

Ericsson inspires e-solutions to address social issues

Non-profit organizations around the world to vie for half a million US dollars worth of Internet technology services

Ericsson announced today that it will award five non-profit organizations \$100,000 US in Web development services and equipment through its Ericsson Internet Community Action (ERICA) program. ERICA and its innovative Awards were created in 1999 with the intent of empowering non-profit organizations to be more effective agents of social change by engaging them in the possibilities that the Internet can bring to their cause.

Business and governments increasingly rely on Web-based solutions to realise their business missions. However, non-profit organizations seldom have the resources, financial or technical, to harness the Internet to their mandate.

“Although Mobile Internet technology is just beginning to take shape in the US, we can already see the great opportunities there are for our non-profit organization to use it to provide services to those in need,” said William Matson, Executive Director of Pathways Community Network, which won an ERICA Award for their e-idea in 2000. “Through our ERICA project, we have been able to set up a wireless system for community outreach workers so that they can immediately access our referral and case management system of information while working with the homeless on the streets.”

“ERICA doesn’t force non-profit organizations to adopt generic solutions, or superimpose technology for technology sake,” said Jennifer Hilborn, corporate citizenship manager, Ericsson. “This program is effective because it works in a cooperative way – non-profit organizations envision their own Web solutions, while harnessing Ericsson’s technical expertise and resources to turn their dreams into reality.”

Entry forms for the 2001 ERICA Awards are available on the ERICA Web site www.ericsson.com/erica. Entries can be submitted directly on the site starting today, and continuing up until 11:59 p.m. (GMT), June 5, 2001.

Award applicants do not need to have a Web site to apply – they just need to have an idea for how the Internet could help them achieve their goals. Programs awarded to date include such innovative ideas as building a communication network to enable teachers in rural South Africa to share curricula and improve the quality of mathematics instruction, and the creation of a customised, easy-to-use online community for people with Down syndrome.

Applications are evaluated according to four main criteria: overall purpose, innovation, feasibility and community involvement. Over 2500 entries were submitted during the first two years of the program. With the volume of inquiries received to date concerning the 2001 Awards program, Ericsson expects a strong response this year as well.

Once the finalists are announced, visitors to the ERICA Web site can help nominate the 2001 People's Choice Award Winner through an online voting process. The organization with the most votes will win \$20,000 US in computer hardware and software.

Non-profit organizations can obtain official ERICA entry forms, guidelines and more information about the award at <http://www.ericsson.com/erica> or by writing to ERICA, 5255 Satellite Drive, Mississauga, Ontario CANADA L4W 5E3.

Ericsson is the leading communications supplier, combining innovation in mobility and Internet in creating the new era of Mobile Internet. Ericsson provides total solutions covering everything from systems and applications to mobile phones and other communications tools. With presence in 140 countries, Ericsson simplifies communications for customers all over the world.

Read more at <http://www.ericsson.com/press>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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