Civil society must participate of decisions about Internet governance

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Abstract

This text aims to explain some reasons why it is so important that civil society take part in the decisions about the Internet.

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Principles for Governance and Use of Internet

The following list of principles was elaborated by Brazilian Internet Steering Committee to support and provide orientation for its actions and decisions. [1]

1) Freedom, privacy, human rights

The use of Internet must be driven by the principles of freedom of expression, individual privacy and the respect for human rights, recognizing them as essencial to the preservation of a fair and democratic society.

2) Democratic and collaborative governance

Internet governance must be exercised in a transparent, multilateral and democratic manner, with the participation of the various sectors of society, thereby preserving and encouraging its character as a collective creation.

3) Universality

Internet access must be universal so that it becomes a tool for human and social development, thereby contributing to the formation of an inclusive and nondiscriminatory society, for the befefit of all.

4) Diversity

Cultural diversity must be respected and preserved and its expression must be stimulated, without the imposition of beliefs, customs or values.

5) Innovation

Internet governance must promote the continuous development and widespread dissemination of new technologies and models for access and use.

6) Neutrality of the network

Filtering or traffic privileges must meet ethical and technical criteria only, excluding any political, commercial, religious and cultural factors or any other form of discrimination or preferential treatment.

7) Unaccountability of the network

All action taken against illicit activity on the network must be aimed at those directly responsible for such activities, and not as means of access and transport, always upholding the fundamental principles of freedom, privacy and the respect for human rights.

8) Functionality, security and stability

The stability, security and overall functionality of the network must be actively preserved through the adoption of technical measures that are consistent with international standards and encourage the adoption of best practices.

9) Standartization and interoperability

The Internet must be basedon open standards that facilitate interoperability and enable all to participate in its development.

10) Legal and regulatory environments

The legal and regulatory environments must preserve the dynamics of the Internet as a space for collaboration.

At Center of Studies of Alternative Media Barão de Itararé, we believe that these are the principles that must guide a global and multi stakeholder Internet governance ecosystem. These principles define guidelines to ensure that Internet remains an environment open for people and friendly for innovation.

Multi stakeholder governance model

Governments, companies, academy and civil society must have representatives where decisions about the Internet are taken. This governance model, where all the stakeholders really participate, is the way to encourage discussions about the views and concerns of each participant regarding to decisions to be made.

Brazilian Internet Steering Committee already has this representation model, in fact it was elaborated to have representatives of these four sectors in its composition, and it has done a remarkable work for the development of Internet in Brazil. We seek to defend at NETmundial that this multi stakeholder model is the one that should guide the governance of the Internet.

Threats to the future of the Internet

Global companies have lobbies trying to persuade congressmen to pass legislation against freedom of speech and against the very nature of the Internet that is sharing knowledge. We have seen this happen in many countries.

Now, in Brazil, these lobbies are trying to change a legislation called Marco Civil da Internet so that companies could break the neutrality of the network. Marco Civil da Internet is a legal framework elaborated with the contribution of thousands of people both from Internet and from public hearings. Lobbyists have spoken openly with some congressmen about funding their next campaign if they now agree with their views about Internet. Civil society organizations are playing a key role right now to fight these lobbies, and Center of Studies of Alternative Media Barão de Itararé has joined this effort against the lobbies from the beginning.

For this reason we cannot stress enough the vital importance of civil society participation in every forum gathered to discuss the future of the Internet. We aim to collaborate so that Internet remains open and free environment.

[1] Brazilian Internet Steering Committee's Principles for Governance and Use of Internet http://www.cgi.br/regulamentacao/pdf/resolucao-2009-003-pt-en-es.pdf/regulamentacao/resolucao2009-003.htm