Facebook NetMundial Submission

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Abstract

Submission focuses on increasing connectivity and global participation as key considerations in discussions on Internet governance.

Document

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Submitted for Consideration to the Global Multi-stakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance

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We are pleased to be able to provide comments for the Global Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance, or NETmundial, and respectfully submit the following perspectives for consideration.

Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. The Internet has enabled people to connect with each other in ways unknown before, and has been a transformative force creating immense social and economic value. We recognize that the existing value of the Internet and its future potential lies in its open and unfragmented nature, and believe that preserving this open environment should be foundational to Internet governance.

Connecting the Next Five Billion

The knowledge economy is the future of the world economy. It is built on knowledge and ideas, resources that are renewable and available to everyone. Because of this, in a knowledge economy, the most important resources are the talented people we educate.

The Internet plays a critical role in the acceleration of the knowledge economy. A new Deloitte report (Deloitte LLP, "Value of connectivity: Economic and social benefits of expanding internet access." February 2014. London) estimated that increasing access in developing countries could generate more than $2.2 trillion in additional GDP, create more than 140 million new jobs, lift 160 million people out of poverty, reduce child mortality by 7%, and give 640 million children access to cost effective learning tools and resources.

Deloitte has found that, for example, "in India, farmers and fishermen tracking weather conditions and comparing wholesale prices through mobile phones increased their profits by 8% and better access to information resulted in a 4% drop in prices for consumers." Further, "In countries as diverse as Mexico, Malaysia and Morocco, SMEs with internet access have been found to have experienced an average 11% productivity gain. Extending Internet access to levels seen in developed countries today means that long run productivity could be enhanced by as much as 25% in developing economies."

Currently, however, only 1 out of every 3 people have regular access to the Internet. If we can bring the remaining two thirds of the world online, and ensure that those who are online maintain the freedom necessary to connect, share and innovate, we can fundamentally advance the well being of the global population.

Lasting Principles for the Future of Internet Governance

Because the Internet can play such a critical role for people's social and economic well-being, stakeholders in all countries should be able to trust and participate equally in Internet governance structures.

We believe that we can make significant progress towards global trust and participation by building on current models of Internet governance. These models have served us well and we should focus on how they can be made more effective and representative. To this end, we support a) bolstering the transparency and accountability of current Internet governance bodies, b) encouraging capacity building so that relevant communities in all countries can fully engage in Internet governance, and c) taking steps to reach out to underrepresented stakeholders to ensure that all sectors are at the table.

In order to maintain momentum in extending access and the benefits of connectivity to the whole global population, we must remain committed to a free and open Internet that connects billions of people in an affordable way and without hindrance by national borders or other artificial barriers. Any work to modify the current architecture of the Internet should be cautious, consultative, and operate through the multistakeholder process. We should avoid sacrificing quality to speed, and we see the NetMundial as an opportunity to carefully advance ongoing and parallel discussions throughout the world on the future of Internet governance.

With this in mind, we join with other industry associations in support of the following consensus principles:

1.Commitment to a free and open Internet;

2.Continuing the free flow of information that is critical for innovation;

3.Expanding access to broadband networks so that all of the world's citizens can contribute to the knowledge economy;

4.Combatting efforts to impose physical or technological barriers on information;

5.Working to decrease the economic barriers to internet connectivity;

6.Commitment to a multistakeholder approach to governance;

7.Commitment to transparent governance;

8.Assuring the continuing security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet.

Conclusion

At Facebook, we believe that connecting the world is a fundamental challenge and opportunity for our generation. Right now the Internet connects a third of humanity – we think it should connect everyone. When everyone can participate in the global knowledge economy, all of us will benefit from the ideas and productivity they contribute to the world. Together, innovators, governments, civil society, and global citizens have been taking impressive strides in this direction. To keep moving forward, we should guard against unnecessary barriers and preserve the Internet as a single, open, free network of networks for everyone.