

Media Monitoring and Network Circulation: APC's coverage in news and networks in 2008

Internal report for APC communications

14 September 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2007, APC committed itself to yearly reports on its media impact. The media monitoring and network circulation project is intended to provide greater insight into how successful APC is at getting stories out into the media and its networks. An improved understanding in this area will allow APC to modify its communications outreach strategy to make it more effective.

This analysis follows the framework and format established in the 2007 report by Kelly Loverock¹. The analysis for 2008 confirms that APC garners media coverage worldwide, and according to our tracking, in all three languages but primarily in English. Media hits were tracked with Google alerts in English, Spanish, and French.

APC was cited in the mainstream media 26 times, from ten different countries from all continents. Ten of the 21 different media sources were national and international media, and the remaining eleven were from specialist media, revealing a rather balanced coverage between mainstream media and specialist media.

For 2008, coverage in Africa more than doubled. Several themes were covered, ranging from access, to gender and ICTs, internet governance and specific themes such as wireless and GISWatch. This may be attributed the media work carried out by the communications team to push GISWatch in Africa and the wireless access story in Tanzania².

¹<http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/reports/media-impact-evaluation-apc-2007>

² <http://www.apc.org/en/node/7178>

One of APC's upcoming strategies will be to create a segregated media list, based on regions and topics of interest. This can help ensure that the press releases sent out remain relevant to those receiving them, as it will allow APC to provide them with targeted press releases, fostering a more personal press-organisation relationship.

Criteria – media vs. network circulation

The media category is divided into three sections - mainstream, specialist and local. The criterion for being placed into the network category includes: having a social agenda, an advocacy role and being a CSO (although not exclusively).

Definitions

Media - Organisations that provide a news service, whether topic-specific, or general news, and strive for unbiased reporting. They may offer aggregated content but must also produce news in some capacity on their own. This category also includes news blogs if reader comments (both quantity and quality), other reputable sources and circulation statistics, indicate that the blog is considered an important resource.

Network - Organisations or resources that have a stated social agenda and/or advocacy role. They can include civil society and/or educational publications or resources. They may provide a type of news service, although that is not necessarily their main role or objective.

Criteria

Media

- Mainstream (general interest; large scale/broad audience)
- Specialist (e.g. technology/policy focused; produce content vs. solely aggregating; can include personal blogs if reader comments (both quantity and quality), other reputable sources and circulation statistics, indicate that the blog is considered an important resource)
- Local and/or community (small-scale audience)

Network

- Advocacy role
- Social agenda (which dominates)
- CSOs (but not exclusively)

OBSERVATIONS

Far and Wide: The scope of APC's coverage by country and region

Media

Country	Frequency	Region	Source
South Africa	8	Africa	AllAfrica (1), Media Club South

			Africa (1), Bizcommunity(2), Network Word (1), Charged (2), My Broadband News (1)
Nigeria	3	Africa	ITREALMs (2), The Daily Champion (1)
Canada	2	North America	Radio Canada (2)
Kenya	2	Africa	Computer world (1), Business Daily Africa (1)
Australia	1	Asia -Pacific	The Australian (1)
Argentina (ES)	1	LAC	Rio Negro (1)
Fiji	1	Asia - Pacific	Fiji Daily (1)
India	1	Asia -Pacific	Digital Opportunity Channel (1)
Uk	1	Europe	The Guardian(1)
Uruguay	1	LAC	La Diaria (1)
USA	1	North America	TMCNews (1)
Unspecified (Africa)	2	Africa	ITNews(1), Africa Focus (1)
TOTAL: 26			

Media coverage in 2008 was carried out primarily in Africa, with an overwhelming majority of the coverage coming from South Africa, where many of APC's staff and networks are located and where important broadband initiatives took place. Following with a significantly smaller amount of coverage is Asia and the Pacific, followed by the Latin America and Caribbean region, and North America.

Coverage by region

Mainstream media	Frequency	Networks	Frequency
Africa	15	Africa	9
Asia Pacific	4	Asia Pacific	2
Europe	1	Europe	5

LAC	2	LAC	9
North America	3	North America	4
Unspecified (online)	0	Unspecified (online)	11
TOTAL	26	TOTAL	41

The Networks coverage is also geographically diverse, and a noticeable increase in coverage can be noticed. Many were either non-specific to any one country or came from regional sites. However, entries did come from every continent and in Spanish and French.

Networks

Country	Frequency	Region	Source
Online	11	Online	AWID (2), Public Sphere Project (1), iconnect online (1), e-agriculture (1), classroom 2.0 (1), telecentre.org (1)(1), information policy (1), Artemisa (1), CommunIT (1), Intellectual Property Watch (1)
Online	6	Africa	Highway Africa (1), CIPACO (1), OSIRIS(1), kabissa.org (1), Africa focus (1), Ansa Africa (1),
Online	4	LAC	ALER (1), OCLACC (1), LIRNE (1), radarti (1)
Bolivia	3	South America	Tic Bolivia (3)
UK	3	Europe	Id21(1), Mediahub (1), Heise online (1)
Brazil	2	South America	Ministre of culture (blog) (1), ongnnetbrazil (1),
Canada	2	North	Alternatives (2),

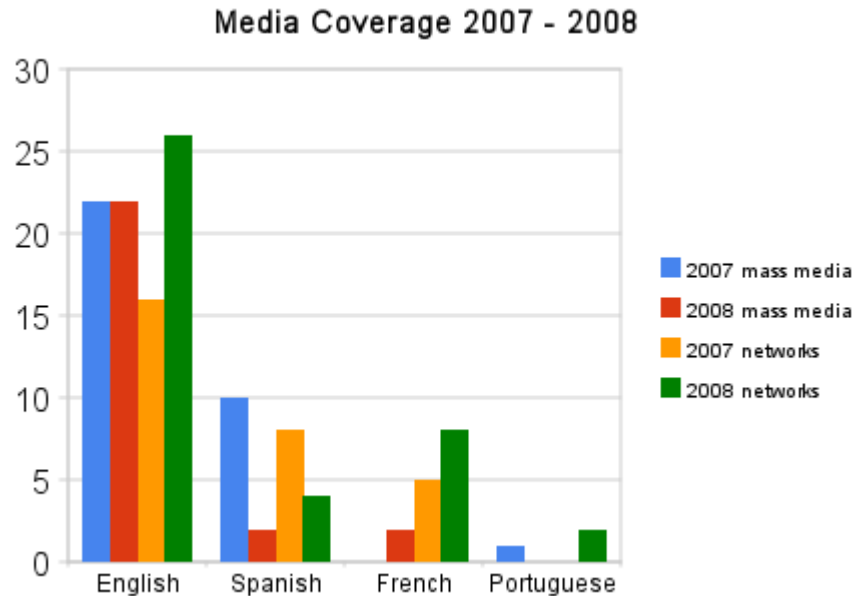
		America	
India (online)	2	Asia Pacific	Testmacth (1), I4donline (1)
South Africa	2	Africa	MyBroadband (1), South Africa connect (1)
USA	2	North America	Openthefuture.com (1), Earlham university (1)
Colombia	1	LAC	Telecentros
Congo	1	Africa	Advocacynet.org
Germany	1	Europe	Freifunkblog
Hungary	1	Europe	Centre for Media and Communication Studies (CEU)
TOTAL	41		

Languages

Language	Media	Networks	Total
EN	22	26	48
FR	2	4	6
ES	2	8	10
PT	0	2	2

**one publication in ES and EN*

The Network category shows a larger diversity of languages, whereas media coverage was predominantly in English. While there was a drop in Spanish language media from 2007 (from ten publications to two), there was an increase of two publications in French. There was an overall increase in most languages in coverage from our networks: English jumped from 16 to 26, Spanish increased by one, and there was coverage in Portuguese, which there was not in 2007. French dropped by one, from five to four.

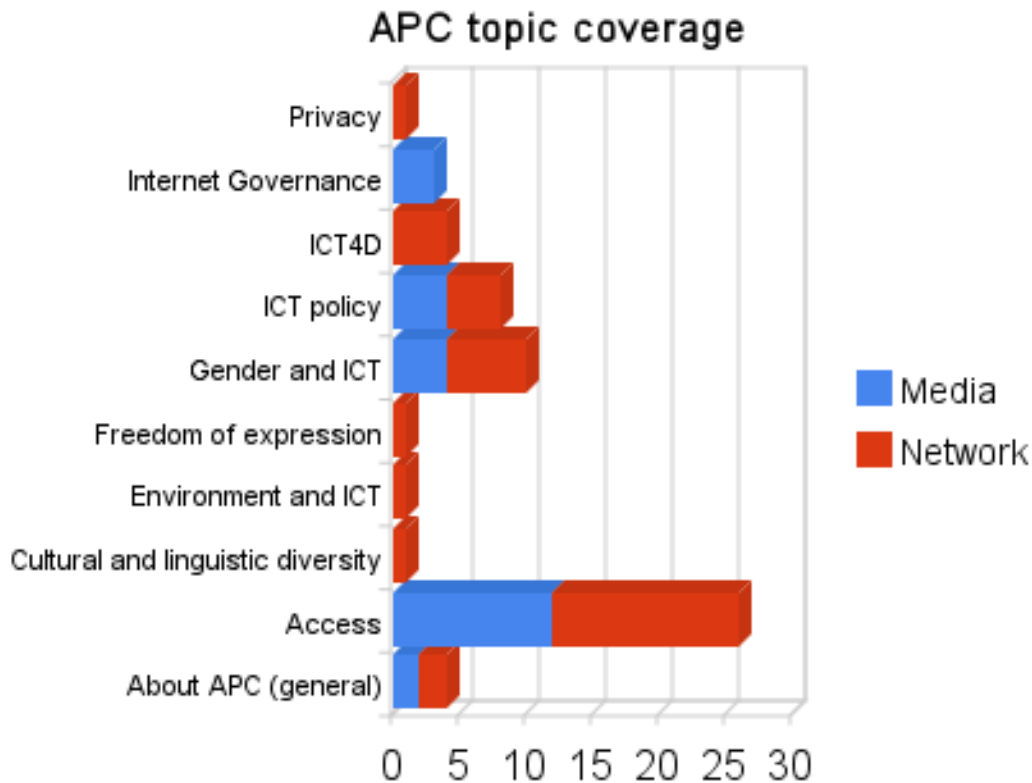


It should also be noted that the Ian Howard piece on wireless was covered in numerous blogs and network sites in both English and French, which is also responsible for the spike in entries by the network. APC's status as a virtual organisation also makes it especially challenging to promote stories from a local angle. But the opportunities exist, as with the Tanzanian story which piqued international interest on a story. Future stories that the APC covers should also include this local perspective as local and international media showed great interest in this type of story.

Recommendations:

- Promote stories to local media (such as with the Ian Howard report) and international media, where we have contacts
- Increase media efforts in French (but also Spanish)

Hot topics: Popular themes of APC-covered stories



**Because wireless and access were collapsed into one category mid-year, the 4 media entries on wireless, and the 5 network were joined to the Access category in this table.*

Mainstream media covered a more specific set of themes, while the networks covered a larger array of themes. The two top themes however, were the same for mainstream media as with networks: Access (twelve and fourteen entries respectively) and Gender and ICT (four and six). The fact that the “access” theme was covered more than others represents a successful effort by the APC communications team to focus on the issue of access for the year. A media push for the specific theme of GISwatch, in late 2008 is responsible for some of the ICT policy entries, however, we can also expect to see more in the 2009 report.

Recommendations:

- Maintain current strategy of pushing a particular issue, choosing a different one every year and make a sustained effort throughout the year to gain more coverage for this issue.
- A more pronounced effort to work in conjunction with members to advance this form of outreach.
- Develop targeted press lists, organised by theme/area of interest

Notable Notes: Publications that have covered APC stories

Mainstream coverage

Mainstream media coverage includes coverage by national papers, such as the Daily Champion (Nigeria), the Australian (Australia), The Guardian (UK), La Diaria (Uruguay), the Fiji Daily Post (Fiji), Radio Canada (Canada), and continent-wide news sites and aggregators such as AllAfrica.com and Business Daily Africa. Continent-wide news sites such as AllAfrica are great, because they have multi-national readership and many views. AllAfrica for example “serves over 12 million monthly page views (over 100 million monthly hits). More than 14,000 other web sites carry AllAfrica's constantly updating headline modules or otherwise link to the site.” The article, which covered APC advocating gender balance³ was reprinted from Nigeria's national news site, The Champion. GenderIT's article on women and the need to rediscover technology⁴ also made the regional Pacific Magazine, which features articles from all over Asia. The national news provider in Fiji, the Fiji Daily Post, also covered this article.

In national news, Radio Canada's Tam Tam show also featured APC twice – once after Frédéric Dubois' article on internet in Africa, and also featured an interview with Ian Howard about wireless networks in Tanzania. I could not get audience numbers for this particular show, but Radio Canada is Canada's premier news station. Other national news providers, like La Diaria in Uruguay (which has about 5000 subscribers nation-wide, and the Australian (numbers unavailable) covered articles with a more local flavour – La Diaria covered an article on the wireless in the Andes and the Australian featured APC council member Andrew Garton. In local coverage, an article in El Diario Rio Negro⁵ (Argentina) presents Dafne and her work with GenderIT and apc.org.

APC also made it into quite a few specialist publications – TMCNews, MyBroadband, Computerworld, Balancing Act, Charged.co.za, ITNews Africa, Networkworld, and ITREALMS. These publications focused on the Internet Governance Forum, broadband, and many also covered the wireless story in Tanzania.

Network coverage

We were cited in several blogs and alternative news sites, as well as organisations working in ICT4D and social research organisations. The Networks that covered the APC range from feminist organisations and sites (AWID, Artemisa), to IT and ICT4D-focused NGOs (i4D, iConnect online, Kabissa, and think tanks (Intellectual Property Watch, Centre for Media and Communication Studies) and local networks (like TIC Bolivia, ALER, OCLACC, CIPACO, Africa focus, South Africa online, etc.) and alternative news sources (Alternatives).

Types of publications/readership

The media category was subdivided into three categories: mainstream, specialist and local. The majority of the 26 articles were written by mainstream news organisations

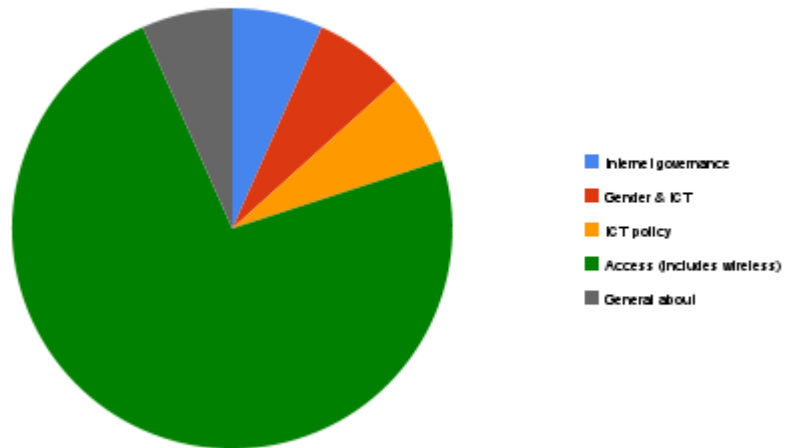
³<http://allafrica.com/stories/200803120319.html>

⁴<http://fijidailypost.com/news.php?section=1&fijidailynews=20176> and <http://www.pacificmagazine.net/news/2008/11/12/women-need-to-re-discover-technology->

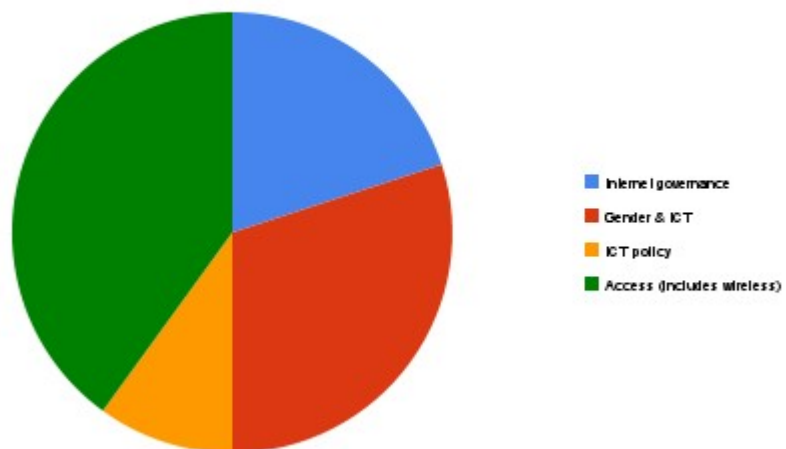
⁵<http://rionegro.com.ar/diario/debates/2008/08/24/14405.php>

(10 out of 21 organisations were mainstream), however specialist media accounted for a significant number as well (11 of 21 organisations). National news agencies are considered as mainstream, though they could also be considered local. Over half the media organisations had a national or international reach. The specialist media focused primarily on access issues, while the mass media coverage focused on many different topics.

Specialist coverage



Mass media coverage



The networks that covered APC in 2008 included mostly local networks and organisations. Networks focussed more on the issue of access (and wireless) as well as gender and ICTs. Some also covered the topic of ICT policy and other APC topics.

The one topic that surprisingly did not get any coverage was the environment and ICTs topic, though some articles were written on different initiatives being taken on by APC members (though they themselves did get media coverage, such as Computer Aid in the BBC). This is something that could be improved and further promoted by the communications team, particularly with APC's new cross-cutting theme of ICTs and the environment and new Greening IT project.

Recommendations:

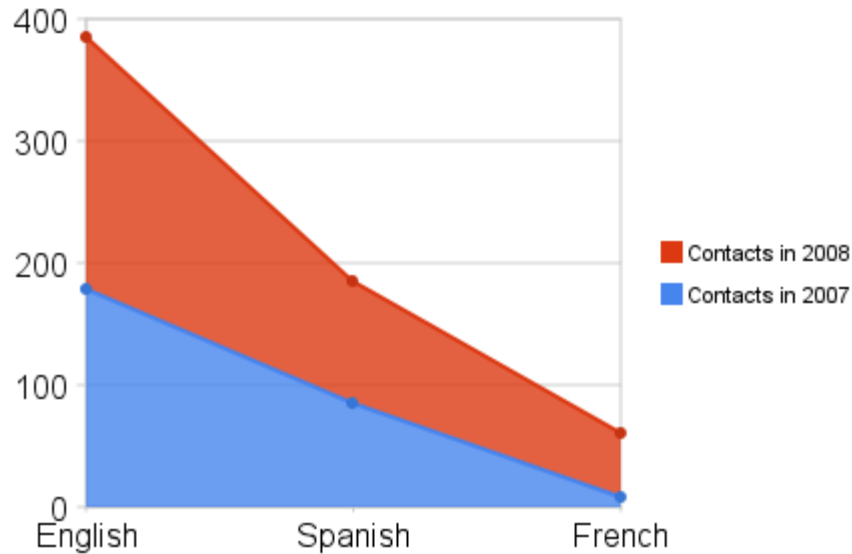
- Outreach to continent wide news sites when possible, as this is a good way to get wide coverage on a local story
- Continue to develop media relations by sending press releases to the mainstream publications where journalists have been identified who have covered APC in the past. Mention their past coverage and why they might find this particular press release of interest.
- Pay attention to news stories about issues similar to the ones that APC champions. Note who wrote the story and add them to our media list.
- Thematically target other publications (e.g. environmental publications) to broaden pickup.
- Send APC print publications to media organisations for free (to journalists with a particular interest in our area)
- Focus on Greening IT and getting into environmental media as well (once content for this is developed)

Connections: New contacts and media out reach

Contacts:

APC's press list has grown from 2007, when it had 250 contacts – 178 in English, 86 in Spanish and 9 in French – to 358 - 208 in English, 99 in Spanish and 51 in French (as of September 2009). This shows an important increase in media contacts, which over time will be represented by an increase in media coverage. While APC still needs to continue to work on developing personal contacts with journalists and the media, mainstream media especially.

Media contacts in 2007 and 2008



In response to recommendation made in early 2008, APC undertook a media trend monitoring process in late 2008 to early 2009, which was helpful in identifying a few media contacts; however, given the theme of "affordable internet" the trend was not as useful as desired, since many journalists picking up on the theme were not the type APC would want to establish a relationship with. Often, the issue of access was covered briefly in a line or two of a later article that focused on a local issue. The reports from October 2008 to January 2009 are available online⁶.

Generally, when a site or journalist picks up on an APC story, the communications team writes to them introducing the APC and what we do, inviting them to join our press list. As we had decided that I should particularly focus on the French press lists, I did exactly this, writing to potential contacts when I felt it was relevant. At this point, a targeted press list would be very important, since many of the people I contracted were interested only in news from a particular area (for example, Africa for the French contacts). Some even mentioned specifically that they did not want to be receiving news from elsewhere, as they are dedicated to news from that area (for example, the Africa Press Organisation).

Media outreach

Media outreach was carried out on a few specific topics, namely the Ian Howard report on wireless networks in Africa, and GISWatch. The Ian Howard report adaptation was received particularly well within the international, national and specialist media, as well as our networks.

Both were sent out in Press release form.

For the GISWatch 2008 report, we selected a few different countries (South Africa,

⁶<http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/reports/media-trend-analysis-affordable-internet-access>

Brazil, and India) where we had specific media contacts based in mainstream news organisations. We then build a "national" template, by introducing the book in general and then mentioning the specific issue for their particular country.

While the mass media and network picked up on the general press release, the individual outreach, which got initial responses but nothing beyond a reply with interest and a request for the volume (for example Lloyd Gedye of the Mail and Guardian in South Africa requested a copy of the book, as did Paromita Pain from the Hindu). Unfortunately there was no further coverage on the issue.

Recommendations:

- Provide a sort of briefing, as the entire GISWatch book could have been too overwhelming for them
- If a press release coincides with the release of a book, ensure that it can get to them expediently (as was not the case with GISWatch)
- Have a follow-up schedule, so things don't fall off the radar and for reporters that might potentially be interested in it the following year, send out copies pre-emptively (i.e email them asking if they would like a copy once the new report is published)
- Dedicate time to media outreach and press contact research every week (this was started but was not consistent through out the year)