



State of the NREN Update

e-AGE 2016

Where We Came From

- Established as a trust in 2009
- Founded and owned by member institutions
- A member of UbuntuNet Alliance and ASREN
- Although no network was built throughout its existence, the NREN was operational – serving the members
 - Sought and facilitated graduate scholarships for the members
 - Facilitated the procurement of digital libraries
 - Setup e-repository platforms for internal use
 - Assisted with the build-out of the campus networks
 - Capacity building related to campus network design and implementation
- Strategic Pillars: Connectivity, Community, Content

Where We Are Now

- **Membership:** 14 member institutions and 5 new applications received
- **Connectivity:** network rollout plans completed, local network build-out to commence in January 2017, procurement for link to connect to UA network in its final stages
- **Organizational capacity:** currently 4 full-time staff members,
- **Community building:** launch of research capacity development program, development of R & E recruitment portal (REConnexion) in the final stages
- **The ‘Environmental Variables’:** government interested in getting involved, telecom [internet] infrastructure is improving, cost of bandwidth still high at an average of \$300/Mbps (and a max of \$350 and min of \$200)

Where We Intend to Be

- **In 6 months:** the rollout of Segment M to be completed, at least one effective use case for the NREN's network infrastructure to be ready, and having more visibility
- **In 3 years:** completion of the rollout for Zone S and Zone P, ability to provide video conferencing facilities to the members
- **In 10 years:** having redundant links with UbuntuNet Alliance and ASREN
 - We feel that the NRENs affiliated with the two or more RRENs will one day be the bridges that form one Global REN

Lessons We Have Learnt

1. Sometimes it is OK to put the cart before the horse. You can serve the members before you have a network.
2. NRENs in developing 'markets' have the potential to act as driving forces in the sector.
3. The NREN's business is to respond to the needs of the R & E communities. Connectivity is just the ticket to being able to do that.
4. NRENs cannot do everything on their own, but they can facilitate the formation of bodies that make up an ICT ecosystem.
5. Funding is a challenge for NRENs that are not owned or funded through governments. In order to get support, you should have already accomplished something and make sure that everybody knows about it.