Internet Governance Revisited: Think Decentralization!

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Three Layers of Internet Governance

- services and applications
  - protection of personal data
  - illegal and harmful content
  - spam
  - online-gambling

- transport
  - Domain Name System
  - IP-addresses

- physical infrastructure
  - peering-agreements
  - orbit-slots for satellites
**Coordination vs. Regulation**

**IP-Addresses**
- unique identification
- must only be assigned once
- “indefinite” pool of addresses (IPv6)

**Domain Names**
- easy to remember
- must only be assigned once
- technically indefinite but semantically scarce

- require coordination of assignment
- require binding rules for distribution and enforcement
Public-Private Partnership

**Pro**
- gathers all actors concerned (governments, private sector, civil society)
- non-hierarchical setting
- comparative advantages (expertise, flexibility, etc.)
- high problem-solving capacity

**Contra**
- output-orientation beats input-legitimacy
  “Focus on progress and effectiveness over process.” (Stuart Lynn, 2002)
- intense optimism for self-regulation constrains perception of potential conflicts
Back to the Future...

- multilateralization of meta-governance functions
- centralization contradicts the distributed architecture of the Internet
- narrow mission for ICANN
- division of labour along functional confines (subsidiarity)