Cannot be done through volunteer labor
    - Rule of thumb: 10-15% of research budget needed for a multi-country project; less if single country
      - DFID suggests 30%
    - IDRC is committed to funding dissemination

# When do you communicate?

- When the results are in
- Before the results are in, but when the time is right
- Opportunism is an essential ingredient
  - Perfect is the enemy of the good
  - Need respond when there is demand for the story, not when you are good and ready

# Most important element of CS

- Identify your audience(s)
- If more than one, assign priorities
  - If all are equally important, your campaign unlikely to succeed
  - Doing one thing means, having less resources for other things
- Priority can change over time
  - E.g., first six months senior managers of companies; after that civil-society opinion leaders; some time down the road, academics

# Choose method/media based on audience

- If senior private-sector decision-makers are your audience, succinct PowerPoint is the best bet
  - Highest priority must be to get the meetings
  - Certain kinds of conferences (trade events), trade journals and financial press will increase your credibility and reinforce the message (but cannot substitute for the face-to-face)
- Face-to-face and PowerPoint best even for government
  - Again, most difficult task is getting meetings
  - Skeptical about policy briefs being sent cold; useful in the context of a relationship
  - Govt officials also impressed by your presence in certain fora
  - Always leave a document behind (PP or Policy Brief)
- If your audience is the general public, no alternative to TV
  - If opinion-leaders/subset among the public, print may work
  - Radio is the most difficult to work with
  - Having a personal brand (derived through mass media) helps
    - Work on developing personal brands for researchers

# Communication

- To key stakeholders or to media: it's story telling
- Better have a single point, or at most 2-3 related points in a story; multiple stories don't work at the same time
- Different stories appeal to different audiences/media; figure out what fits
- Writing news releases give good training in working up narratives, but news releases/conferences less and less effective
  - Targeted dissemination; may need PR consultant in big markets

# Timing is everything

- Cannot release stories in the middle of elections/terrorist attacks, unless they have a connection
- Even outside CS schedule, if the opportunity arises, get your story out
- Map needs to be improved as you move through the jungle
  - Have the map, but don't be its prisoner

# If you take one thing away from this . .

- Audience is king
  - Identify your audience/interlocutor
  - Empathize with your audience/interlocutor
  - Respect your audience/interlocutor (especially their time)
  - Address your audience's/interlocutor's needs
  - Test everything against the audience

# Broadband Quality of Service Experience (QoSE)

A simple team exercise to get you into the practice of thinking about communicating for policy influence

# Why Broadband QoSE?

- **The need for connectivity and growth in usage**
  - ~ 251 Million Internet subscribers in Asia Pacific of this ~**128 Million Broadband subscribers**– ITU 2007
- **Lack of Quality**
  - Complaints by users
  - Broadband Quality of Service Standards undefined by many regulators
- **Importance of Quality**
  - Applications and platforms may require higher quality in connectivity for better performance

# Ways to improve BB QoSE

- Convince regulator to measure QoSE and regulate it
- Measure it ourselves, show evidence to regulator, get it regulated (improved)
- Measure it ourselves, educate users to pick highest performing BB provider
  - As long as there's sufficient competition and switching costs are low, this can work
- Convince user community to measure it, WITH us. Publicize the results. Get users to pick/switch to highest performer

# Methods of measuring BB QoSE

## Existing methods - speednet

- Emphasis on limited metrics – throughput (upload and download speed)

## New Method and new software

- Methodology and software (AT-Tester) developed with the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
- Other than throughput it takes into account additional metrics
  - E.g. Round Trip Time (RTT), Jitter and Packet Loss
- Software available (freely) at [www.broadbandasia.info](http://www.broadbandasia.info) for anyone to download and use

# Metrics explained

- **Round Trip Time :**

Time taken for a packet to reach a destination and return

- **Jitter :**

Average Variation of RTT

- **Packet Loss :**

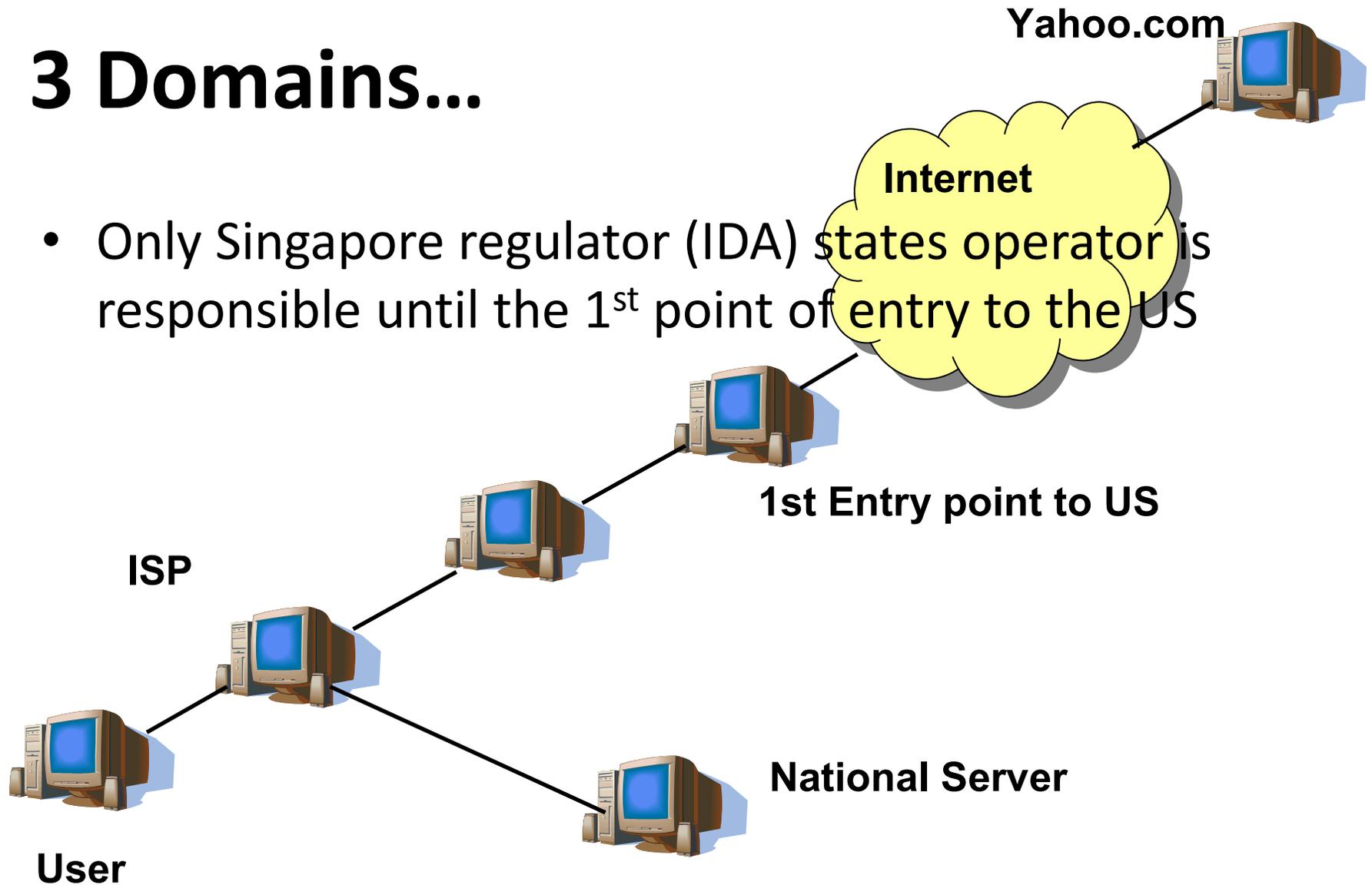
Number of packets (in %) which do not reach the destination

# Relative importance of metrics

Service	Throughput		Delay		
	Down	Up	RTT	Jitter	Loss
Browse (text)	++	-	+	-	-
Browse (media)	+++	-	+	+	+
Download file	+++	-	-	-	-
Upload File	-	+++	-	-	-
Transactions	+	+	++	+	+
Streaming media	+++	-	+	++	++
VOIP	+	+	+++	+++	+++
Games	++	+	+++	++	++

# 3 Domains...

- Only Singapore regulator (IDA) states operator is responsible until the 1<sup>st</sup> point of entry to the US



# Testing BBQoSE

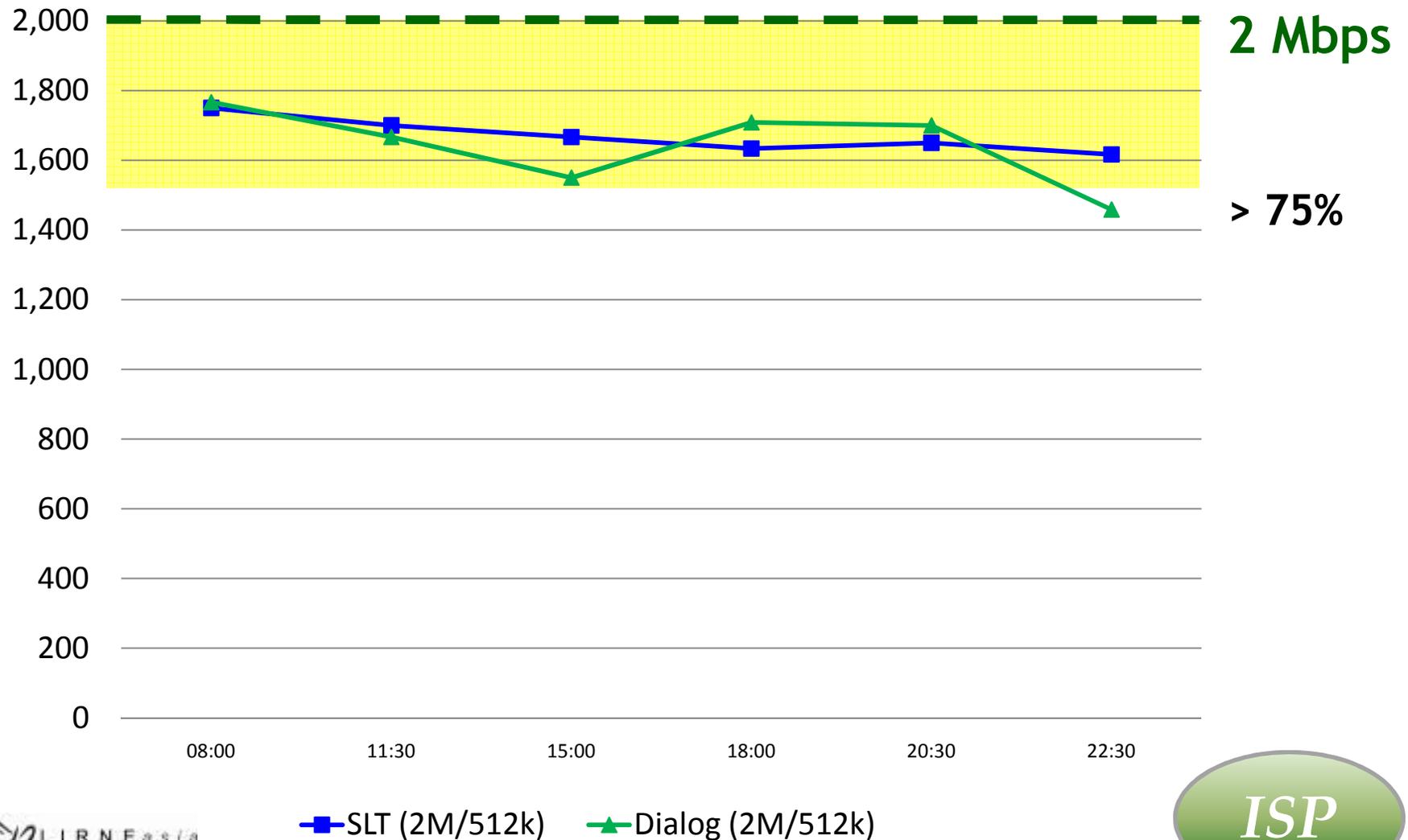
- Testing conducted using AT-Tester Software
- Testing in multiple domains
  - ISP, National and International (yahoo.com)
- Multiple broadband packages or links
  - 256kbps – 2Mbps
- Multiple times a day
  - 6 times a day; ranging from peak to off peak
- Multiple Locations (cities) in Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh (and just once in US & Canada)

## Results uploaded (automatically) to website

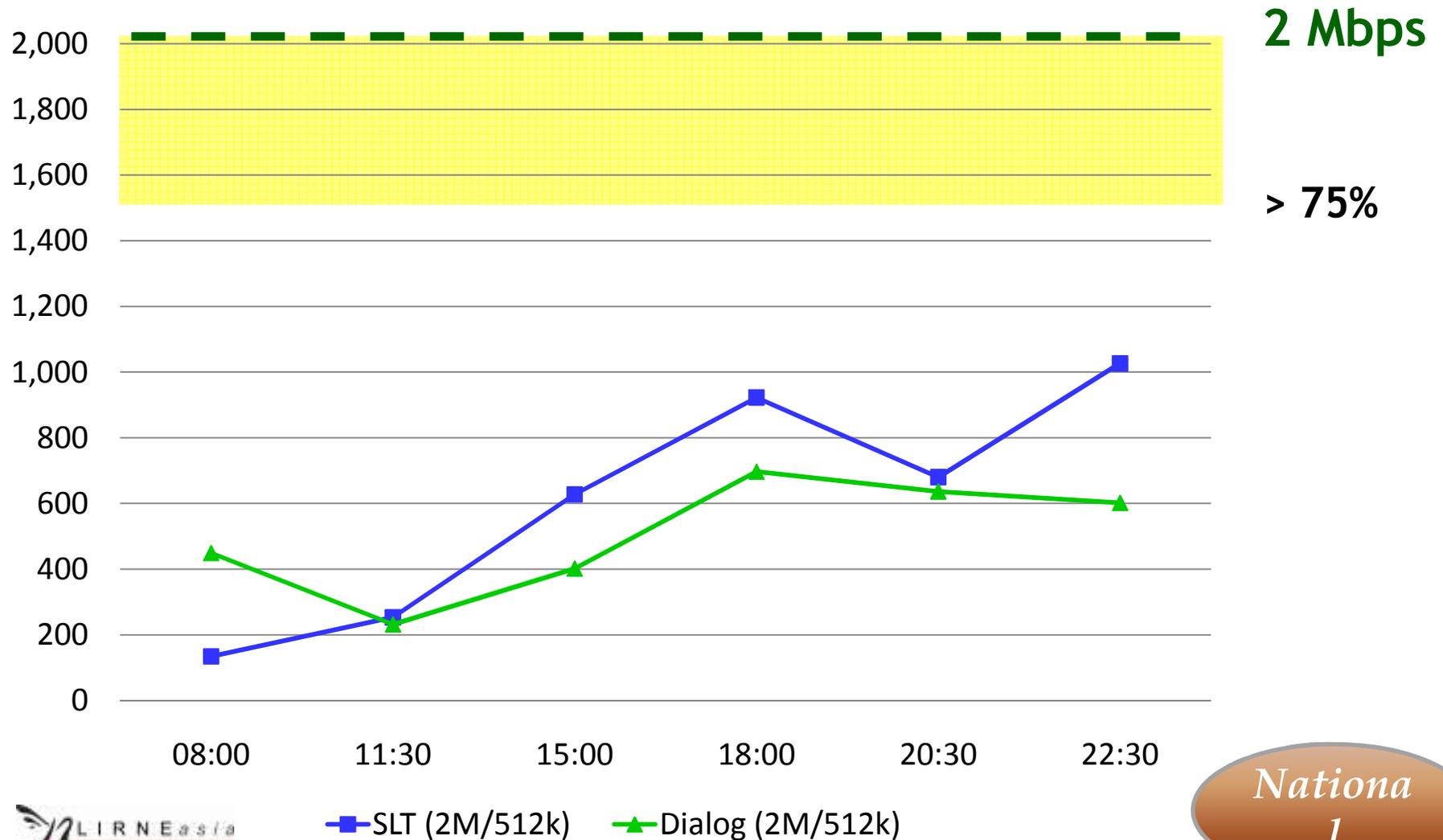
- Each reading uploaded to [www.broadbandasia.info](http://www.broadbandasia.info) where calculations are done and results displayed
- Viewable by all (by country, by operator, by city)
  - Developed with the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

# Some Results

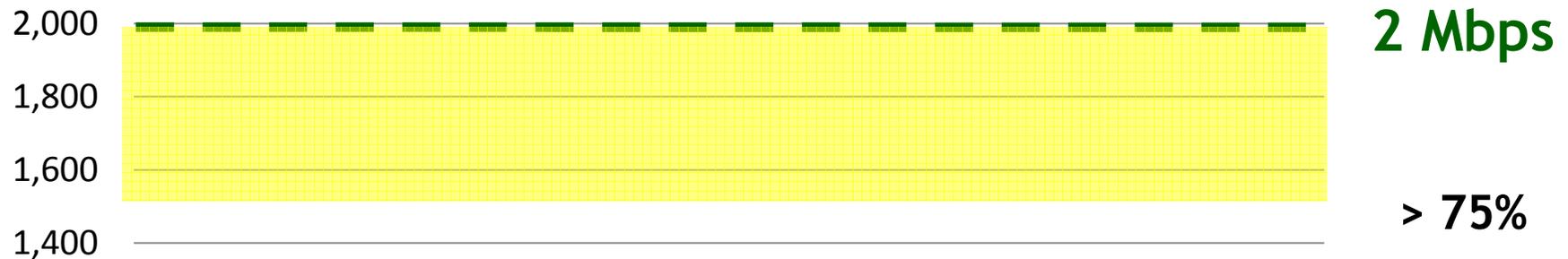
# Download speed (Colombo Business Packages): Relatively healthy in ISP domain...



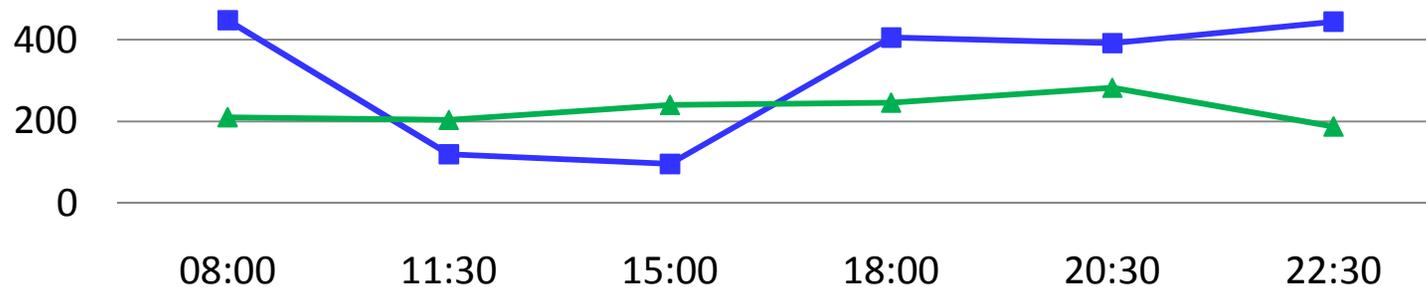
# Download speed (Colombo Business Packages): ...poor in national domain



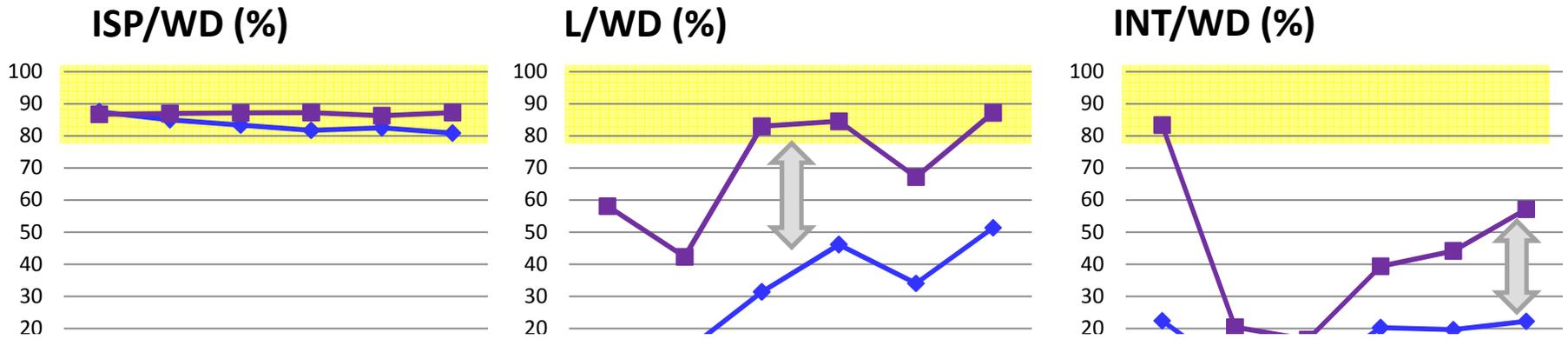
# Download speed (Colombo Business Packages): ...even poorer when accessing International sites



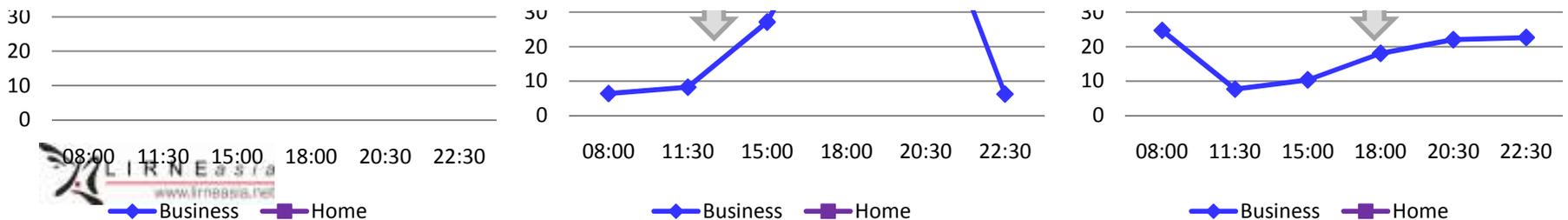
**Message 1: For countries with little local content, availability of sufficient international bandwidth by each operator is key, as are local mirroring and other strategies to minimize use of international bandwidth**



# Download speed (SLT Business vs. SLT Home packages): ...in % terms, home is better than business

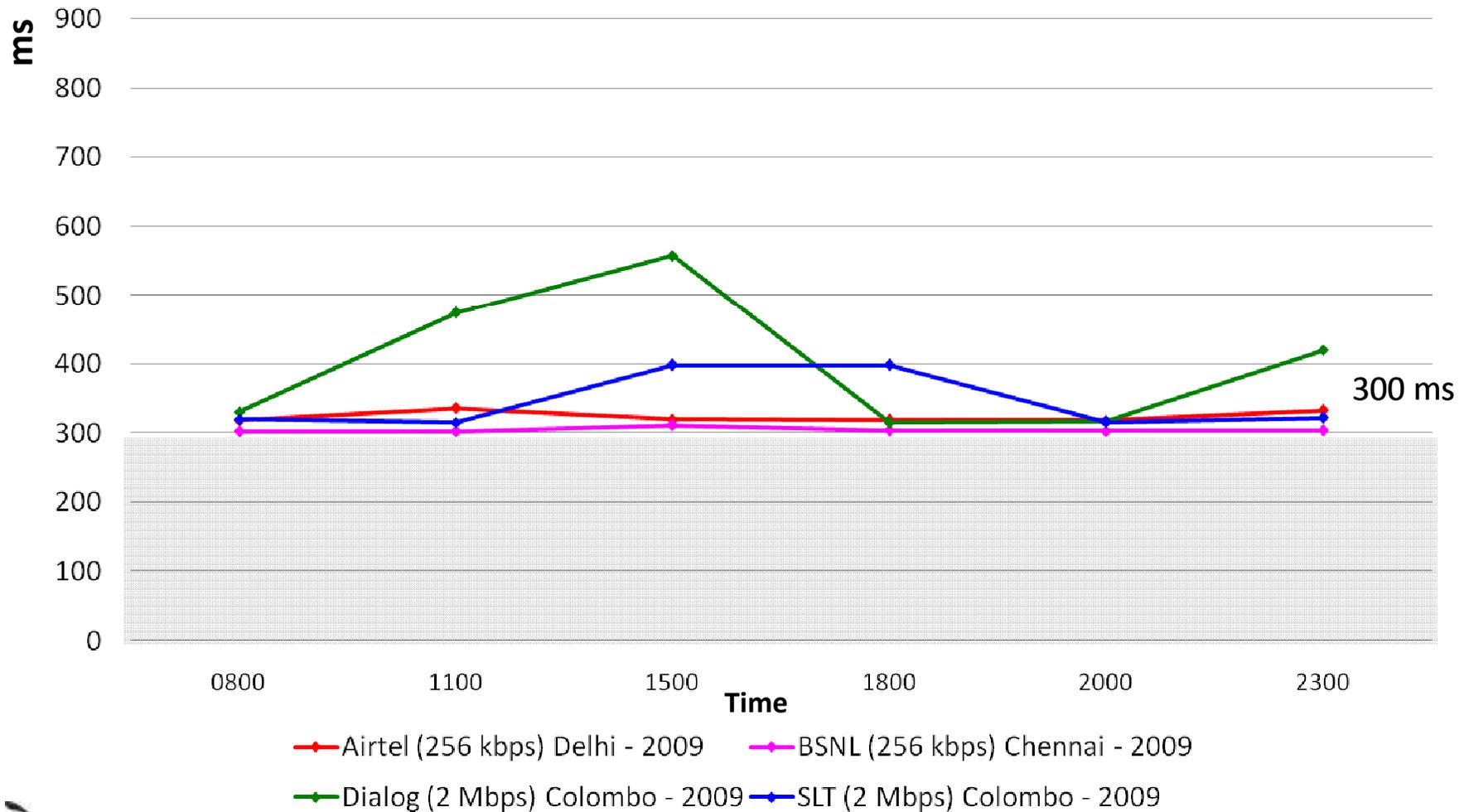


**Message 2: Lower cost “Home” packages with lower advertised bandwidth may deliver better throughput than more expensive “Business” packages that have high advertised bandwidth. Consumers should look beyond labels**



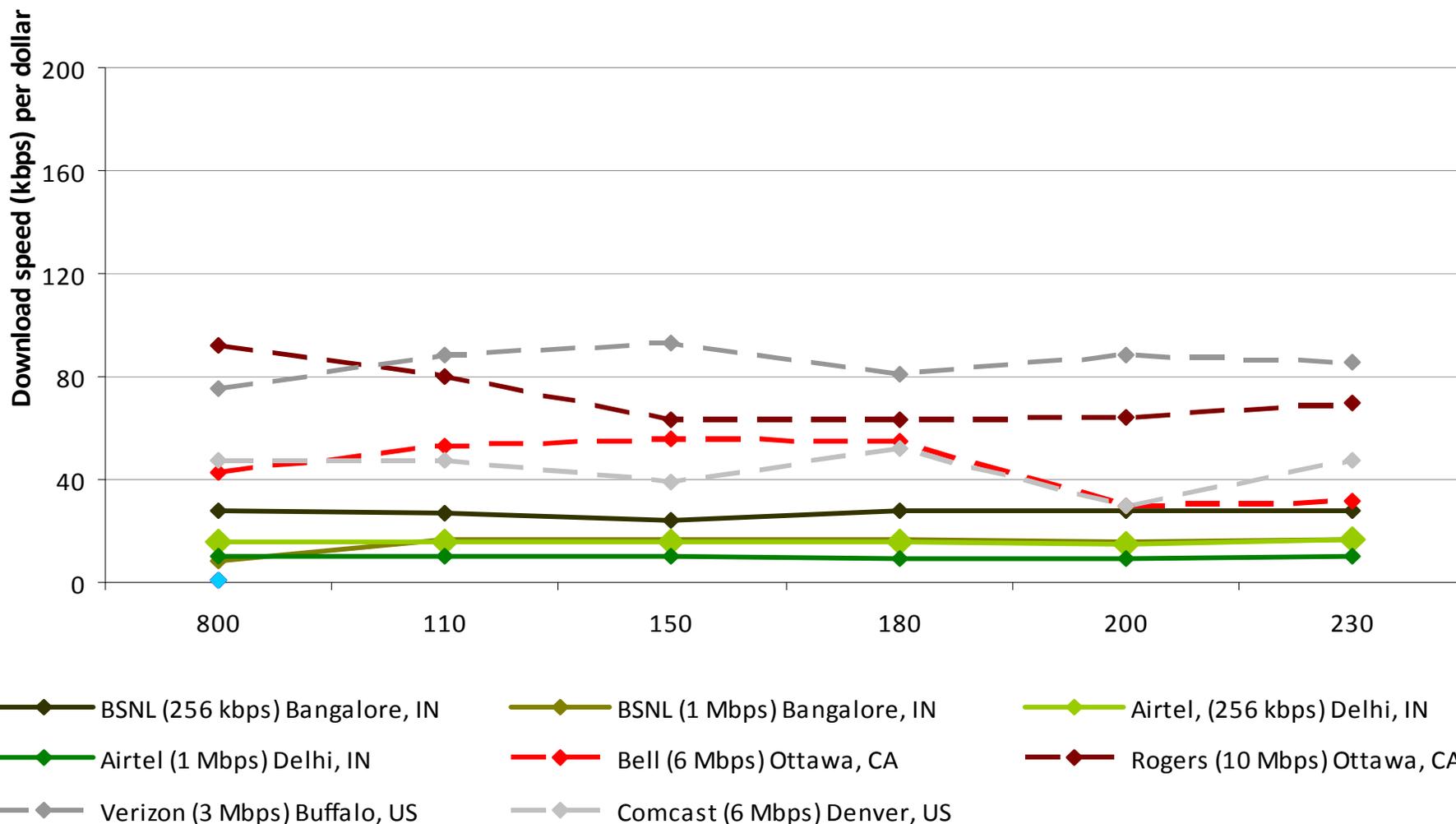
# Return Trip Time from Delhi, Chennai and Colombo to yahoo.com

Yet to meet Singapore (IDA) standard

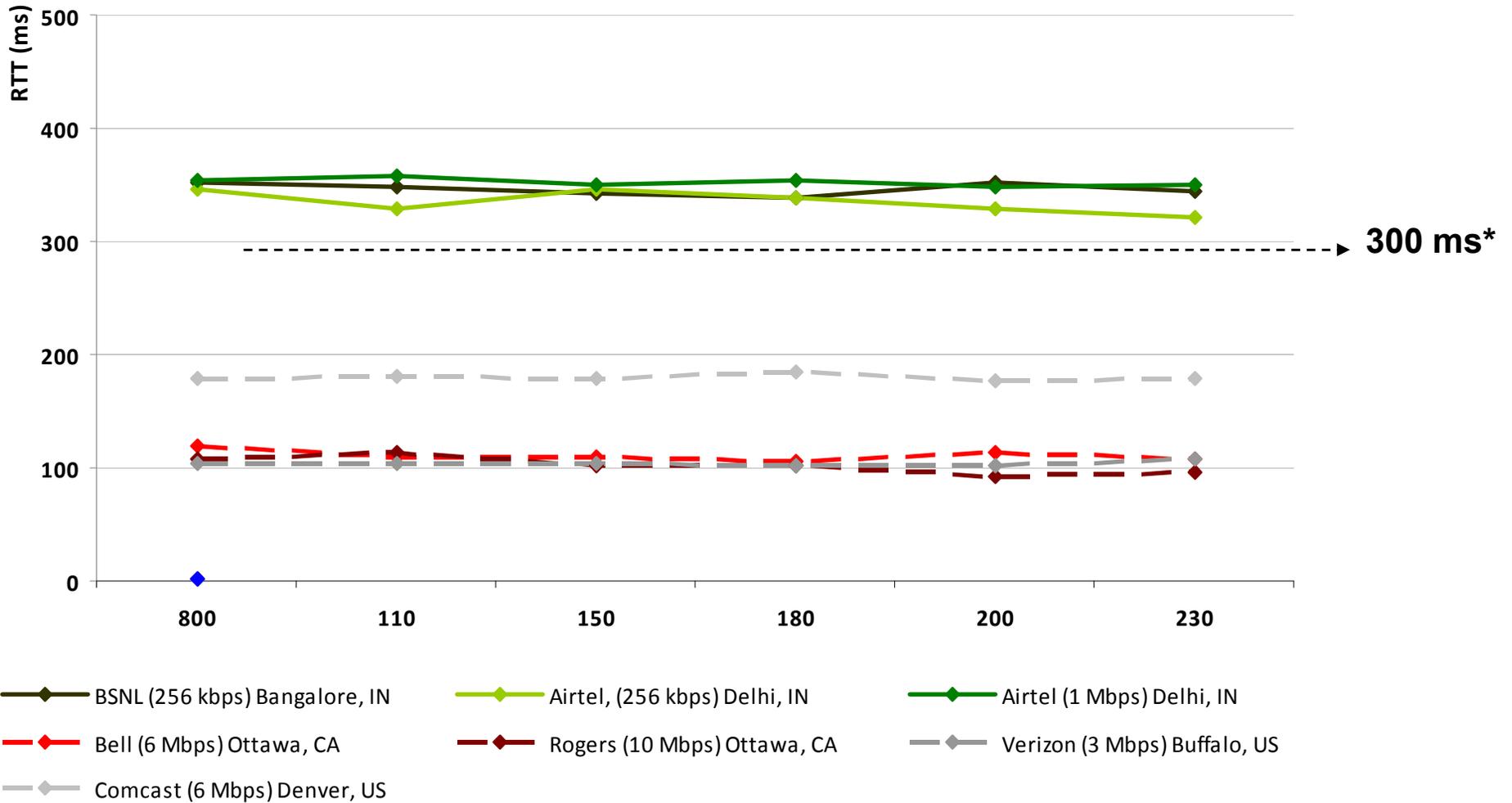


# Users in North America get more value for money

Value for Money - Reaching International servers



# International Bandwidth issues as reflected in high RTT

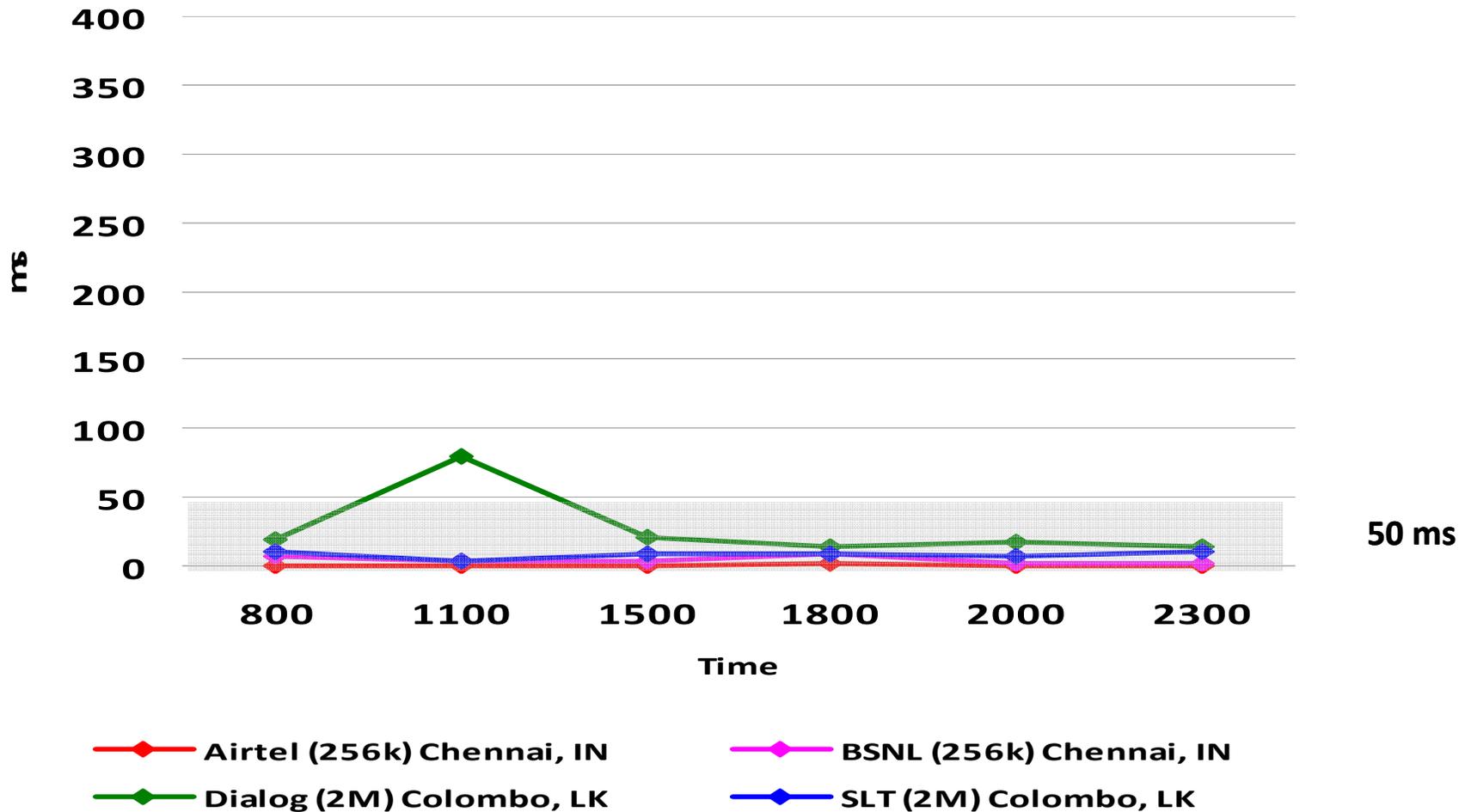


– \* Limits specified by the Singapore Regulator IDA for national and International network latency



# Jitter – pinged to yahoo.com

Almost within acceptable levels



# Importance of location...

## Rest of TN has better broadband quality than Chennai

26 May 2009, 1354 hrs IST, Niranjana Ramesh, ET Bureau

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Circle	Download speeds – within ISP (kbps)	Download speeds – National (kbps)	Download speeds – International (kbps)
Chennai	366.21	318.46	243.94
Rest of TN	1300.32	1281.66	1045.19
Bangalore	309.38	264.51	279.03
Delhi	424.48	393.63	331.32

(All above speeds are for broadband connections advertised for speeds of 256 kbps)



that they presently serve," said Prof Timothy A Gonsalves, IIT-M.

TeNeT - Telecommunications and computer Networks group of IIT-M, has conducted tests on broadband quality of service in Chennai and

RoTN circles as part of a project by Asian telecom policy thinktank LIRNEasia. The study which focuses mainly on metros, spilled over to non-metro areas in Tamil Nadu, with the surprising result that broadband speeds in RoTN are nearly three times the advertised speeds.



# Group Assignment

# Description of task

- Separate into 4 groups
- Each group plays the role of a policy research organization in one particular country
  - Pick one country per group
  - At least one person has be from (or work in) that country and know enough about it's stakeholders
- Assume you have completed similar testing (using AT-Tester or similar tools) and you have the data
  - Free to say you want to do more testing using other tools etc

- You are attempting to influence 4 different stakeholders;
  - Group 1: Government (including regulators, policy makers)
  - Group 2: Private Sector
  - Group 3: Non-governmental Organizations
  - Group 4: Citizens/consumers

# Group 1: needs to influence Government

- Focus on policy and regulatory issues
- May seek to convince policymakers and regulators to give higher priority to QoS issues.
- It may not limit its activities to the AT tester, but may want to implement additional quality testing methods.

# Group 2: needs to influence the Private-sector in your country

- Focus on market mechanisms
- May seek to influence broadband operators
  - Get them to improve BB quality
  - Pay more attention to BB quality
- Assume limited engagement with policy makers and regulators

# Group 3: needs to influence NGOs

- Considers BBQoSE as key to good performance of all ICT-based NGOs
- May involve other NGOs in improving BB QoSE and implementing AT tester in multiple facilities
- May consider NGOs as proxies for the many disempowered citizens who use the Internet through their telecenters
- Involved in the testing process
- May exert pressure on both Operators and on government authorities
- Concentration of NGOs implementing ICT4D projects for citizens

# Group 4: Citizen group

- Citizens may not be aware of what they are buying
  - Advertising may leave them confused
  - Too much “fine print”
- Many may not be able to afford expensive BB packages
  - But adoption of BB among citizens is important to increase the benefits of ICT4D
- May be paying high prices for low-performing BB packages

# Task: Formulate a communications strategy for the Broadband QoSE project

- Identify your audience: in detail
  - Segments/sub-segments
- What is/are the message(s) for your audience
- What format/s & tools will you use with each?
- When is the best time?
- What kind of budget will you need?
- What partners will you work with?
- [assume market, regulatory, social & economic conditions are as of today, in the country you picked]

## Each team makes a 10 minute presentation

- Appoint a speaker/presenter
- Leave time for questions from audience
- Need answers to all questions in the checklist

# Group work - 40 minutes

# **Group presentations**

- Strictly 10 minutes per group**

# Debrief

## (and what WE did)

# Chronology of what we did (green = activities with policy communication components)

- Exploration of the concept – prior to Oct 2007
- Discussion of methodology with experts – Oct 2007:Nov 2007
- Selection of IIT-M to formulate methodology – Nov 2007
- Formulation of test methodology – Dec 2007
- 1<sup>st</sup> round of testing (Chennai, Colombo) – Dec 2007:Jan 2008
- Publication of Broadband Benchmarks – March 2008
- Results presented at Public Lecture, Sri Lanka: March 2008
- Rapid Response, Bangladesh: July 2008

# Chronology continued

- Development of software, AT Tester – May/June 2008
- Development of website and server -
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Testing – Sept/Oct 2008
- Publication of Broadband Quality Benchmarks – Oct 2008
- Training of NGO sector and bloggers (introducing AT Tester) – Nov 2008
- TV interview on Biz First in Sri Lanka – Dec 2008
- Rapid Response, India – Jan 2009
- Changes to advertising re Mobile BB – Jan 2009

# Chronology Contd.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> round of testing, India (Chennai, Delhi), Sri Lanka (Colombo), Bangladesh (Dhaka) – Feb 2009
- Publication of Broadband Benchmarks – March 2009
- Rapid Response, Bangladesh – March 2009
- Results presented at Public Lecture, Sri Lanka – April 2009
- Interviews with Print Media at their request, India – May 2009
- Workshop on Mobile Broadband Methodology – April 2009
- 4<sup>th</sup> Round of Testing, India (multiple locations) Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, USA: Sept-Oct 2009

# Chronology Contd.

- Development of software to test mobile BB: Sept-Nov 2009
- Press event for journalists, India – Nov 2009
- Advertisements in Sri Lankan news papers. To coincide with SATRC conference
  - In the paper given out at hotel regulators stay in
  - Followed by a more “consumer centric” ad

## HOW BROAD IS YOUR BROADBAND?

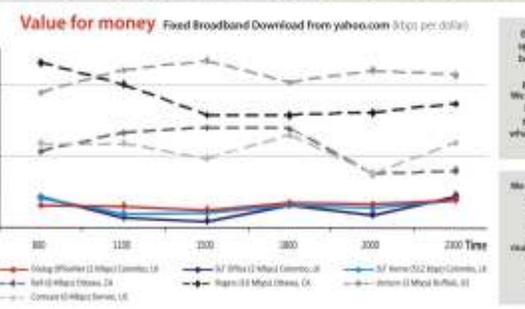
### FOUR facts you should know

- 1 Value for Money**  
Sri Lankan broadband users receive less value for their money than North American users. (LIRNEasia's 2009 3rd Quarter test results)
- 2 Checking Advertised Speeds**  
When connecting to most international websites, the average Sri Lankan broadband user typically gets only 40-50% of the advertised broadband speed.
- 3 Bandwidth Bottlenecks**  
Although international bandwidth prices continue to fall, international bandwidth limitations continue to be a major bottleneck.
- 4 Contention Ratios**  
The Sri Lanka Telecommunication Regulatory Commission has still not specified contention ratios, which limit the number of simultaneous users on a shared link, thereby boosting overall bandwidth.

In January 2009, following LIRNEasia's recommendations to adopt contention ratios of **1:20 (Business)** and **1:50 (Residential)**, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) specified contention ratios of **1:30 (Business)** and **1:50 (Residential)**.

**Models to emulate**

PARAMETER	SINGAPORE	INDIA
Network Availability	> 99%	> 99%
Latency (Local)	< 20ms	< 120ms
Latency (International)	< 300ms	< 250ms (average) / < 600ms (worst)
Bandwidth Utilization	10% during peak time	10% during peak time
Download Speed	Not Specified	80% of advertised, from user to ISP
Service Activation	Not Specified	100% in 15 working days
Customer Support	Not Specified	80% calls in 30 seconds, 80% calls in 30 seconds



DOWNLOAD THE FREE SOFTWARE from [www.broadbandasia.info](http://www.broadbandasia.info) to test the quality of your broadband link.



# Debrief

**If we have time...**

# What can we do with new media?

# Website

- Essential element of the public face of a project/organization
  - Balance between DREAM IT and home organizations?
- More interactive sites attract more traffic → attractiveness of blogs
  - But blogs are anarchic; not all organizations can run blogs
- Balance between static content and interactive content has to be determined by objectives and audiences
- A powerful mechanism to provide information to audiences when they need it (pull)
- Essential for credibility

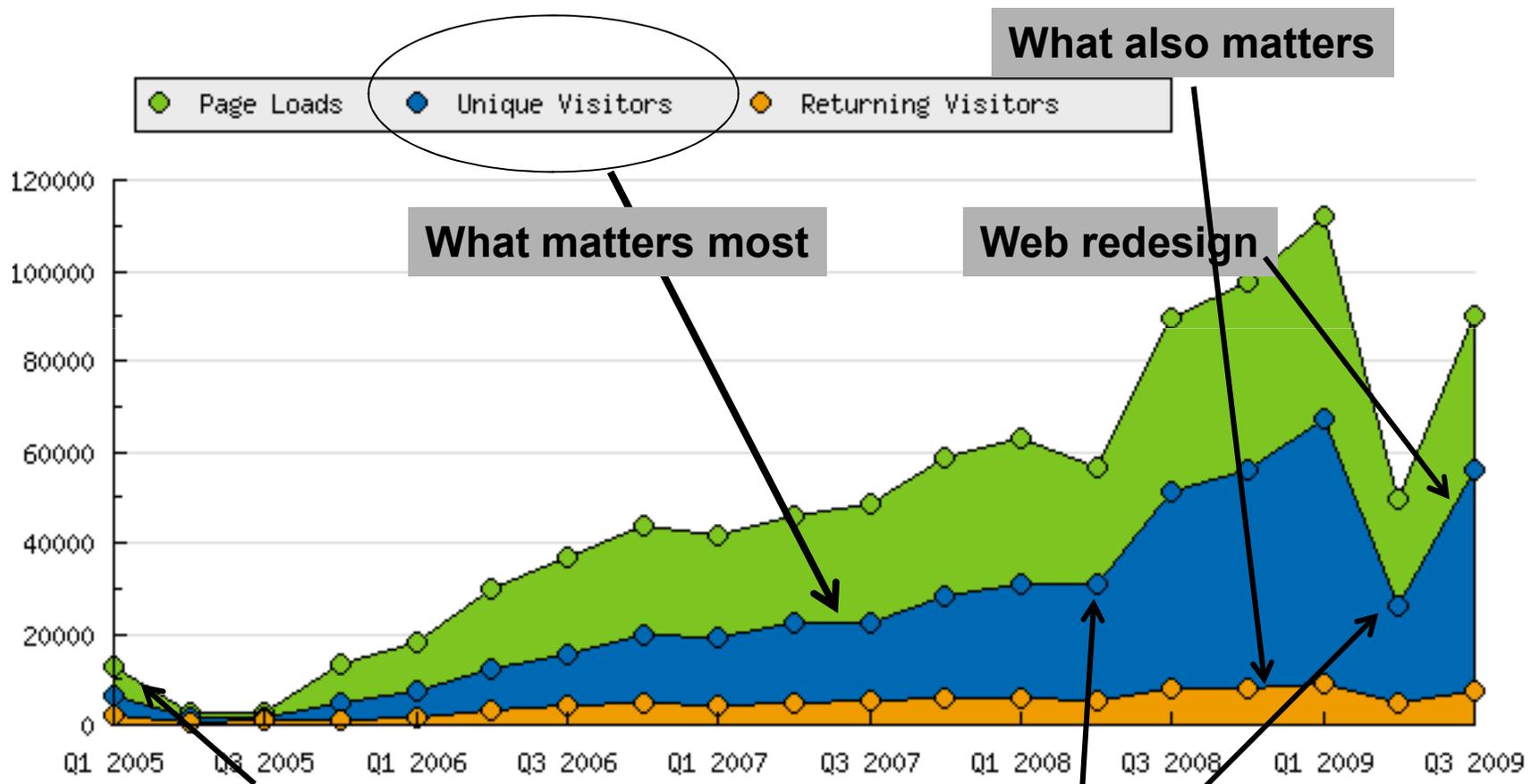
# What about web presence?

- Search is the new paradigm: if you can't find an organization through web search, does it exist?
- To provide information on a demand-pull basis to institutional actors, a website is very useful
- Can be a way of advertising yourself to information brokers—important bloggers, journalists, opinion leaders
- Very harmful if you do not have it
- Not necessarily beneficial by itself
- Web work takes time; time that has to be taken from something else

# Don't get hung up on hits

- Look for readers who stay
  - LIRNEasia average is round 2 mts; factoring in the bounce rate, that means that a significant number stay for 4-5 mts
- Are they from among your desired audiences?
  - Raw numbers are meaningless for strategy
  - Google Analytics is indispensable

# Traffic on LIRNEasia website, 2005-09



**Tsunami spike**

**What matters most**

**What also matters**

**Web redesign**

**Unexplained 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter troughs**

# Quality v. quantity

- Pages per visit and bounce rate
  - High pages per visit is good
  - Low bounce rate is good
  - Bounce rate newly defined as those leaving from the entry page (1 page only)
    - We reduced our bounce rate by giving only a few lines of our blog entries on the home page, requiring readers to click to second page to read
- Average time on site
  - More is better
- Sept 7-Oct 9, 2009 data from Google Analytics

	Sub Continent	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time Site	Bounce Rate
1	S. Asia	7,659	3.49	00:02:12	2.05%
2	N. America	2,429	3.08	00:01:23	1.40%
3	N. Europe	1,238	2.84	00:01:24	0.40%
4	SE Asia	977	3.14	00:01:35	1.94%
5	W. Asia	741	2.72	00:00:51	2.02%
6	W. Europe	651	3.08	00:01:05	0.31%
7	Aus NZ	519	2.61	00:00:48	1.54%
8	S. Europe	456	2.76	00:00:57	1.54%
9	 E. Asia	441	3.10	00:01:41	1.13%

# Does our web presence meet our needs?

- Focus on Asia, with most work concentrated in S Asia
  - S Asia does well quantitatively and qualitatively, though bounce rate is high (riff raff)
  - SE and East Asia look good qualitatively, though behind N America and N Europe quantitatively
    - Cause for concern re E Asia, which used to be above S Europe and Australia/NZ
  - Not very interested in W Asia, so not unhappy about the low quality of the traffic; lots of visits but short stays

## More detail . . . City-level useful for national websites

City	Visits	Pp/Visit	Avg. Time/Site	% New Visits	BounceR
Colombo	4,445	3.54	00:02:07	73.63%	1.96%
London	630	3.03	00:01:58	83.65%	0.32%
(not set)	464	3.38	00:02:39	77.16%	3.45%
Delhi	359	3.63	00:01:53	78.83%	2.23%
<b>Dhaka</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>6.99</b>	<b>00:06:22</b>	<b>59.88%</b>	<b>1.47%</b>
Chennai	336	2.92	00:01:23	83.33%	2.38%
Singapore	271	3.59	00:01:46	68.27%	2.21

Indicates very high interest among a small number of readers in Dhaka: highest time on site, highest pp/visit; lowest new visits %

# Wikipedia

- In the old days, it took a researcher decades to be invited to contribute an entry to an encyclopedia, if at all
  - Encyclopedias are about settled knowledge and authority
  - Invitations were rare to those not in the centers of academic networks
- Wikipedia turns it upside down . . . , or does it?
  - Nothing to stop a young Mongolian researcher seeking to write a Wikipedia entry
  - But actually, you may be rejected if you do not proceed with extreme caution

# Wikipedia: Stand-alone entries or insertions into pre-existing entries?

- Not a true choice: depends on the subject and what is already in Wikipedia
- Wikipedia has many restrictions against self-promotion

# Wikipedia is worth trying for

- Especially advantageous for non-mainstream topics like Gobi ecology where
  - The current entries do not contain any references to work done in Mongolia by Mongolian researchers
  - Unlike in conventional encyclopedias, Wikipedia has infinite space
- If you get an entry
  - Very high pay off
  - People who read encyclopedia entries want to learn more; primed to read the entries in the reference websites

# Facebook, Myspace, Orkut, . . .

- Open to discussion, but . . .
- Best that we can think of is having a presence in social networks that provides links to substantive sites

# Youtube

- Significant potential for disseminating videos (short) made for other purposes

# Twitter

- Can you reduce your research to short phrases?