

## **10 years of the Internet in Croatia: visions outlined**

**Predrag Pale**, FER, Zagreb

Even the longest voyage begins with the first and consists of numerous steps. However, in order for the steps not to be wobbly and not to wander off, one needs to keep an eye on the spot in the distance: the goal. This requires visions: images of the future we dream about. The ones that can be realized. Recognized individuals who (re)shape the usual style of work and living already today by innovative application of internet technologies, will share their vision of the future of Internet in Croatia.

The panellists were:

- Željko Anderlon, monitor.hr
- Vlado Banka, zgwireless.net
- Igor Novak, adriatica.net
- Veljko Skočilić.

Panellists, but also the audience (20+ participants), were asked to portray the work and life in Croatia and the world in ten years.

The panellists were also asked to share their experience in applying ICT in their respective businesses.

Regarding the commercial leverage of ICT the conclusions were that major obstacles are: lack of entrepreneurial spirit in general, small Croatian market and thus necessity to orient on-line business toward global market, the necessity to lower the boundary for on-line seller and requirement for significant investments in start-ups.

As an interesting by-product was the discussion why employees of on-line companies still travel to their work place instead working from home-offices. It turns out that sharing the atmosphere, spreading the leaders energy and building synergy are among crucial ones.

It is envisioned that at the end of next decade most commercial and administrative information required for everyday life and work will be available on-line. The trading of goods will be limited to rare and unique items, non-material goods (e.g. films), and products that are bought routinely (e.g. office supplies).

In the area of applications in educational system, particularly in primary and secondary education the main obstacles are ignorance and fear both among teachers and educational management, conservative legislation and lack of English language skills.

It is expected that the first "new" teachers will start changing the schoolscape in about five years when today's pupils become teachers.

An interesting movement has been presented aimed at offering broadband connectivity free of charge. A number of cities around the world are witnessing the emergence of wireless IP networks operated by very loosely organised individuals on a voluntary basis.

Cheap wireless interfaces for PCs are the only thing required to communicate with the matching fellow spirit in the neighbourhood up to few kilometres away. In Europe, no licenses and fees are associated with the frequency range in which these devices operate.

The prophecies of such nets wrapping the whole Earth in no more than three years have been heard at the panel. Linked with the enormous capacity of hard disk storage available today, they might be the network of tomorrow, while ISP infrastructures will be used in businesses requiring guaranteed quality of service.