

Technology

Strengthening U.S. Information Technology

Keep America #1 on the Net

Background

Information and telecommunications technology (“IT”) are fundamentally important drivers of economic growth. IT has a broader and more powerful economic impact, because it makes both capital and labor more efficient, and enables the creation and distribution of new knowledge and creative ideas at little to no marginal cost. The Internet, the central medium of information technology, will remain the single most important “big thing” in the telecommunications and information technology industries for the next decade. The Internet will go completely mobile, and just as mobile telephony has changed voice communications, the mobile Internet will greatly magnify the value and importance of the Internet.

But the United States does not have any special right to be the global leader on the Net. The United States is currently benefiting from 30, 50, or even 70 years of educational, infrastructure, and basic research investment combined with a pragmatic business and political culture that encouraged innovation and the practical application of fundamental research. However, America’s recent investments have not matched this history. Ironically, the Internet’s open nature makes it inherently easier for other countries to catch up—even if the United States were on the top of its game, other countries would be gaining.

Recommendations

The next President should endorse policies that enable American companies to remain the primary inventors and purveyors of Internet technology, stimulate American entrepreneurs to continue to develop the best new Internet businesses, and help American workers continue to receive the benefits of increased productivity and economic growth. Specifically, the President should pursue the following national objectives:

- recruit and retain 10,000 new mathematics and science teachers per year
- double our annual number of engineering graduates
- each year convince 1,000 more of the nation’s top engineering students to pursue doctoral studies

- at least double the number of H1-B visas for highly-skilled foreign workers to meet market demand

Key Facts

- over the past five years, IT investment contributed 20 percent of total U.S. economic growth
- the number of Internet users worldwide has increased 18-fold since 1997 to over one billion
- online advertising is growing 30 percent annually at the expense of television and print
- foreign companies purchase more than \$500 billion in American-designed and produced semiconductors, computers, servers, software, and fiber optics annually

A full version of this proposal, as well as supporting background material, is available at www.opportunity08.org.

About the Authors and the Project

Sean Maloney

Sean Maloney is executive vice president of Intel Corporation, general manager of the Sales and Marketing Group, and chief sales and marketing officer. He has been with Intel since 1982. Maloney began his Intel career in its European headquarters where he spent nine years, first as Intel United Kingdom's manager of applications engineering, then as country manager of Intel UK, and director of marketing for Intel Europe.

Christopher Thomas

Christopher Thomas is a chief strategist at the Intel Corporation, assisting Sean Maloney in the directing of sales, marketing, and branding strategy for all Intel products, platforms and initiatives. At Intel, Thomas also was director of strategic alliances for the Wireless Networking Group, the world's largest vendor of 802.11 Wi-Fi semiconductors; and director of marketing for the Optical Products Group.

Opportunity 08 aims to help 2008 presidential candidates and the public focus on critical issues facing the nation, presenting policy ideas on a wide array of domestic and foreign policy questions. The project is committed to providing both independent policy solutions and background material on issues of concern to voters.