Internet Infrastructure Coalition Internet Governance Principles: Multistakeholder Model for Security and Economic Growth

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Abstract

The i2Coalition?s unique place within the Internet ecosystem gives it great insight into the impact of the current Internet Governance model, the issues facing that model and proposals to change/reform it.The i2Coalition supports those who build the nuts and bolts of the Internet. We believe the continued growth of the Internet is vital for growing an environment of innovation and seek to engage in ways to foster success of the Internet and Internet infrastructure industry. We seek to foster growth within the Internet infrastructure industry by driving others to harness the Internet?s full potential.i2Coalition has a deep interest in the way the Internet is ?governed.? Our member companies are affected by decisions made in regard to Internet governance; we are increasingly involved in the institutions created by the Internet community to guide the development of the Internet. It is our firm belief that participation in these processes is a civic duty and an economic necessi

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Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition)

The i2Coaltion appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance. The i2Coalition's unique place within the Internet ecosystem gives it great insight into the impact of the current Internet Governance model, the issues facing that model, and proposals to change or reform the model.

The i2Coalition supports those who build the nuts and bolts of the Internet, and we treat it like the noble profession that it is. We believe the continued growth of the Internet is vital for growing an environment of innovation and seek to engage in ways to foster success of the Internet and Internet infrastructure industry. We seek to foster growth within the Internet infrastructure industry by driving others to harness the Internet's full potential.

The i2Coalition has a deep interest in the way the Internet is "governed." Each of our member companies is affected by decisions made in regard to Internet governance, and we are increasingly involved in the institutions created by the Internet community to guide the development of the Internet. It is our firm belief that participation in these processes is not only a civic duty, but also an economic necessity.

Below are principles that we, as a coalition, believe are needed for discussions of Internet Governance.

Section 1. Internet Governance Principles

- Internet Governance works best when specialized groups are involved, allowing individual groups to focus on issues specific to their knowledge base and then sharing with one another, utilizing specializations.

- Governments have a role as equals in Internet Governance, but should not have "veto power" in governance fora.

- Businesses provide support for the Internet, and are fundamental to ensuring its success. Economic principles govern business decisions. Providing an environment for investment will facilitate Internet development.

- Internet Governance entities should be focused on their "remit." There is a danger that the Internet Governance system will become overly politicized.

- Several documents and statements currently exist that the i2Coalition agrees are particularly appropriate to a set of universal principles, including:

o The Modern Paradigm for Standards *(*Open-Stand.org's *Prinicples)*

o European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes' Compact for the Internet

Section 2. Roadmap for the Further Evolution of the Internet Governance Ecosystem

i2Coalition Overview of Internet Governance

The Internet was created from the bottom up. Those initially building the Internet did so on a collaborative basis, sharing ideas and debating the best methods to operate the network. These processes continue today in a variety of areas: people discussing Internet standards, naming and numbering policies, peering and interconnection and many other technical and administrative issues.

Why Participation in Internet Governance is Important

The i2Coalition believes that business plays a critical role in shaping Internet governance.

The vast majority of the Internet's infrastructure is owned or operated by private entities. While these entities have a civic duty to develop the Internet, they are also driven to move their business forward. Participation in the collaborative Internet governance process is critical to ensuring that the Internet remains a positive place to do business and that all businesses regardless of location are able to grow and flourish.

Those using and benefiting from the Internet must work together to ensure its continued success and viability. By doing so, the Internet will remain a robust place to exchange ideas, create new businesses, and develop economies in a way that is unprecedented, and offers significant opportunities for those without significant development resources.

The i2Coalition believes that the following principles of Internet governance are key to a thriving and robust Internet:

- **Governance of the Internet is best undertaken by specialized groups**. The Internet has thrived because technical experts have led its governance. Groups like the W3C and IETF focus almost exclusively on technical standards. These standards are designed to optimize the functionality and resiliency of the Internet, and not serve a particular entrenched technology or set of standards. This has allowed the creation of an open and free Internet in which one or a small set of businesses do not dominate.

- **Governments deserve a seat at the table**. Some issues affecting the Internet cannot be resolved by entities other than governments. Governmental entities should be treated as equals among all stakeholders in multistakeholder processes. No participant in Internet governance should be given veto power over any decision.

- **Internet governance must be transparent**. Decisions made by governance bodies must be made openly in public forums, using a consensus-based process with significant opportunity for debate.

- **The development of the Internet should continue to be done at the edge of the network, by end users, and not mandated by governmental or intergovernmental entities**. Internet infrastructure providers have a unique viewpoint into the development possibilities the Internet provides. For most U.S. providers, over fifty percent of their business comes from outside the United States. As this business grows, these providers establish a presence outside the U.S. to be closer to their customers. Because of the investment involved in establishing Internet infrastructure, development cannot be forced. It will only come when small Internet businesses grow, making infrastructure investments viable.

Issues Presented for the Internet Governance Ecosystem and Areas for Improvement

The Internet governance process is at an inflection point. While we believe that the past success of the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, we see increasing calls for change. Those calling for change appear to seek to replace this governance structure with one favoring a top down regulatory approach in which governmental entities, or quasi-governmental entities, dictate rules, regulations and technical standards. Such a change would exclude groups like the i2coalition and its members who have designed, funded, operated and participated in the governance structure of the Internet. Further, the rapid pace of innovation is well suited to the multistakeholder model. It is not well suited to a top down, regulatory based model of governance. Such a model is not narrowly focused enough to be nimble and swiftly address issues in “Internet time.”

Internet infrastructure providers have a significant interest in the continued security, stability and reliability of the Internet. Even with this interest, we recognize that other interests have a seat at the table. We believe that the current model of Internet governance facilitates the discussion and prioritization of interests better than a top down,

nation based, governmental structure.

Although Internet governance may appear to be abstract and removed from day-to-day business operations, businesses ignore it at their peril. Some issues that are currently being debated that directly affect Internet infrastructure businesses, yet are being harmfully conflated with other subjects, include:

- **In-country requirements**. Governments should not mandate that all or some content remain in a particular jurisdiction. The Internet has thrived in a one-to-many environment. This environment has not only revolutionized the way the world conducts commerce, it has amplified the ability of those seeking to communicate with others to disseminate their views. Data localization requirements and content controls are solutions seeking a problem.

- **Intermediary liability**. Those creating content should bear liability for its creation and dissemination. Intermediary liability creates a barrier to new businesses, and entrenches already existing businesses. Imposing liability on intermediaries also creates a disincentive to invest in jurisdictions that seek to equate transmission of data with its creation. Imposing liability on intermediaries would stymie the growth of new businesses by creating an incentive for businesses to only provide services to safe, and not disruptive, businesses.

- **Politicization of the process.** Internet technical standards have generally developed away from political issues. While no issue is totally free of politics, allowing those participating in technical standards organizations to create standards away from political and diplomatic pressures is a key factor in the continued development and stability of the Internet.

- **Adding additional, potentially unnecessary layers of governance to the Internet Governance process with a finite amount of participants.**

As the Internet grows, there is some need for the organizations providing support to its governance to also expand. However, great care must be exercised that those responsible for facilitating the governance of the Internet do not themselves become the governance. In addition, increasing layers of staff may isolate those operating businesses from the ability to make effective, and swift, decisions. The current governance structure may need to be refined to better address the needs of participants who seek to use the structure to address problems that they believe affect the Internet as a whole.

- **Inability of the process, and participants, to welcome new participants and ideas.** The current governance structure appears complicated and opaque to new entrants. As a new entrant in the process, the i2Coalition has experienced this issue recently. In particular, technologies that facilitate communication and dissemination of information are not common within governance structures. Corporatized communications solutions that are appropriate for high level government needs may not be necessary, or nimble enough, to facilitate the high level of communication needed for globally distributed Internet businesses and users to participate. Further, remote participation is often difficult and perceived by governance participants as secondary, or reflective of a lack of interest, than in-person attendance at meetings.

Meetings and gatherings that form the basis of Internet governance should not be hierarchical, complicated gatherings requiring multiple layers of authentication and identity verification. Widely available and widely used technologies should be favored over proprietary solutions that require technical expertise to use. To facilitate participation by those who do not have significant resources, remote participation tools (in particular) should use technologies that may be installed on shared resources such as internet cafes or on handheld devices.

The i2Coalition recommends that at a minimum Internet governance organizations offer “newcomer” sessions that have been designed by individuals skilled in soliciting new entrants into unique processes. Further that these sessions be designed to reflect the global nature of the Internet, and include facilitation of remote participation as an equal.

Fora for Internet Governance processes

The specialization of Internet governance entities has been key to its success. This specialization has allowed these entities to respond quickly to new developments and technologies in a way that is not available to established regulatory entities. We believe that Internet stakeholders will be able to rely on these entities to solve new problems, and that a new model, or additional governance bodies, are not necessary.

The major entities involved in Internet coordination are: the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Internet Society (ISOC). There are hundreds of lesser known organizations actively involved including root-server operators, DNS registries, Internet Exchange Points and IP address registries (regional and local).

As noted above, the solution to the issue of how to handle the inflection point that faces the Internet may not be to create new institutions, but to help users, particularly new users, use existing structures. To do so, we recommend that those participating, using and critiquing governance structures:

- Create models that allow new entrants to effectively interface with them without a significant learning curve or isolation.
- Embrace the capacity building examples provided by the IETF and ISOC.
- Welcome transparency. The default standard for all organizations that touch the Internet should be for open meetings, transparency and inclusion. Attendance should be encouraged, documents should be disseminated without cost, and platforms should be available to the technically unsophisticated and economically disadvantaged.