

The Internet Governance Debate - an overview

Issues and Concerns,
Dr. Konstantinos Komaitis,
University of Strathclyde
k.komaitis@strath.ac.uk

Should there be Governance?

- ♦ *“Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather.”*

*John Perry Barlow,
Declaration of Independence, 1996*

Explaining the Need

Governance *on* the Internet.

Governance *of* the Internet.

Why the need for Internet
Governance - Phase 1 of the World
Summit on Information Society
(WSIS), Geneva 2003

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

Creation.

Role and Responsibilities.

Criticism and Debate

Internet Governance: Beyond standard-
setting policies and ICANN

The WSIS Disputes

1. Some Governments believe that Governments should have more power on the Internet.
2. Some Governments believe that two “critical Internet resources” - the DNS and the Root Server System - are controlled by the United States.
3. Some Governments believe that the Internet should be managed by an intergovernmental agency like the ITU.

The WSIS Disputes

- ♦ Other Governments emphasise:
 1. That private sector and Internet community leadership has been successful
 2. Governmental or intergovernmental control would stifle innovation
 3. That perceived US authority over ICANN is illusionary and could not be exercised in practice.

The WSIS Principles

Geneva Declaration of Principles, para. 48

- The international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organisations.
- It should ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet, taking into account multilingualism

The WSIS “Solution”

- No change in official roles of organisations, including ICANN.
- “Enhanced Cooperation”.
- The Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

“Enhanced Cooperation”

Tunis Agenda for the Information Society

- 68. *We recognize that all governments should have an equal role and responsibility for international Internet Governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet. We also recognize the need for development of public policy by governments in consultation with all stakeholders.*
- 69. *We further recognize the need for enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in the day-to-day technical and operational matters, that do not impact on international public policy issues.*

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Was established at the end of the WSIS as a compromise way forward:

- UN-sponsored but unlike the UN:
 1. Multistakeholder participation
 2. Scope for discussion of issues but...
 3. ... no decision-making powers
- Five year term
 1. To be reviewed after three/four years

IGF Mandate: 1

- Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet Governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet.
- Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body.
- Interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview.
- Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities.
- Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world

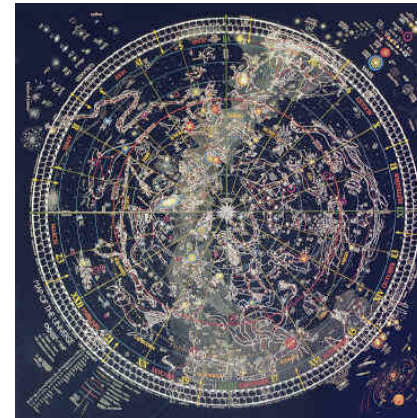
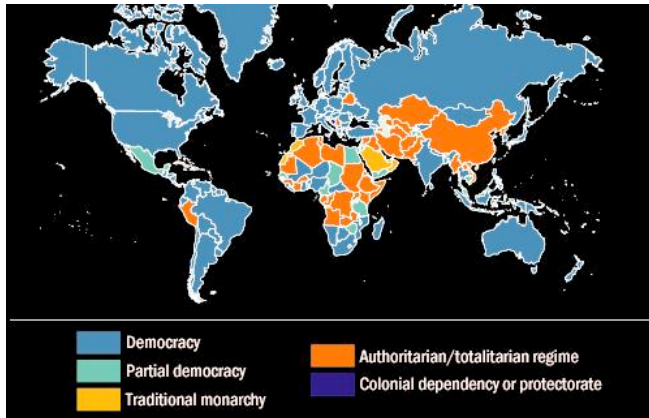
IGF Mandate:2

- Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet Governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries.
- Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations.
- Contribute to capacity building for Internet Governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise
- Promote and access, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles
- Discuss, *inter alia*, issues relating to critical Internet resources.
- Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users.
- Publish its proceedings.

IGF Meetings

- ♦ 2006 - Athens
- ♦ 2007 - Rio de Janeiro
- ♦ 2008 - Hyderabad
- ♦ 2009 - Egypt
- ♦ 2010 - Lithuania or Azerbaijan

Multistakeholderism



The Role of the IGF

- Many believe that its value lies in the fact that it has no decision-making powers. This enables it to act as a forum in which people from all stakeholder communities:
 1. Can increase understanding of issues;
 2. Can learn about the diversity of perspectives (“why others think the way they do”)
- In time, they believe this can improve the quality of the debate in other international Internet Governance fora
- Others believe it should move towards having decision-making authority

So far...

- ♦ ...not so good
- ♦ Political wars and issues of power
- ♦ Inclusion (civil society and developing countries)
- ♦ Multistakeholderism
- ♦ Issues of Legitimacy

Thank you