

First Report (June 2005)

« INTERNET GOVERNANCE : COMMON FACTS AND RIGHTS »

Vox Internet is a scientific program of the Foundation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, with support in 2004-05 from the French Ministry of Research.

Vox Internet took on the objective of providing support for and increasing the visibility of French and European research on the role of Internet in the building of "knowledge societies," a plural reality that encompasses and goes beyond the notions of information society and communication society.

A first seminar was dedicated to Internet governance, a subject brought to light by the current United Nations World Summit on the Information Society.

The **Vox Internet Report 2005** will be published online since July 1st at www.voxinternet.org.

It is an open web portal aiming to enlarge, accompany and enforce the continued scientific studies dedicated to Internet stakes via an open network : multidisciplinary, multistakeholder, international.

Due to the WSIS - WGIG and EGENI agenda requirements, we are pleased to deliver the followings abstracts of its conclusions and some recommendations it inspired.

We hope they can be of useful interest for the current debates.

Summary

Introduction	Ch.4 : Architecture of the Internet
Ch.1 : The languages and cultures of the Internet	Ch.5 : The Internet, the economy and economic theory
Ch.2 : Users and consumers on the Internet	Ch.6 : Public good, private good, common good
Ch.3 : The economics of networks	Ch.7 : Internet regulation and governance

Conclusions (abstract)

Internet is becoming a part of the social, cultural, economic life for more and more people

Before talking about Internet Governance mechanisms, it is necessary to find a global agreement on a stable and sustainable set of rules, based on a common view of Internet Structures, Applications and Uses.

A new "social contract" should be the consequences of a common sense and understanding of Internet value.

Some key words to employ

Trust	<i>rather than</i>	Security
Adaptability		Performance
Asymetries correction		Equity
Accountability		Transparency
Right to the Diversity		Inclusion
Economy of Exchange		Information or Knowledge-based economy

Main followings to consider

- The identities (and not The Identity).
- The right to innovate in the Internet architecture without fearing to brake the system every time.
- A network determinated by socio-political issues, despite any consideration regarding the technical neutrality.
- The right to exist in a worldwide interaction, both with respect to and beyond the sovereignties.
- Promoting multi-availabilities and multi-abilities, to build multi-powers with fair competition and accountable coordination.

Recommendations

On the definition and the boundaries of Internet governance:

The attempt to draw a line of demarcation between the governance of technical resources and political governance leads to an impasse: the technological layers can correspond to levels of regulation but everything is always overlapping.

The management of technical resources cannot remain as it has been passed down through the history of the Internet: the end of the exclusive MoU between ICANN and the U.S. Government, planned for May 2006, is a main deadline.

The generalization of daily uses of the Internet raises questions of public policy: the place of governments can be reinforced within a legitimate international framework.

Numerous private and public authorities are involved today with various aspects of Internet governance: a coordination should be established, allowing both loyal competition and the promotion of Internet as a common good.

For these reasons, the Vox Internet report concludes it is important to differentiate material governance (a set of regulatory norms and institutions in the large sense) and formal governance (guided by directing principles such as transparency, responsibility and equity). The former must, among other things, separate the operational functions of managing technical resources and the missions of monitoring or supervising their guidelines.

Drafting a "technological charter" incorporating technical specifications and regulatory ranges would allow international decisions on suitable management structures to be adopted more easily.

On the effectivity of powers in the real Internet:

The representation of the Internet rests on certain technological assumptions: neutrality, uniqueness, interoperability, connectivity. Its real functioning, however, has highly contrasted effects on the level of the sovereignty of States, economic opportunities and also social and cultural constraints.

A deep research effort is necessary in order to elucidate and model all the components of the current situation. The creation of a European multidisciplinary research network, amplifying the Vox Internet initiative, would enable a coherent, forward-thinking and fruitful process to be constructed.

This network could help form a new paradigm for the Internet resting on new principles: the notions of

public resource (for the technical architecture),
abundance (informational, economic, cultural and linguistic),
and *commutation* (beyond "routing" and "peer-to-peer").

These elements would provide a consensus for a new legal construction, confronting the reality of Internet governance to the reality of public and private international law and uses, enabling their interactions to be coordinated and an understanding to be developed as to the techniques of arbitration, penalties and conflict resolution on both the international and regional levels.

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