The Internet Association?s Internet Governance Principles Submission

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Abstract

The Internet Association, a trade association representing leading Internet companies, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on principles for Internet governance in advance of the upcoming Global Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Future of the Internet Governance. We welcome the Brazilian government, CGI.br, and /1net?s efforts in convening all stakeholders to discuss the critical issue of Internet governance. Our member companies understand the importance of preserving the Internet?s successful multi-stakeholder model and rely on its open, bottom-up model to ensure that global citizens are able to access and take advantage of this growing platform.

Document

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Global Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Future of the Internet Governance

April 23 - April 24, 2014 (São Paulo, Brazil)

The Internet Association, a trade association representing leading Internet companies[1], appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on principles for Internet governance in advance of the upcoming Global Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Future of the Internet

Governance. We welcome the Brazilian government, CGI.br, and /1net's efforts in convening all stakeholders to discuss the critical issue of Internet governance. Our member companies understand the importance of preserving the Internet's successful multi-stakeholder model and rely on its open, bottom-up model to ensure that global citizens are able to access and take advantage of this growing platform.

With almost 3 billion users around the globe, the Internet is a transformative platform for technological innovation, democratic discourse, and economic growth. According to a March 2012 report by the Boston Consulting Group, small-and medium size businesses (SMEs) - proven engines of economic growth - contribute significantly to the Internet economy, which will grow to $4.2 trillion in G-20 economies.[2] SMEs have played an essential role in the Web's development as a mechanism for creating jobs and generating revenue.[3] For instance, in Brazil, SMEs that rely heavily on the Internet take advantage of the Web to engage consumers and drive increased sales.[4]

In addition to facilitating economic growth, the Internet's important role as a forum for free expression is undeniable. The International Telecommunication Union's Secretary General previously recognized in a draft report that the Internet alters the global economy by creating opportunities in local communities and acting as a driver for social change.[5] During the Tunisia and Egypt uprising, we witnessed how the Internet's open and decentralized ecosystem allowed citizens to exercise their basic human rights. These citizens used Web services to dispel misinformation, organize, and communicate with not only each other but also the rest of the world.

To further promote the Internet's inclusive, multi-stakeholder model, we highlight the following high-level principles for future Internet governance:

1) Expanding broadband access: The Internet is a gateway to knowledge, cultures, services, commerce, and communication. Internet users deserve the ability to freely access this information to enjoy the economical and societal benefits available online. In the case of SMEs previously mentioned, these businesses in developing countries often cite poor access to technology as a significant barrier.[6] Governance should promote the expansion of access to broadband networks for all of the world's citizens to engage in this participatory platform.

2) Promoting the free flow of information: In addition to promoting increased access by global Internet users, any model of governance must promote the free flow of information, which is critical to the knowledge sharing, self-expression, and assembly that are characteristic of the Internet.

3) Increasing Inclusiveness: Individual users, governments, civil society, businesses, academics, and members of the technical community drive the Internet's decentralized model. All of these stakeholders are invested in the continued success of the Internet and have a stake in preserving it as a critical platform for communication and information

exchange. The process of reaching decisions regarding the future model of Internet governance must be inclusive of this diverse and knowledgeable group.

4) Maintaining user trust: Given that the Internet is integral to all aspects of our daily lives, stakeholders must preserve its security, stability, and resiliency. Our member companies are committed to maintaining Internet users' trust when they access and interact with our companies' online services. As Internet users access personalized services and information online, they trust that their online experience will be secure. Governments should recognize limitations on their ability to collect information on Internet users' that respect users' privacy interests. Internet governance policies should also encourage openness, transparency, and accountability.

The Internet Association believes that maintaining the Internet's current, open model is critical to the continued success of the platform but also to future economic prosperity around the globe. Internet governance should foster innovation and technical development while creating economic opportunities at all levels. Implementing the principles outlined above will ensure that stakeholders preserve the Internet as an important platform for commerce, trade, and communication. We look forward to our continued engagement on this issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Michael Beckerman

President & CEO

The Internet Association

[1]The Internet Association represents the world's leading Internet companies including: Airbnb, Amazon, AOL, eBay, Expedia, Facebook, Gilt, Google, IAC, LinkedIn, Lyft, Monster Worldwide, Netflix, Practice Fusion, Rackspace, reddit, Salesforce.com, SurveyMonkey, TripAdvisor, Twitter, Uber Technologies, Inc., Yahoo!, Yelp, and Zynga.

[2] The Boston Consulting Group, The Internet Economy in the G-20: The $4.2 Trillion Growth Opportunity (Mar. 2012), *available at* http://www.bcg.com/documents/file100409.pdf [hereinafter *BCG Report*].

[3] *Id.* at 14.

[4] *Id.*

[5] ITU, *Fourth Draft of the Secretary-General's Report for the Fifth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum 2013* , released January 10, 2013 at 4.

[6] *BCG Report* at 16.