

Global JAM on Collaborative Technology Requirements for Social Change

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Reception -> Meet and Greet -> Re: Great Idea to add a link to your profile! Such a diverse, talented and interesting community - WOW!

by Lars Soeftestad - Wednesday, 18 July 2007, 11:11 AM

Dear Jen,

You pose an intriguing question! Why, indeed, do not software developers and social scientists work more collaboratively together! There are a number of reasons for this, that I won't get into. The important thing to focus on is the outcome: most software are produced by people living in the West, or that are part of the Westernized globalized world. As a result, we tend to get software that are produced primarily for people in the West. In architecture, size, bandwidth required, tools available, etc., many of these software packages are not well suited to the average person or NGO located in a village and in rural areas in a developing or transition country.

Regards, Lars

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Reception -> Meet and Greet -> Re: Meet and Greet

by Lars Soeftestad - Wednesday, 18 July 2007, 11:03 AM

Dear Megan (and, by implication, Bob Stilger),

I, too, chewed a bit on Bob's language that you quote. While I understand and emphasize with his vision, I would like to offer the following comment:

Many out there (I cannot write "us" as the people I have in mind are certainly not part of this JAM), may be "held together by mutual intent, friendship, common values and a hope for new possibilities in the world". However, these sentiments do not reach around and across the world. Rather, for most of the people I meet and interact with in my work in development cooperation (preparing, implementing and evaluating development projects), including in remote corners of Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Middle East, these sentiments only apply to the next-of-kin, the neighborhood and the village. The rest of the world hardly exists. Thus, their interest in the technologies we are concerned with are framed by how they can help them in managing and bettering their own lives, on a daily basis. They are, at best, users and beneficiaries of this technology, and the over-arching globalized vision that I seem to read into Bob's vision is just not part of their reality and equation. This is not what drives them.

Regards, Lars

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Reception -> Meet and Greet -> Re: Howdy Cliff

by Lars Soeftestad - Wednesday, 18 July 2007, 10:40 AM

Riff,

I agree wholeheartedly with you as far as your balancing argument goes. As for the challenge you outline, I'm afraid I do not quite grasp it -"synchronize technical and social solutions"? Could you elaborate?

Regards, Lars

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Reception -> Meet and Greet -> Re: Nomadic Voice Chiming In

by Lars Soeftestad - Wednesday, 18 July 2007, 10:36 AM

Aerin,

I've been reading through the Meet and Greet section, and yours is one I deeply emphasize with. The view from developing countries on the blessings and bright world ahead promised by Web 2.0 and social networkings needs to be highlighted. You seem to have made many of the same experiences as I have, working in a number of countries throughout the world.

Also, for those few that can readily log on and tune in, it should be remembered that the Internet is nothing but a tool, and that treating it as a goal in itself is really a shame.

Your post is, I believe, the first one I've come across so far in the Meet and Greet section that addresses these issues.

Regards, Lars

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Reception -> Meet and Greet -> Re: Meet and Greet

by Lars Soeftestad - Tuesday, 17 July 2007, 05:13 PM

Greetings from Norway!

From what I've seen so far, there is great variety among us in terms of training, work and experiences. This promises well for the discussion ahead!

As for myself, I am trained as an anthropologist, and I have been working in developing cooperation for almost 25 years, in operations and at the policy level, and largely living abroad (for details see the site of my company Supras Consult at www.supras.biz). Since the mid-90s I have worked with a number of ICT-based networks and Communities of Practice, specifically CBNRM Net (Community-Based Natural Resource Management Network – www.cbnrm.net), and it is the experience I have accumulated over the years that has brought me to this JAM. I am sure I will benefit from interacting with you, and I hope I will be able to contribute a few things as well!

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