



Public Policy Issues for the First Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum

The Internet Society is pleased to respond to the Internet Governance Forum Chair's request for input on public policy issues to be discussed at the meeting of the Forum in Athens in October 2006.

In the Internet Society's contribution to the Internet Governance Forum consultation dated 17 February 2006, we outlined some initial thoughts on the purpose of the public policy discussion, the process to be used and the policy areas we felt the Forum should address¹. We build upon those key points in the following.

Purpose of the public policy dialogue

The Internet Society believes that the purpose of such a public policy dialogue should be to build issue awareness through a case-study approach emphasizing best practice and expertise sharing. Building this awareness across stakeholders and geographies can be done by:

- Understanding who is doing what in the issue space
- Compiling, socializing and disseminating commonly accepted best practices
- Encouraging participation in the key organisations in the issue areas
- Discussing best practices implementation, etc.

The Forum's success will be determined by the degree to which it engages with those organizations and individuals that are actively addressing the issue areas, the degree to which it

¹ "The Internet Society recommends that the Internet Governance Forum begins the case-study approach with a limited set of issues (one or two) that are "cross-cutting" and "do not fall within the scope of any existing body" (paragraph 72 b), and also build on the WSIS achievements and contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The Forum should draw heavily on existing bodies of work, and institutional and individual expertise – highlighting the work already being done to address the issues – and then focus on concrete proposals of how governments, the UN, the World Bank, the private sector, and the key Internet governance organizations, etc., can work together to ensure that the best available expertise and resources are brought to bear.

These case-studies should include areas such as interconnection arrangements and connectivity (paragraph 50), ICT education and training (paragraph 51), spam (paragraph 41), and multilingualism (internationalizing the Internet) (paragraph 53), all of which were core to the WSIS discussions and require further development. The Internet Society notes that it will be important that the Forum focus on "workable" issue areas, and not on those subject to clearly entrenched views that would make discussion unproductive."

promotes greater awareness of who is doing what in the Internet governance space, and the degree to which it encourages and brings about greater participation, particularly from developing nations, in the range of organizations that play a role in the administration, management, development and evolution of the Internet.

The Forum has the potential to spur national governments, international organizations, organizations involved in Internet governance, and other organizations to strengthen the dozens of organizations currently involved in shaping the evolution of the Internet and to make their work and their decisions more accessible. For instance, governments might commit funds to support Internet experts in their country who wish to participate in Internet standards bodies or Internet policy discussions, thereby contributing to national ICT-related capacity building. Standards bodies and policy organizations might also make more of their documents available free of charge online and use the Internet to better enable online participation.

Proposed public policy case study areas

In order to determine how best to strengthen existing Internet governance efforts, the Internet Society recommends the Forum focus on two or three specific issues at a time. Possible topics that the Forum might examine during its mandate include:

- **Spam (Tunis Agenda for the Information Society paragraph 41)**
- **Interconnection arrangements and connectivity (paragraph 50)**
- **ICT education and training (paragraph 51), and**
- **Multilingualism (paragraph 53).**

Other topics might also be examined. The Internet Society has proposed a number of guiding principles in its submissions and interventions with regard to the choice of case studies. They are as follows:

- The issues should be cross-cutting
- The issues should not fall within the scope of any existing body
- The issues should be material to harnessing the power of ICTs for development and to promoting access to and the availability of the Internet
- The issues should be drawn from those that were core to the WSIS discussions and clearly warranted further discussion
- The issues should not be subject to entrenched views that would make discussion unproductive
- The issues should be those for which dialogue in the Forum can be seen to be adding value.

While each of the above is important, we would draw attention to the last one in particular. Given the personnel, financial and time related constraints that all interested parties are subject to, the Forum must show quickly that it is adding value to the Internet governance discussion at a global level in order to ensure the continued commitment of all stakeholders

Whatever issues the Forum chooses to focus on, in order to make the discussion productive it will need to consider the following for each of the issue areas:

- Why is the issue important?
- What are the key considerations?

- Who are the key players?
- What are the recognized initiatives (possible best practices)?

As an illustration, a discussion on **spam** in the IGF would likely consider, *inter alia*, the following:

Why is the issue important?

- Developing and developed countries see an increasing level of spam
- Viruses and malware use spam-techniques, and spam for the purpose of identity theft is becoming more prevalent
- For developing countries there are concerns related to the loss of confidence in the Internet as a communications medium, as well as costs of spam over limited bandwidth
- Spam is a global problem; therefore increased discussion at the international level should be advantageous, etc.

What are the key considerations?

- Spam is a truly cross-cutting issue: it is generally recognized that spam cannot be solved by any one stakeholder in isolation but requires a multi-stakeholder approach, one that incorporates regulation, technology, law enforcement, international agreements, users, etc.
- Spam has many forms, some of which are considered legitimate business traffic in some countries, some of which is criminal solicitation intended to perpetrate fraud, and some of which is virus and other malware intended attack the receiver's system.

Who are the key players?

- International organizations such as the OECD, the ITU
- Standards development organisations such as the IETF
- E-mail infrastructure, anti-spam and mail certification companies
- Internet service providers
- Non-profit organizations such as Spamhaus
- And many more....

What are the recognized initiatives (possible best practices)?

- OECD anti-spam toolkit
http://www.oecd.org/document/26/0,2340,en_2649_22555297_34804568_1_1_1_1,00.html
- London Action Plan <http://www.londonactionplan.org/>
- The IETF's Domain Keys Identified Mail Working Group
<http://www.ietf.org/html.charters/dkim-charter.html> etc.

Through addressing each of the issues in this way the following will become evident: 1) the degree to which work is already underway in the issue area, 2) the players and how they are addressing the issues, and 3) the recognised initiatives and possible best practices. Such a process will lead to a better understanding of the public policy areas in question and to addressing whatever related concerns stakeholders may have. Furthermore, each case study will help spur discussion of how more representatives of developing countries and underrepresented stakeholders can play a larger role in Internet governance efforts currently underway.

We would note that getting the right players to the table will be critical to the Forum's success. The Forum needs to exercise caution in terms of how it positions itself vis-à-vis those entities that are already involved or are recognized experts in the issue areas. The Forum should not be seen to be more than "a forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue" and a "neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process" as specified by those who very carefully negotiated the Tunis Agenda.

Conclusion

The Internet Governance Forum has a unique opportunity to provide major, long-term benefits to current—and potential—Internet users around the world through strengthening and enhancing the participation of stakeholders, particularly from developing nations, in Internet governance mechanisms. But the Forum must stay focused on this goal and avoid the pressure to discuss new organizations, draft bold new declarations or treaties, or duplicate work already being done elsewhere. If this is done, we believe the Forum has the potential to build on the World Summit on the Information Society, contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and spur ICT development.

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