

# Electronic commerce

## A regional approach

**Karen Coppock and Colin Maclay**

*Karen Coppock is a PhD Candidate at The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, USA, and an affiliate of Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Colin Maclay is a Fellow at Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.*

**Keywords** Telecommunications, Internet, USA, International trade, Foreign investment, Economic conditions

**Abstract** During the months of May and June of 2002, interviews and surveys were conducted with over 30 high-level private, public, academic and non-profit sector leaders from around the world to discuss the development and impact of regional e-commerce initiatives. Three pioneers in this arena were analyzed: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the European Union (EU). The motivation, objectives, design, structure and implementation of their respective e-commerce programs were explored, with an eye toward uncovering the visible and invisible challenges and opportunities. This paper presents a set of high-level principles which guided and influenced these initiatives and that can serve as a reference for other organizations considering regional e-commerce needs.

Organizations around the world are considering alternative approaches to electronic commerce, contemplating the national, regional and global implications of this new business tool. At least three organizations have implemented regional e-commerce initiatives, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the European Union (EU). During the months of May and June of 2002, interviews and surveys were conducted with over 30 high-level private, public, academic and non-profit sector leaders associated with these initiatives to discuss their development and impact[1]. The motivation, objectives, design, structure and implementation of the respective e-commerce initiatives were explored, with an eye toward uncovering the visible and invisible challenges and opportunities.

### The new economy imperative

Our generation stands on the very cusp of the greatest technological revolution that mankind has ever faced. Some compare this age of

This paper is adapted from work generously sponsored by the Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF) as part of the CAF/Harvard University Andean Competitiveness Project.

electronic communication with the arrival of the Gutenberg press, or with the Industrial Revolution. Yet this revolution when it has run its course may have a greater impact on the planet than anything that has preceded (OECD, 1997).

In the mid-1990s, there was immense optimism and enthusiasm about the New Economy and its ability to transform the economic paradigm to one based on continual productivity growth. The USA was at the forefront of the technological revolution and had designated technology as a national priority as early as September of 1993, with the announcement of the National Information Infrastructure initiative by then Vice President Gore.

The USA also had a definite perception on how technological development and e-commerce should be handled: private sector led, with minimal regulation. Given that e-commerce transcends borders, APEC was used as a forum to promote this perspective. According to Paul Myler, Director of e-APEC Business, Economic and Ecotech Unit of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a specific element of APEC's agenda was to "educate members to ensure that e-commerce was not subject to inappropriate trade-restrictive measures".

Europe was slower to embrace e-commerce and the New Economy. Although "the information society was no longer only a vision", notes Denis Baresch, of the European Commission's Information Society Directorate General (EC's Info Society DG), the "EU didn't seem to be abreast of these changes".

Yet the EU soon took notice. A 1998 European Commission report credited the ICT industry with creating "one in every four net new jobs" in the EU and having been



The Emerald Research Register for this journal is available at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/researchregister>

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/1463-6697.htm>

able to “drive growth and create jobs” in the USA (European Commission, 1998). Furthermore, as an integrated unit, the EU would be less likely to “risk cultural or technical imperialism or imposition”, says Colum Joyce, DHL’s Global E-commerce Strategy specialist. After analyzing the situation, European countries decided they could most effectively compete against the USA, for jobs and markets and protect European culture via a coordinated technology plan. Consequently, in the 1999 *eEurope: An Information Society for All*, the European Commission announced a comprehensive eEurope initiative, aiming to “bring everyone in Europe – every citizen, every school, every company – online as quickly as possible”.

Southeast Asia faced a distinct set of challenges. Two and a half decades of some of the highest growth rates in the world were abruptly halted by the Asian financial crisis. During the SE Asian “miracle”, foreign investment was freely flowing, but this trend sharply reversed in most of the countries with the onset of the crisis. The thought, therefore, was that an “intra-ASEAN collaboration and integration, to create a large ‘common market’ of half a billion people, would be attractive for investors and businesses from outside ASEAN”, stated William Hioe, Senior Director, of Singapore’s InfoComm Development Authority (IDA). Dr Mah, Director of Strategic Global Relations and Alliances of the Dagang Net Group of Companies and leader of two e-ASEAN Pilot Projects, confirms that “the context of e-ASEAN is to promote the entire ASEAN as a preferred [location for] foreign investment and international competitiveness”. As “electronic commerce is a natural extension of normal commerce”, noted a minister of international trade in Southeast Asia, it therefore played a prominent role in e-ASEAN agenda.

### **Regional organizations and e-initiatives**

An overview of regional initiatives is given in Table I. Competition, for jobs, markets and/or investment dollars, was a primary driver of regional e-commerce initiatives. Although the objectives were similar, the organizational structure and culture of the entity spearheading the particular initiative heavily influenced its shape and scope, as did the context into which it was introduced. On one extreme was APEC, the least integrated and formal of the three studied bodies. Being a “member driven” organization, “initiatives arise from many different directions”, notes Chutintorn Sam Gongsakdi, of the APEC Secretariat. The key is to generate enough political support for a specific initiative or issue, to ensure its survival and implementation. Numerous e-commerce related initiatives have been endorsed by the organization, with varying degrees of success in reaching the implementation stage.

The opposite extreme was the EU, where formal decision-making processes are adhered to and the level of integration is unparalleled. According to a representative of the EC’s Info

Society DG, common policies are established by the EU in a multi-phased, iterative process which consists of consultations (with Member States, stakeholders – industry, non-profit organizations, etc.), a European Commission proposal, a review/edit of the proposal by the European Parliament and the final revision and decision on the proposal by the European Council. At the time of the interviews, the eEurope 2005 initiative, which included an e-commerce element, was going through this process. Hence eEurope, and its associated e-commerce activities, were treated as any other EU-level project, in that they were designed to leverage existing EU policies and programs, rather than supplant them.

In contrast, ASEAN implemented a significant structural innovation in its e-ASEAN initiative, breaking its long-standing tradition of allowing only public-sector representatives on its task forces and opening the e-ASEAN Task Force to the private sector. While the EU was focused on transforming itself into an “information society”, with ICTs and ICT-related programs infiltrating every aspect of its existing institutional structure, e-ASEAN was an attempt at reinventing the organizational structure. Yet it is important to note that the organizational change did not alter the traditional process – consensually agreeing to a combination of binding and non-binding agreements by representatives from each country. What it did achieve, however, was to increase the private sector’s participation in “setting the direction of the economy”, commented a high-level Malaysian executive. This was something that had traditionally been done primarily by the government in developing countries such as ASEAN, he concluded.

### **High-level principles**

As previously described, each region dealt with e-commerce in a distinct fashion, with the policy courses taken largely reflecting the attributes of the implementing institution. This portion of the paper presents a set of high-level principles that guided and influenced these e-commerce initiatives and that can serve as a reference for others considering regional e-commerce needs.

### **E-commerce is just one piece of the ICT puzzle**

E-commerce is just one of many building blocks of information and communication technology (ICT) readiness and was not considered by any region in isolation. The tendency of the organizations was to launch an overall “e” strategy, which included an e-commerce component. One of the common first steps taken was to benchmark the e-commerce environment within the region to understand the broad range of issues that affected its diffusion and effective use.

For example, the e-Readiness Study conducted by the ASEAN Secretariat played “an important role in defining the work for the Task Force”, recalls Shelah Lardizabal, of the e-ASEAN Task Force Secretariat. The ASEAN Secretariat

**Table I — Regional initiatives overview**

<b>Date established</b>	<b>APEC 1989</b>	<b>ASEAN 1967</b>	<b>EU 1950</b>
<b>Mandate</b>	Promote open trade and economic cooperation	“Accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and promote regional peace and stability”	“Establish European citizenship; ensure freedom, security and justice; promote economic and social progress; and assert Europe’s role in the world”
<b>Structure</b>	Non-treaty based	Treaty-based	Treaty-based
<b>Decisions</b>	Non-binding, made by consensus	Binding	Binding – must be implemented in national legislation
<b>Member states</b>	21	10	15
<b>Vision</b>	Bogor Goals – free and open trade and investment in the region by 2020	“Cooperative peace and shared prosperity”	Lisbon Goals – “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world” by 2010
<b>Major e-commerce initiatives</b>	Blueprint for Action on e-commerce (1998) e-APEC (2001)	e-ASEAN Task Force (1999) e-ASEAN Framework Agreement	European Initiative on Electronic Commerce (1998) e-Europe Plan (1999) e-Europe Action Plans (2002 and 2005)
<b>Focus of the e-commerce related initiatives</b>	Information gathering and sharing, awareness raising and some actionable items (particularly ones designed to facilitate intra-regional trade)	Legal and regulatory activities (with a strong emphasis on adhering to international norms and standards) as well as pilot projects to demonstrate the tangible benefits of the technology	Funding of research projects via the Information Society Technical Research Program, regulation (including self-regulation), legislation and benchmarking
<b>Insights</b>	If it could be done again, a “more strategic vision, clearer game plan and better management of the process” would be recommended (Gongsakdi)	“It is hard to say what is a right and what is a wrong approach – it is all trial and error” (Nordin)	“Just because you are one of the EU countries, does not mean that you will subsume your national interests to the regional good” (Joyce)
<b>Homepage</b>	<a href="http://www.apecsec.org.sg">www.apecsec.org.sg</a>	<a href="http://www.aseansec.org">www.aseansec.org</a>	<a href="http://www.europa.eu.int">www.europa.eu.int</a>
<b>Source:</b> APEC Secretariat’s Web page ( <a href="http://www.apecsec.org.sg">www.apecsec.org.sg</a> ); APEC, 1994; ASEAN’s Web page ( <a href="http://www.aseansec.org/64.htm">www.aseansec.org/64.htm</a> ); European Council, 2000; The EU’s, “the EU at a Glance” Web page ( <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/abc-en.htm">www.europa.eu.int/abc-en.htm</a> ); and interviews			

was “aware of the e-APEC Readiness Study” and they referred to it for “comparative purposes”, she notes. Benchmarking is also an important part of the eEurope Action Plan and has assisted the EU with measuring its progress on the first eEurope Action Plan and on determining the elements of its second Action Plan.

### **Two distinct regulatory philosophies appear to exist for e-commerce, each aligned with a different world leader**

A fundamental difference exists between the highly-structured, government-led, e-commerce approach exemplified by the EU and the bottom-up, self-regulating, strategy of the USA. One purpose of the EU and APEC’s e-commerce initiatives appears to be the promotion of these differing regulatory perspectives, attempting to tip the scale toward a particular approach. Regions need to determine where they stand on the government-led to self-regulatory spectrum and may feel external pressure to lean toward a particular side.

### **E-commerce has the ability to transcend borders**

While the organizations realized that e-commerce resides in the virtual world, each considered the national, regional and

global issues to a different degree. Some preferred to first focus on regional interoperability, as it may be achieved more quickly than global consensus, while others recommended the immediate adoption of global standards. The private sector appeared most concerned with worldwide interoperability, as many of those interviewed operate at a global, not regional, level. Furthermore, it was widely acknowledged that if a region is not a large enough economic unit to depend on its internal markets or to sway international negotiations, regional decisions that were not aligned with global efforts could decrease its international competitiveness.

### **E-commerce is a tool, not a solution**

After the dot-com bubble burst, the regions began to view e-commerce as a complement to traditional commercial strategies, and not as a business solution in and of itself. It is becoming part of the larger economic competitiveness landscape and, to some extent, a driver for broader ICT diffusion within society and economy.

Furthermore, in the quest for the “killer” e-commerce application, many commented that the most basic of e-commerce tools, e-mail, has been overlooked.

Respondents from both Asia and Europe emphasized the importance of e-mail with firms of all sizes using it to “manage business dealings”, says Jan Gessin, of the Asia Oceania Electronic Marketplace Association (AOEMA). Not only is e-mail a powerful business tool, which has been used by some companies to make certain business operations more efficient, it is also a stepping stone to more advanced e-commerce activities. A representative from the EC’s Info Society DG was adamant about the fact that not all businesses will reach the online selling stage, but a company will *never* sell online without having taken the initial step of incorporating e-mail into its normal business processes.

### **The characteristics of the implementing organization heavily influence the shape of the initiative**

The leading institutions’ history, charter and standard operating procedures strongly contributed to the design, structure and implementation of the e-commerce initiative.

For example, Baresch, of the EC’s Info Society DG, mentions how the eEurope Action Plan has “considerable political weight and commitment” due to the fact that European leaders directly approved it. However, this same plan was criticized by a private sector representative, who states that: “When you deal with consensus in the European Union, you go down to the lowest common denominator and it is very low in the e-commerce realm”. Reaching consensus is a very time-consuming process. One benefit of APEC’s “loose” organizational structure and non-binding decisions, says Colin Oliver of Australia’s National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE) is that it can “move a lot faster than other international organizations”. Yet, ASEAN leaders have mentioned that what differentiates ASEAN from APEC is the very fact that it can agree to binding decisions.

### **Coordination is seen as a key role for the regional organizations**

The general consensus was that one of the most important roles of the regional organizations analyzed was to coordinate and streamline national efforts, not lead them. Using its convening powers, these entities encouraged collaboration and communication within the region, fostering an increased awareness of e-commerce and the cross-fertilization of ideas and best practices. It was perceived that the potential for intra-regional learning and cooperation are great. This perspective may be influenced by the traditional role of each of these bodies.

It is interesting to note that funding was not a key element of any of these initiatives. ASEAN lent its name, not funds, to its pilot projects and, according to Jorge Gasós, of the EC’s Info Society DG, there was no budget initially assigned to the eEurope initiative. Hence, activities associated with eEurope were incorporated into the existing European infrastructure and programs, and ASEAN pilot projects were required to have a sustainable business model. There are pros and cons

to the lack of funding, states Frank Cunningham, of the EC’s Info Society DG. He would have appreciated some financial support for key projects, yet he appreciated the fact that his unit was not limited to a pre-determined project or resource base.

### **Both policy and practical cooperation are important elements of an e-commerce initiative**

Most of the regions coupled policy changes with practical cooperation. Both were seen to be necessary elements of an e-commerce strategy, as one reinforces the other. By jointly collaborating on specific e-commerce projects, obstacles and opportunities could be uncovered, leading to an increased awareness and commitment to addressing policy issues.

### **The question is not why, but how, to most productively involve the private sector**

There was strong consensus on the power of exploiting the unique advantages and resources of both the private and public sectors. The challenge is, therefore, determining how to best achieve private sector representation, ensuring that the entire sectors’, and not just a particular company’s, interests are represented. No particular model is appropriate for all regions or cases, as each of the approaches used had unique advantages and disadvantages.

As APEC has strongly embraced private sector participation since its creation, it had to discover a method of soliciting private sector input without hindering the business activities of its representatives. Its solution was ABAC – APEC’s Business Advisory Council. This is a permanent council, comprised of up to three senior-level executives from each member country, which advises APEC leaders on business’ interests. It prepares an annual report which is presented, in person, to the APEC leaders at the annual Leaders’ Summit. This model has provided the private sector with an official voice in APEC, while simultaneously unencumbering it from the political process.

Yet how to select those private sector leaders? “It is difficult to select one private sector partner without considering the thousands of others”, admits Dr Mah, of the Dagang Net Group of Companies. Yet this is the exact challenge faced by the Economic Ministers of the ASEAN nations, which are responsible for choosing a single private sector representative for the e-ASEAN Task Force. The Malaysian Government’s delegate is the Multimedia Development Company (MDC). According to Dr Mah, the MDC represents some 750 corporations in Malaysia and functions as a “distributor of information and facilitator of all e-ASEAN-related activities” in the country. Although he feels that this model has been a success, criticism was expressed by at least one major Malaysian corporation, which felt that it should have been invited to participate in the e-ASEAN Task Force, but was not.

## **Compromise is required to balance the diverse stakeholder agendas and national ICT readiness levels**

All of the regions had to find a balance between meeting the diverse agendas of numerous stakeholders as well as the choosing between the alternative processes and tools available to meet the stated e-commerce objectives. One prominent set of stakeholders is the member state. Member states often have different levels of ICT readiness, thus translating into distinct priorities and needs. Alternative approaches to compensate for these differences were employed.

For example, a leading private sector representative from Malaysia commented that a disparity in the levels of ICT readiness has slowed down regional ICT initiatives in ASEAN. One way of compensating for this, says Hioe, of the IDA, has been for more advanced countries to begin with bilateral agreements, with their experiences being observed and used as a model by the other member countries. APEC has a similar solution with its Pathfinder Initiatives. According to Jaeyung Park, Deputy Director of the E-commerce Policy Division of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea, a Pathfinder Initiative is one in which a group of member states pilot the implementation of a project in order to provide a framework “to encourage the broadest participation by other APEC members when they are ready to join”. The project, he clarifies, must be designed to make progress on APEC’s strategic Bogor Goals; safeguarding that all APEC members are marching toward the same overall objective.

Leading by example, and demonstrating small-scale successes, could facilitate intra-regional learning in regions with countries at disparate economic and technical levels. The risk of this approach is the perception of “domination” by certain countries within a region, a sentiment expressed by at least one private sector participant who requested to remain anonymous

## **Borrow, and adapt upon, proven techniques**

Across the EU, “Go Digital” banners are waving (see Figure 1).

No, it is not an advertising campaign by a major IT company, but rather it is the logo for the EU’s initiative to promote e-commerce in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

One of the initial agenda items of the 1999 eEurope initiative was to encourage SMEs to “go digital”. Recognizing

the power of brand recognition, the European Commission “branded” the Go Digital campaign, unveiling the associated logo. According to Cunningham, of the EC’s Info Society DG and Head of the Go Digital campaign, the logo “enabled many players to conceptualize the whole campaign as a platform from which many various kinds of activities – customized to local needs – can be launched”. Furthermore, unlike the private sector, which fiercely guards its logos and brands, the Commission readily provided the logo to any organization – local, sub-regional or regional – which wanted to support SMEs to Go Digital and allowed them to tailor the logo and brand to their particular needs.

Cunningham views the Go Digital campaign as one of the “more successful EU programs”, in that it has achieved prominent visibility among EU Commission staffers, individual member states and the SMEs themselves. Confirming this is the fact that over 400 people attended the Go Digital kick-off conference in April 2001 and, even more, approximately 500 people, attended the Go Digital Summit this past May.

Yet, as branding masters such as McDonalds and Intel know so well, your brand is only as good as your product or service, hence the Go Digital initiative needs to deliver more than just awareness. Although awareness, one of the 11 objectives of the initiative, has certainly been achieved.

## **Actions often speak louder than words**

Government is a powerful change agent. By embracing the technology itself, the government sends a strong signal to its constituents and the world as a whole, on its commitment to the digital age and its economic competitiveness in general. The actions can even be symbolic. For example, one region signed an ICT agreement digitally, the first time this had ever been done. Yet governments also run a risk in leading by example. According to Carlos Osorio, of MIT, the vast majority of e-government projects exceed stated budgets and miss deadlines.

## **Conclusions**

During the late 1990s, there was immense optimism and enthusiasm surrounding the New Economy. At the time, e-commerce was seen as key to unleashing new markets and economic potential and this was particularly appealing to some regions, given the challenging employment and/or investment climates. It was in this context that the three regional e-commerce initiatives were launched and hence the thrust of the various initiatives was to accelerate its adoption.

Regional approaches to this challenge varied considerably and were largely dependent on the institutional structure and norms under which each initiative was conceived. The EU’s philosophy was to leverage existing programs and procedures, helping ICTs to permeate the entire organization and region. This was in line with the Union’s commitment to tight integration and top-down,

**Figure 1 — EU logo**



decision making. Furthermore, its ability to make binding decisions that must be implemented on a national level, allowed it to formulate regional level legislation and policies that would have been extremely difficult for an organization such as APEC to accomplish.

It appears that some of the more advanced economies in APEC, on the other hand, used this entity as a conduit for the promotion of liberal trade philosophies. The tactics revolved primarily around information gathering and dissemination, areas where APEC could play a role. In line with APEC's fluid organization, and bottom-up approach, various e-commerce-related initiatives were announced, beginning with those sponsored by Australia. The private sector heavily influenced APEC's e-commerce activities, encouraging one of the cornerstone projects, the e-Commerce Readiness Initiative.

Conversely, the trade ministers in ASEAN perceived that institutional change was necessary to appropriately handle e-commerce. Therefore, the first-ever multi-sector task force was inaugurated and ASEAN lent its name to select private sector-led pilot projects. ASEAN incorporated these changes into its existing institutional structure; consequently, complementing, not supplanting, traditional processes and norms.

The climate has changed significantly since these three regions adopted e-commerce initiatives. The dot-com bubble has deflated, expectations for e-commerce are more measured and e-commerce is being more widely integrated with general commerce. Yet, the lessons learned from these initiatives can assist other regional organizations, because many of the high level principles associated with this issue remain relevant.

One critical lesson to be learned from these regional experiences is that there is not a single, or optimal, approach to fostering e-commerce. A region will require a distinct e-commerce model for its particular realities. The model selected also should be congruent with the region's overall ICT strategy, as e-commerce is simply one element of ICT readiness. ■

#### Note

- 1 For a complete listing of the interview/survey respondents, please see Appendix.

#### References

- APEC (1994), *APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration of Common Resolve*, APEC, Bogor.
- European Commission (1998), Report to the European Council, Job Opportunities in the Information Society: Exploiting the Potential of the Information Revolution COM (1998) 590 final, Brussels.
- European Council (2000), Presidency Conclusions: Lisbon European Council, Lisbon.
- OECD (1997), *Electronic Commerce: Opportunities and Challenges for Government* (the "Sacher Report"), OECD, Paris.

#### Further reading

- APEC (n.d.), *APEC Blueprint for Action on Electronic Commerce*, available at (APEC Secretariat's Web page): [www.apecsec.org.sg/loadall.htm? www.apecsec.org.sg/ecotech/apecbec.html](http://www.apecsec.org.sg/loadall.htm?www.apecsec.org.sg/ecotech/apecbec.html)
- APEC (n.d.), *Electronic Commerce in APEC Fora*, available at: [www.apecsec.org.sg/loadall.htm? www.apecsec.org.sg/virtualib/v-ecommerce.html](http://www.apecsec.org.sg/loadall.htm?www.apecsec.org.sg/virtualib/v-ecommerce.html)
- APEC (2001), *APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration: Meeting New Challenges in the New Century*, Shanghai.
- ASEAN (n.d.), *About ASEAN*, available at: [www.aseansec.org/64.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/64.htm)
- ASEAN (n.d.), *Terms of Reference of the e-ASEAN Task Force*, available at: [www.fit-ed.org/easean/tor.html](http://www.fit-ed.org/easean/tor.html)
- ASEAN (2000), *e-ASEAN Framework Agreement*, Singapore, available at: [www.aseansec.org/6267.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/6267.htm)
- Commission of the European Communities (2002), *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: eEurope 2005: An information society for all COM (2002) 263 final*, Brussels.
- Commission of the European Communities (2001), *Communication on a Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: eEurope 2002 Impact and Priorities, COM(2001) 140 final*, Brussels.
- Council and the European Commission for the Feira European Council (2000), *Action Plan, eEurope 2002: An Information Society for All*, Brussels.
- European Commission (2000), *Communication on a Commission Initiative for the Special European Council of Lisbon: eEurope: An Information Society for All*, Brussels.
- European Commission for the European Council in Nice (2000), *Communication on a Commission to the Council and European Parliament: The eEurope 2002 Update*, Brussels.
- European Union (n.d.), *The European Union at a Glance*, available at: [www.europa.eu.int/abc-en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/abc-en.htm)
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretariat (2001), *E-commerce and Development Report 2001*, New York, NY and Geneva.

#### Appendix: interview/survey respondents

- Anonymous Private Sector Representative, Malaysia.
- Anonymous Representative, EC's Info Society DG, Belgium.
- Baresch, Denis, EC's Info Society DG, Analysis, Policy Planning, eEurope, Belgium.
- Bartelot, Richard, Department of Trade and Industry, Head of EU Information Society Policy, UK.
- Basilio, Antonio, Director of Operations of the ABAC International Secretariat.
- Browning, Douglas, Assistant Commissioner, Office of International US Customs Service, US.
- Coward, Chris, University of Washington, US.
- Cunningham, Frank, European Commission, Directorate General Information Society, Leads Go Digital, Belgium.
- Gasós, Jorge, EC's Info Society DG, Belgium.

Gessin, Jan, Asia Oceania Electronic Marketplace Association (AOEMA), Australia.  
Gonsakdi, Chutintorn Sam, Program Director, APEC Secretariat, Singapore.  
Hassan, Kamarudin, Minister of International Trade, Malaysia.  
Hioe, William, Senior Director, Infocomm Development Authority (IDA), Singapore.  
Ho, Susanne, Assistant Secretary, Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.  
Joyce, Colum, Global e-commerce Strategy, DHL, Belgium.  
Kazmin, Amy, *Financial Times*, Bangkok, Thailand.  
Lardizabal, Shelah, e-ASEAN Task Force Secretariat, Philippines.  
Mah, Dr Alvin C.K., Director, Strategic Global Relations and Alliances, Dagang Net Group of Companies and leader of WeASEAN and ASEAN-TEDI pilot projects.  
Mann, Catherine, Institute for International Economics.

Mylar, Paul, a/g Director, E-APEC, Business, Economic and Ecotech Section APEC and Regional Trade Policy Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia.  
Nordin, Suhaimi, Senior Manager, E-Business Division, MDC Multimedia Development Corridor, Malaysia.  
Oliver, Colin, National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE), Australia.  
Orlowski, Steve, APEC's e-Security Task Group (eSTG), Australia.  
Park, Jaeyung, Deputy Director, E-commerce Policy Division, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy, Republic of Korea.  
Roper, James, Chief Executive, IMRG, UK.  
Skehan, Paul, Deputy Secretary General, Eurochambres.  
Smutkupt, Phumisak, Project Analyst, Electronic Commerce Resource Center, National Electronics and Computer Technology Development Agency, Thailand.  
Stubbs, Clyde, European Forum for Electronic Business (EEMA), UK.  
Wong, Douglas, Correspondent, *Financial Times*.