



The official publication of the World Information Technology & Services Alliance

May 20, 2020

SPOTLIGHT

Dear Colleagues,

First and foremost, on behalf of WITSA, I sincerely hope that you and your loved ones are safe and will remain so, through these trying times.

Like everyone in our industry, I have watched in horror over the past several weeks as the SARS-CoV-2 virus continues to wreak havoc around the world, causing large number of casualties, ruining the health of millions and destroying the economies and livelihood of untold numbers, in nearly every country.

The challenges ahead seem daunting, with people first and foremost preoccupied with protecting the health and welfare of our families, our staff and colleagues.

At the same time, businesses are increasingly able to provide business continuity through virtual means. Going forward, our industry must continue to think critically about how we can best adapt to a future which will be very different than we would have anticipated not long ago.

The resilience of our industry, though trade, investment, innovation and supply chains, place us in a good position to develop sustainable solutions based on industry ingenuity, investment and partnerships.

In confronting this unprecedented crisis, industry must work with our respective governments to facilitate solutions through multilateral systems in order to restore and strengthen the global economy.

Only through an international and collaborative approach can we, together, remove barriers to essential goods and services, provide common-sense and coordinated health strategies, and eventually stop the pandemic as well as restoring confidence in our future.

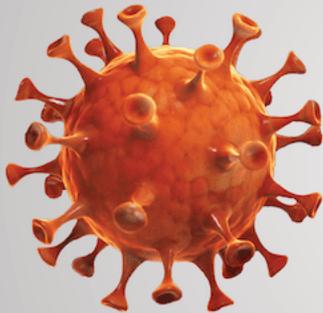
Like all previous crises, this too shall pass. Let's pray it passes quickly. Stay well.

Sincerely,

Jim

Dr. James H. Poisant
Secretary General, WITSA

BREAKING NEWS



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

WITSA Launches Webpage Dedicated to COVID-19 Resources

Last month, WITSA launched a Coronavirus Global Updates webpage to share resources, best practices and news about combatting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The webpage, which provides Global Resources as well as Member News, is open to the public. WITSA members are encouraged to send any articles or resources to molly@witsa.org so they may be added to the page.

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WORLD CONGRESS ON IT (WCIT)

Update on WCIT 2020 Penang, Malaysia

“Taking the lead to apply sufficient precaution measurements against the spread of the novel coronavirus, the exciting programming of WCIT2020 Malaysia that is due to take place in September 2020 will be delivered as ROAD TO WCIT MALAYSIA – a hybrid of small official functions and live telecast that is available online for global participation including B2B matching and virtual exhibitions for Southeast Asia’s market access. More announcements to come from the team of WCIT MALAYSIA.”

Postponement of WITSA’s Global ICT Excellence Awards

Dear Colleagues,

With reference to the recent announcement of the postponement of the Malaysia World Congress on IT, the next WITSA Global ICT Excellence Awards has been rescheduled and will now be held in conjunction with the **November 11-14, 2021 World Congress on IT in Dhaka, Bangladesh**. In the link below, you will find a revised program and nominating form. As you will see, the nomination stage is schedule to begin in March of next year. Any further changes or modifications to the Awards program will be announced in due time.

Stay safe,
Jim

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PUBLIC POLICY

WITSA Public Policy Action Plan for 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As was discussed at the recent WITSA Board of Directors meeting, please see in the link below, WITSA's public policy action plan for 2020. Over the last few years, WITSA has addressed a number of important policy issues. This year, industry is facing several significant challenges, which requires vigilance and action. The COVID-19 crisis is first and foremost a health crisis which has forced governments to take unprecedented measures to protect people's lives. The unavoidable declines in trade and output have painful consequences for households and businesses, on top of the human suffering caused by the disease itself. The enforcement of social distancing, lockdowns and other measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has led consumers to ramp up online shopping, social media use, internet telephony and teleconferencing, and streaming of videos and films.

However, e-commerce for goods and services trade has been adversely impacted by the same factors that have caused disruption in supply and demand overall. Governments have adopted new measures, and the private sector has also acted, to respond to and ensure that e-commerce can help to alleviate some of the challenges faced in combatting the virus. These have included increasing network capacity, offering expanded data services at little or no cost, lowering or scrapping transaction costs on digital payments and mobile money transfers, improving delivery services and other logistics, using digital tools to enforce measures and disseminate information, promoting telehealth services, and leveraging ICT for surveillance.

The global nature of COVID-19 and its impact on e-commerce may encourage strengthened international cooperation and the further development of policies for online purchases and supply. The pandemic has made it clear that e-commerce can be an important tool for consumers. E-commerce can also support small businesses and, by making economies more competitive, be an economic driver for both domestic growth and international trade.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital technologies in general, but also several vulnerabilities across the world. Electronic commerce could benefit from looking at greater international cooperation to facilitate the cross-border movement of goods and services, narrow the digital divide, and level the playing field for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

Please review the action plan carefully and let me know at your earliest opportunity if you have any comments or suggestions. Your support is, as always, very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Anders Halvorsen, VP Global Public Policy

[Action Plan Link](#)

WITSA Calls for a Sensible Approach to Regaining Trust on the Internet.

In the digital era, false content has been amplified through social media by fear mongers, Internet trolls, and election-meddlers to widen social fissures, undermine democracy and

strengthen authoritarian regimes by spreading content that intends to deceive, mislead or manipulate.

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MEMBER NEWS

tech^{UK} representing the future

Physically apart but digitally together

#ConnectandProtect

"Starting on 13 May and running to 10 June, techUK will kick off a month-long campaign highlighting how tech is helping organisations, businesses, communities, families and the whole of society continue in this new reality of social distancing where we may be physically apart but we have never been more digitally together."

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Rebuilding a Resilient Economy

Recently, [Xero](#) commissioned the New Zealand Economic Research Institute ([NZIER](#)) to undertake a major analysis of the impact of cloud-based technology on the New Zealand economy.

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ITAN Lagos Chapter Delivers COVID-19 Stimulus Package

ITAN Lagos Chapter COVID-19 Stimulus Package Delivered to Oshodi Shogunle community with the help of DPO Shogunle Division and COVID 19 Task officers. Thank you to Information Technology Association of Nigeria Lagos Chapter.

GLOBAL NEWS



ITC News - The e-commerce response to COVID-19

Across 100 countries, pure e-commerce firms are so far holding up well in Europe and the United States, while Asia and Nigeria shows a continued decline in online sales. It would seem that where e-commerce has established itself among consumers, there has been a tendency to switch to purchasing online. Underdeveloped e-commerce markets were not sufficiently ready to respond.

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OECD: Trade Facilitation and the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the midst of this global crisis, international co-operation in trade facilitation will remain important to keep trade flowing. Continued aid for trade will be particularly important to assist developing countries to implement trade facilitation measures needed in the crisis.

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**It's time to return to globalization.
But this time let's do it right.**

April 27, 2020: "Instead of "de-globalization" — as some are advocating — I see us all benefiting from a "re-globalization." This time, though, we must concentrate on getting it right, aiming for a renewed integration of our world that centers on the well-being of its people. A re-globalization that strengthens and builds capacities within our countries and ushers in true cooperation rather than competition. A re-globalization that recognizes that a single country, acting alone, cannot succeed. One country's failure is every country's failure."

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PARTNER NEWS



How do you use Virtual, Augmented, and Mixed Reality, and is it Accessible?

XR Access is a community committed to making virtual, augmented, and mixed reality (collectively referred to as "extended reality" or XR) accessible to people with disabilities. This survey was designed by XR Access to understand what XR applications are in widespread use and how they can be made more inclusive and accessible.

[Take Survey](#)



UNCTAD: Africa needs a Marshall plan to ride out Covid-19 crisis; prepare for uncertain times

The rapid spread of Covid-19 has upended life in all parts of the world in ways never witnessed this past century.

On the health side we have seen an acute shortage of facilities from testing kits, personal protection gear, to hospital facilities and health personnel in the most developed countries.

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COVID-19: A 10-POINT ACTION PLAN TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TRANSPORT FACILITATION IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

International collaboration, coordination and solidarity among all is going to be key to overcoming this unprecedented global challenge. As part of efforts aimed at reducing the international spread of the virus and to mitigate the potentially crippling longer-term consequences of the pandemic, especially for the most vulnerable countries, policymakers need to take a number of measures to ensure the facilitation of international trade and the transport of goods.

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UNCTAD E-Commerce Week Goes Digital

The first edition of the virtual UNCTAD eWeek took place from 27 April to 1 May. If you weren't able to join the 2'000+ participants from 134 countries attending the 14 live sessions, you can easily access the videos and sound recordings of these various sessions here.

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