

NetAid - demonstrates the power of the Internet to fight global poverty

In what must surely be remembered as the world's biggest and most successful live music event this century, NetAid broadcast simultaneously over the Internet and via TV and radio to touch an audience estimated at 2 billion. On the global scale it was bigger even than the charity phenomena of the 80's- Live Aid and Band Aid.

Viewers, listeners and clickers from some 160 countries tuned in to NetAid's launch concerts held at separate venues in London, New York and Geneva. A galaxy of pop stars had assembled to add their names to the cause. In London, George Michael spoke enthusiastically of his commitment to NetAid before going on stage to give one of his best performances ever. Leaping from his famous revolving black leather chair he took the audience by storm singing hits like 'Freedom' and 'Fast Love' before bringing the house down with a spirited version of 'Brother can you spare a dime.' Irish idols, The Corrs, charmed the audience with a poignant rendering of REM's hit song 'Everyone Hurts' while UK's 'Millennium Man', Robbie Williams had 75,000 pairs of arms punching the air singing his number one hit 'Let me Entertain You'. Over in New York, a string of musicbiz personalities, including Bono, Sting and Wyclef carried on the party, launching the NetAid theme song 'New Day'. Meanwhile, at the Palais de Nations in Geneva, world class music entertainers from top US band Texas to South Africa's Ladysmith Black Mambazo joined the Geneva Chamber Orchestra in rounding off a spectacular concert to promote NetAid's launch objective of creating greater awareness of poverty and Third World Debt.

Earlier, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had enlisted the support of global networking companies to create the world's largest website, **www.netaid.org**. which has been designed to harness the power of the Internet to help fight extreme poverty. In addition to raising money and promoting awareness, NetAid aims to create a new global focus point, linking people and organisations dedicated to building a "community of conscience" for providing basic human needs such as food, shelter, healthcare and human rights, as well as environmental issues.

Mark Malloch Brown, Senior Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme said: 'NetAid is a new development designed to attract a whole new constituency of activists. It is where ordinary people with no prior connection to poverty can become empowered to care and take action'. Addressing the global audience during the concert, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said: 'Shortly there will be six billion human beings, nearly half of them having to survive on \$2 a day or less. The scale of misery that implies is beyond our imagination - how many children unable to go to school, how many people without clean water to drink or a place to sleep? All of us would like to change that if we could and now every one of us can help change it with a click of the mouse on the NetAid website'.

The website was built by e-engineers at KPMG, the global information based services company and was designed to take up to 60 million hits an hour and handle 125,000 live video streams. 'Our challenge was to make it accessible and understandable to

millions of users'. said Douglas Graham, KPMG project manager. 'We had a team of 50 working non-stop to create one of the largest and most efficient e-commerce capacities yet to be developed' The results were pretty impressive too. On the day, almost 2.5 million webstreams were downloaded and the site took millions of hits.

After the event, it is expected the website will generate one billion hits and lead to a series of concrete actions, including donations of time, expertise and goods, as well as cash. John Chambers, Cisco Systems CEO views the future with optimism: 'Just as the Internet has reshaped international commerce, it can change the way anti-poverty efforts are arranged around the world. NetAid puts the power to fight poverty online'.

The Internet Revolution

Already farmers in the remote Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan are beginning to benefit from the arrival of the Internet. Village extension workers now have access to the knowledge that could help raise the level of agricultural production. In just one Egyptian town, with over 100,000 unemployed graduates, young men and women are now being trained at technology access community centres, learning new skills that will help find new jobs. Elsewhere in Malaysia, students are being taught to use the Internet at an early age thanks to a programme that's bringing Mobile Internet Units to their schools. Saving the environment is another important issue, and in Jamaica farmers are able to visit community cyber-centres to access information about new environmentally friendly technologies. Believing that food security is as fundamental as the right to vote, FAO is currently developing a Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network that will link agricultural institutions to extension stations through the Internet.

NetAid's mission is to use the power of the Internet to help millions of men, women and children who live on the edge of survival. The aim is to connect all those who share common values and to promote the exchange of ideas, challenges and resources. Perhaps one day it will eventually turn out to become the world's most comprehensive Yellow Pages for poverty eradication in every corner of the globe.

(Possible Box Feature)

(Photo: Wembley Concert Stage Set)

www.netaid.org

The story of the world's greatest hits

- website built to withstand 1 billion hits
- capable of handling 60 million hits/hour
- designed to accept 1000 e-commerce payments/second
- supplying 125,000 simultaneous live video streams
- operating via 1500 servers in 90+ data centres worldwide

The future

Website originally designed for global webcast but will evolve to include diverse functionality and rich media content to enable visitors to join, learn and contribute to NetAid online.

NetAid - the power to fight extreme poverty

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