

Project "Outernet" looking to bring free Internet to entire world

February 24 2014, by Bob Yirka



A small team of workers at a New York based non-profit organization called Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF) has announced its intention to build an "Outernet"—a global network of cube satellites broadcasting Internet data to virtually any person on the planet—for free. The idea, the MDIF website says, is to offer free Internet access to all people, regardless of location, bypassing filtering or other means of censorship.

As the Internet has grown in size and importance, human rights organizations, or those (such as MDIF) promoting freedom of expression, have begun to propose that access to the information that the Internet can provide, is a basic human right. Conversely, they suggest that restricting access to the Internet is a violation of human rights. MDIF seeks to circumvent those that might wish to violate such [human rights](#) by bypassing their ability to restrict access—they are proposing that hundreds of cube satellites be built and launched to create a constellation of sorts in the sky, allowing anyone with a phone or computer to access Internet data sent to the satellites by several hundred ground stations.

MDIF claims that 40 percent of the people in the world today are still not able to connect to the Internet—and it's not just because of restrictive governments such as North Korea—it's also due to the high cost of bringing service to remote areas. An Outernet would allow people from Siberia to parts of the western United States to remote islands or villages in Africa to receive the same news as those in New York, Tokyo, Moscow or Islamabad. That they say, would guarantee all people the same Internet rights as everyone else.

The Outernet, as envisioned, would be one-way—data would flow from feeders to the satellites which would broadcast to all below. MDIF plans to add the ability to transmit from anywhere as well as soon as funds become available. At this time, it's not clear how much MDIF has been able to collect for the project, but acknowledge that building such a network would not be cheap. Such satellites typically run \$100,000 to \$300,000 to build and launch. Still, the timeline for the project calls for deploying the initial cubesats as early as next summer.

As conceived, at least in its initial stages, the constellation of satellites would broadcast data received in a continuous loop until new fresh data arrives. Broadcasting will be done using already accepted international

standards such as UDP-based WiFi multicasting, DVB, and Digital Radio Mondiale.

More information: www.outernet.is/

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