

# What is Wrong with Access to Information?

WSIS Prepcom 2

Roundtable No. 2

Access to knowledge, open access, cultural and linguistic diversity,  
local content

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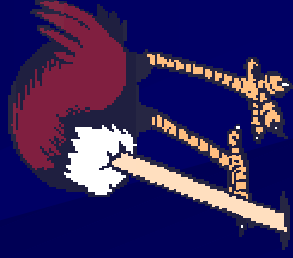
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# Themes of Roundtable No. 2

- Access to information and knowledge
  - Providing access points to all users, in all areas
- Production of relevant content
  - Creating substantive content relevant to all groups of users, according to their needs, their level of education, their language and cultural background

# Aren't they Contradictory?



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# Access to information and knowledge

## Benefit.

- Distribution and Enhancement of Knowledge
- Reducing the Digital Divide
- E-Government

## Risks

- Information overload
- Inefficiency
- 1984 – big brother knows everything about you

## IRS PLANS GOLDEN EAGLE TAX RETURN

The project manager for the Internal Revenue Service's Document Processing System described the "Golden Eagle" return, in which the government would automatically gather all a person's tax info and then compute the tax. "If I knew what you've made during the year, if I

know what your withholding is, if I know what your spending pattern is, I should be able to generate for you a tax return. I am an excellent advocate of return-free filing. We know exactly how about you that we need to know. Your employer tells us everything about you that we need to know. Your utility records on your credit cards tell us everything about you that we need to know. Through interface with Social Security with the DDTV, with your banking institutions, we really have a lot of information.

We could literally file a return for you. This is the future we'd like to see (Speech, December 1994, p. 174)



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# Production of relevant content

## ● Personalization

- Using knowledge of the customer to provide customized/individualized offerings that address customer needs, preferences and intentions

## ● Contextualization

- Enhancing the value of products and/or services by offering customers context with search and comparison capabilities

## ● Who decides about the content?

## ● Channeling and filtering



# Examples of Filtering

- Looking for Stormfront?

You won't find it in Google Germany

- What happened to Google in China?

# So Which Theme is Preferable?

## Access to information and knowledge

Providing access points to all users, in all areas

This theme is:

- Less functional
- Less efficient

Nevertheless this theme is:

- More liberal
- More egalitarian



# Suggestions, Lessons and Conclusions

- Augment anti-trust measures to cope with information sharing and control
- Assure equity in data accessibility
- Individual rights
  - The right to know
  - The right to appeal
- Distinguish between factual data and evaluative data