Committing to the Principle of Openness

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Abstract

For more than 20 years, the Internet Society has been committed to promoting the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world. In this regard, the Internet Society considers openness as a core principle and the underlying foundation for the fulfillment, enjoyment and sustainability of the Internet?s social, political and economic potential.

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Introduction

The Internet Society appreciates the opportunity to provide input for consideration by the participants in the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance (“NETmundial”).

We understand that the meeting will seek to put forward a set of recommended principles on Internet governance. In this regard, the Internet Society considers openness as a core principle and the underlying foundation for the fulfillment, enjoyment and sustainability of the Internet's social, political and economic potential.

Openness is additionally reflected in the following principles[1] articulated by a set of Internet standard-setting organizations:

· Cooperation among standards organizations;

· Adherence to due process, broad consensus, transparency, balance and openness in standards development;

· Commitment to technical merit, interoperability, competition, innovation and benefit to humanity;

· Availability of standards to all; and

· Voluntary adoption.

Underlying these principles is the value openness has created for the Internet (and beyond). Internet standards have to be open to be useable. Openness allows the rapid development of the Internet and the various applications running on it; it has resulted in unprecedented economic growth, social transformation, technological innovation and creativity.

The Virtuous Circle of an Open Internet

Openness has allowed the technical, economic, societal and political dimensions of the Internet to come closer together. For instance, open global standards provide a platform for borderless trade and an interoperable open economy, fostering innovation; innovation, in turn, relies on users' ability to freely and openly create, share information and exchange ideas, reflecting the model of a healthy open society; finally, open multistakeholder models have proven key in terms of economic development and capacity building.

In the absence of open, global standards for interoperation, fragmented and incompatible networks are likely. Open standards are accessible to all developers and permit the creation of affordable networks and services, through competition. The desire to create an open and efficient system of communication has driven the creation of the Internet we see today.

Openness can also enhance individuals' freedom, allowing people to connect and craft

together technical and social change through a participatory and consensus-driven process. From its early days, the Internet has evolved by empowering users and communities.

Final remarks

These manifestations of openness, however, require constant commitment and re-examination of core values to remain relevant and effective. The NETMundial meeting could be one of the spaces that contribute towards this commitment.

For more than 20 years, the Internet Society has been committed “to promote the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world”.[2]

To this end, the Internet Society considers openness a key principle. It is because of openness that the need to adhere to other principles including, but not limited to, transparency, accountability, cooperation, inclusiveness, proportionality and the rule of law and due process becomes even more pertinent. Openness encapsulates the essence of the Internet – from its technical evolution to its contribution to societies and economies.

[1]http://www.internetsociety.org/who-we-are/mission

[2] http://open-stand.org/principles/