

Excerpts from my letters on the unofficial MIT Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) Initiative:

(first to MIT PI's)

“Goal is to create a new top research institution at MIT and have a large scale collaborative effort across the MIT campus. MIT is the right place (on the East coast) to host this institution.

This initiative, well deserved, will advance the Internet related research and hopefully bring substantial funding on campus; it will benefit you, MIT and society as a whole. It should educate and support work of young researchers, refresh the ways we think about this important global phenomenon and help create a new generation Internet. Science, technology, law, policy, art, design, entrepreneurship...; i.e. any valuable single or cross disciplinary Internet related research effort that will advance humanity.

I expressed some of the motivation at the Summit Conference on Future Networks: Economy, Energy, Health held last month at MIT (all talks are online). Also, please see the preliminary communication with NSF below....”

(second to NSF)

“In terms of technology Internet, in its fourth or fifth decade of existence (*), is still about computers, networks, data storage, protocols, cryptography, search algorithms, apps, wired/wireless transfer of digital bits etc. In terms of human values, of course if wisely used, Internet is all about human advancement/augmentation, novel ways of human to human communication and collaboration.

With more than 1600 million active users worldwide, trillion US dollars being transferred daily in US alone, Internet clearly represents a paradigm shift with profound impact on humanity.

As an initiative that will be hopefully supported by / instigated at the top national and MIT levels MIT CAIS will quickly gather the brightest and most creative minds and evolve into highly reputable institution. The researchers within the Center will study numerous Internet related phenomena, re/create advanced technologies and policies benefiting individual and society, and finally craft and inspire a new generation of the Internet based industry.

The MIT CAIS will be a focal point for the Internet related research unifying researchers from the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab, Comparative Media Studies, Media Lab(**), Center for Civic Media, SLOAN School of Management, Center for Collective Intelligence, Center for Digital Business, E Club, Program in Technology and Policy, and many more. MIT community is informed about this initiative. Feedback I received till now was very positive.

Internet clearly deserves a new class of interdisciplinary academic institutions that will be primarily focused on the advanced Internet related studies. I think that keeping a status quo in regard to this matter would be an oversight.

With a strong technical, scientific and innovative base MIT is probably the most qualified institution on the East Coast to advance and lead this initiative and host a Center that will be an extremely valuable, however neutral, partner to industry and government.

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(*) On September 2 1969 two computers at UCLA passed test data through a 15-foot cable. On October 29, 1969 two nodes of ARPANET were interconnected between UCLA and SRI. These projects were led by UCLA Professor Leonard Kleinrock who received the prestigious National Medal of Science, from President George W. Bush on September 29, 2008.

As well known the architecture of the Internet and the design of the core internetworking protocol TCP (which later became TCP/IP) were conceived by Vinton G Cerf and Robert E Kahn during 1973.

(**) The MIT Media Lab has been founded back in 1980 with original premise to study new digital media (Internet and alike) by visionaries Nicholas Negroponte, MIT architecture professor, and Jerome B Wiesner, a Science Advisor to U.S. Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. Jerome Wiesner also served as MIT President from 1971 to 1980. Driven by its exploratory spirit this valuable worldwide celebrated interdisciplinary institution with strong links to industry drifted away from its original premise and is currently oriented toward hands-on approach to general innovations. In contrast, MIT CAIS will be closely focused on the Internet related research.”

(first to NSF)

“As well known, more than 75% of the US population is actively using Internet services and almost one trillion US dollars is circulating through the US on-line networks every day. Internet is deeply embedded into every aspect and a very essence of life and work in this country and therefore represents a serious matter of the national importance.

It is probably unnecessary to point out how unsatisfactory is the current state of the Internet in terms of security, privacy, law, policy, hardware infrastructure, etc. and to point out how rich, important and yet unexplored are possibilities that Internet could give a birth in the next several years. Something that may profoundly affect our economy, energy, health and many other fields. The current and future workplace of majority of the US citizens, for good or bad, is in front of the screens and connected to the Internet on-line services.

By gathering an interdisciplinary expert star team the MIT Center for Advanced Internet Studies will quickly become the top research and educational institution in this country and world. It will address Internet related science, technology, policy, new concept design and practical realization by forming close ties with industry and nourishing fresh, inspiring and industry moving start-ups. The MIT Center for Advanced Internet Studies will introduce paradigm shift by creating a new generations of advanced Internet services that will ensure the US leadership in this highly competitive field.

Our hope is that the MIT Center for Advanced Internet Studies will receive the first initial round of funding from the US government, quickly grow to half of the originally envisioned size and then rapidly attract industry sponsors.

Last week President Obama spoke on the clean/renewable energy initiative here at MIT. In this for MIT historic address President pointed out that he wants the US to lead the global race in the energy research. Many of us share this goal and fully recognize the necessity for research that will create future energy resources which will be then "feeding" many old and new "cells" of this country's "organism" and potentially boost our economy by exporting these energy resources abroad. MIT, to best of my knowledge, stands by this promise and daring man and woman working at MIT on the energy research will give their best to make that promise true.

Probably unnecessary to mention that many of us also recognize the grave need for Internet related research and creation of new infrastructure and services that will stipulate healthy growth and functioning of country's "organism". I am confident that President Obama as true visionary and leader recognizes this reality and that government will help us fight for this honorable cause that will create new markets, new jobs and prosperity for the entire country.

The MIT Center for Advanced Internet Studies will necessitate a very small funding compared to any other current initiative and it will represent an extraordinary legacy that current government led by President Obama will present to many future generations.

Before forming a detailed proposal for the senior MIT administration it will be necessary to engage in a constructive dialog and...

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Thank you in advance.

Best regards,

Marko B Popovic, PhD

<http://walltrust.com/MarkoBPopovic> “