COMNET

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COMNET is a global network of information and documentation centers in the field of media and communication research, policy and practice.

AIM.

The aim of COMNET is to improve and accelerate international and regional exchanges of information and documentation in the field of communication research, policy and practice, to contribute significantly to scientific development in the field of communication in all regions of the world.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.

- To consolidate the COMNET network and expand its range and representation at international, regional and national levels.
- To automate, in a gradual and phased manner, the COMNET documentation network.
- To set and apply standards and provide maintenance and training support for indexing, retrieval and exchange of information in the fields covered by the network.
- To increase the range and quality of activities, products and services provided within the COMNET framework.

ORGANIZATION OF THE NETWORK.

For operational reasons COMNET is currently organized in eight regional networks, consisting of the member institutions in each of the regions, and a global COMNET Co-ordinating Comittee (COMNET COC), consisting of one representative from each of the regional networks.

The eight regions are: Africa, the Arab States, Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America and Europe.

In conformity with the general principles articulated by the COMNET COC, each regional network organizes its own membership and activities, according to the specific needs of the respective regions.

THE COMNET CO-ORDINATING COMITTEE (COC)

Each regional COMNET selects its representative to the COMNET COC according to its own rules of procedure, formulated according to the organizational and decision-making structure in each of the regions.

The Committee constitutes itself with a convenor and a co-convenor, responsible for calling yearly meetings of the committee.

The tasks of the COMNET COC are:

1) - to formulate policies and provide the instruments necessary for the implementation of COMNET activities, in accordance with the overall objectives of the network

2) - to monitor compliance with the rules of membership among its member institutions, and provide a mechanism for negotiation and appeal in case of conflict

3) - to encourage and facilitate inter-regional co-operation on matters of common concern to member institutions

4) - to co-operate with other international organizations on matters directly concerned with the improvement of scientific communication and information exchange in the field of communication research, policy and practice.

5) - to represent and further the interest of COMNET in relation to the international community at large

The COMNET COC may create special administrative mechanisms to fulfill its tasks.

MEMBERSHIP.

COMNET membership at regional or global level can be awarded at three different levels:

a) full membership
b) associate membership
c) corresponding membership

Should the need arise, regional COMNETs can allow other types of memberships, with the approval of the COC.

1) Full membership

Eligible for full membership are all non-profit organizations which are working actively in the field of communication information and documentation, providing services that are available to users outside their own or parent institution.

To be a full member of COMNET, the member institution is obliged to

a) provide regular descriptions of its products and services, and the scope and contents of the information provided

b) be ready on demand to provide any other centre in the network with information, free of charge or at production cost

c) abide by the minimal standard requirements for bibliographic indexing defined in the COMNET Manual

d) apply the Communication and Information Thesaurus for subject indexing

e) accept principles established over time by the COC

Recommendations:

As most COMNET members are presently using the MicroIsis software for bibliographic management and data exchange, the use of this system is strongly recommended to facilitate cooperation and information exchange.

It is recommended that bibliographic registration includes translations of titles into English, preferably also abstracts in English.

2) Associate membership

Eligible to apply for Associate membership are all inter-governmental organizations or non-governmental international organizations which have a consultative status with Unesco, and which are active in the field of communication and/or documentation.

Associate members are given observer status at COMNET regional or inter-regional meetings.

3) Corresponding membership

Eligible to apply for Corresponding membership are institutions which would in normal circumstances be eligible for full membership, but are

> a) situated in a region which does not have a working regional network, or
>
> b) do not have the will or ability to fulfill the obligations of full membership status.

4) Withdrawal of membership rights

If failing to fulfill the obligations of full membership, after due warning, full members can either be excluded from the network or referred to the status of corresponding member, by decision made by the COMNET COC or the regional networks.

In case of conflict, decisions made by the regional networks may be appealed to the COMNET COC for final settlement.