Mobile Internet Quality Standards in India: Role of Policy Makers & Civil Society Organisations

Project Brief

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi is implementing a project entitled '2G/3G Internet Measurements in India'. The project focuses on collecting measurements from several rural and urban areas regarding the quality of service consumers receive from various 2G/3G service providers in India. The survey to collect data from service providers - Idea, MTNL, Airtel and Reliance across rural and urban areas of Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Delhi.

As part of the initiative, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) has partnered with IIT, Delhi to disseminate the findings of the project (focus on advocacy) and provide platform for discussions to pave a sustainable way forward. The idea is to document the evidence and recommendations in Briefing Papers and Policy Notes and organise seminars with relevant stakeholders (Government, regulators, Consumer Organisations, industry, etc) to discuss the same. Low cost options such as community networks to extend provider networks, application/ infrastructure changes to deliver better quality of experience to users and applications to encourage first-time internet users to adopt online services, would be discussed during various events.

Objective
Create awareness among consumer organizations, regulators, industry players, government, media, etc. on the issues of depleting mobile data quality and evaluation of performance of the service providers in India. The idea is to disseminate the findings of the mentioned study in order to generate space for dialogue among the aforementioned stakeholders.

Methodology

a. *Preparation of Advocacy Material*

For the purpose of undertaking advocacy; specific advocacy documents would be prepared such as, Policy Brief and Briefing Papers. While the Policy Brief will cull out key policy recommendations based on the research study and will be targeted to Member of Parliaments/Industries, the two Briefing Papers will be produced separately, based on certain issues as they emerge out of the study and will be targeted for policymakers, regulators and CSO's (respectively).

b. *Strategic meetings*

Marking the importance of the role that can be played by mentioned stakeholders in the national seminar for advocacy, the two strategic meetings will be organised in New Delhi. One would be with regulators and private players, whereas the second one would be with CSO's. These would be 2-3hours meeting with 15-20 participants. The main objective is to do brain storming with key stakeholders on planning the strategy for advocacy and

also, to sensitize them with the project outcomes. Further, the meetings will also help us in formulating the advocacy agenda to be discussed during the national seminar.

c. National Level Seminar

Similarly, to mark the end of the project and to map the long term strategy for future action plan, a national level seminar will be organised in Delhi, to showcase the findings of the study and also build a network of CSO's, web companies and social enterprises to bring momentum to the issue of quality mobile internet in India. The event will feature participation from regulatory bodies, government organisations, media, consumer organisations and other stakeholders. It would be an attempt to raise concerns regarding the need for establishment of third party quality of service (QoS) auditing agencies for proper surveillance on maintaining accessibility, quality and transparency by internet service providers. It would also be an attempt to highlight novel models and technological innovations happening in other parts of the world andto find effective ways to provide wider and better Internet access and appropriate applications in India.

Proposed Outputs

Two briefing papers and One policy option note as a part of advocacy documents focusing on quality of service issues in relation to 2G/3G mobile internet in India.

Expected Outcome

The outcome of the intervention is to form a network of CSO's, academia, web companies, and social enterprises for addressing issues pertaining to quality of service in mobile internet and provide them with a platform to engage with regulator, government and telecom providers to bring about policy/ practice change.

Development Partner

The project will be implemented in collaboration with IIT Delhi.