

# Chapter 3

## Trends of Information and Communications Policies

## Section 1

# Achieving a Society of Advanced Information and Communications Networks

### 1. Building a New, Japan-Inspired IT Society

Based on the e-Japan strategy formulated by the government in January 2001, efforts have been made in Japan “to provide high-speed constant Internet access to at least 30 million households and ultra high-speed constant Internet access to at least 10 million households” so as to make Japan the world’s most advanced IT nation. As a result, steady achievements have been made toward accomplishing this strategy, including accomplishing the target number of households having access to the Internet and offering the lowest high-speed Internet access fees in the world. However, the number of households that actually subscribe to the high-speed or ultra high-speed Internet services is considerably smaller than the number of those that can have access to such services, indicating stagnation in the rate of actual use.

In light of this situation, the Internet Use-Promoting Committee of the Department on Information Communications Policy of the MPHPT’s Telecommunications Council discussed the direction of the IT strategy and compiled an interim report in January 2003. The interim report covers proposals about “building a new, Japan-inspired IT society” while giving consideration to the balance between the upgrading of the infrastructure and expansion of use.

### 2. Promoting the IT National Strategy

The government established the IT Strategic Headquarters and has promoted the IT national strategy based on the Basic Law on the Formation of an Advanced Information and Telecommunications Network Society (IT Basic Law) that entered into force in January 2001. The headquarters formulated the e-Japan Strategy in January 2001 toward “making Japan the world’s most advanced IT nation within five years.” It also formulated the e-Japan Priority Policy Program in March 2001 for

materializing said strategy, and the e-Japan 2002 Program in June 2001 for reflecting said priority policy program upon the measures to be taken in fiscal 2002.

Furthermore, it set up the Acceleration and Advancement of e-Japan 2002 Program in November 2001. In addition, the headquarters drastically reviewed the e-Japan Priority Policy Program and created the e-Japan Priority Policy Program-2002 in June 2002. Furthermore, the IT Strategic Headquarters set up the Expert Study Committee on Future IT Strategy in November 2002 and continues its efforts to review the e-Japan Strategy in order for Japan to remain being the world’s most advanced IT nation even in and after 2006.

### 3. Budget Related to e-Japan

The government budget in fiscal 2003 relating to the formation of an advanced information and communications network society totals 1.5358 trillion yen. The MPHPT’s budget related to IT is 131.3 billion yen, up 4.8% from the initial budget of 125.2 billion yen in fiscal 2002. In the supplementary budget for fiscal 2002, a total of 287.9 billion yen was allocated as budget relating to formation of an advanced information and communications network society.

### 4. Implementation of the “e!Project”

Since it is essential to enhance national understanding on IT for promoting the IT revolution, the “e!Project” was implemented based on the e-Japan 2002 Program. The “e!Project” is a showcase for displaying the image of the world’s most advanced IT nation to be achieved in 2005 to the general public and the entire world. Under the budget for fiscal 2002, demonstrative experiments were conducted with regard to the desirable utilization of IT in six fields including education and local administration.