Netizen Participation in Internet Governance

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WSIS Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus

- 60+ individuals made contribution to Civil Society Declaration
- Chairs: Wolfgang Kleinwachter, YJ Park
- Coordinators: Jeanette Hoffman, Adam Peake
- Some members are here as speakers and participants
Governance as global challenge

- Global Net posing trans-national challenges that are hard to solve by “nation” based approach:
- Current International, inter-governmental bodies are not designed to deal with these trans-national/global issues effectively
  - They are made for “Industrial Age”
  - Slow, constrained by borders, not flexible enough
- Need to establish new governance model
  - Netizens from Civil Society play vital role
A Proposal: Self-governance with Netizens

- Self-governance with balanced participation by all stakeholders
The large number of users requires new governance model

- Internet Users in Japan: 70M, 60% of population
  - Broadband users: 13.5M, 70% of subscription
  - High speed, always-on as commodity
  - Mobile Internet access: 67.8M, 53% of Population
- 80M in China, 35M in Korea...
- Mobile, ubiquitous... more development to come
- They are empowered even as small individuals
- Emerging Social issues:
  - Online-crime (dating service, online fraud…)
  - P2P, digital copyright, privacy protection
  - Name & Address management has less problems, (may face more)
Governance must fit with local/regional reality

- Internet development status is so diverse: Asia Pacific ranges from Japan/Korea to Afghanistan, East Timor, Bhutan, Iraq...
- "Internet Community" – collaboration between engineers (mostly in university), private sector (entrepreneurs & Netizens) and government is the key
- In many developing countries government support has been essential for Internet deployment
Strong voluntary coordination within Asia Pacific and with other regions

- APNG (Asia Pacific Networking Group)
- APNIC (Asia Pacific Network Information Center)
- APRICOT (Annual Summit Conference)
- APTLD (ccTLD group)
- APAN (Asia Pacific Advanced Networking)
- APCAUCE (Asia Pacific Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email)
- AIII (Asia Internet Infrastructure Initiative)
- AP Cert (Computer Emergency Response Team)
- AP* (joint organizational activity of all APs)

All have voluntary coordination, no central control
Governance must fit with Internet architecture:

- Internet is Autonomous, Distributed and Collaborative network of networks
- Internet has open, end-to-end architecture
- Not central control, but voluntary coordination, proven to be sources of success
Governance model should follow layered structure

- Internet functions based on layers:
  - Physical layer
  - Transport layer
  - Logical routing
  - Application/Services

- Separation of functions by layers
  - Each layer has different protocols and workings
  - Hence different governance model required
  - Coordination between layers also needed
Netizens meet global governance challenges

- "Net Citizen" → "Netizen"
  - First coined by late Michael Hauben
- Active users evolved from technical community, spread into Civil Society
- Main actor of Information Society
  - Social Game: From Economic forces to Intellectual forces (Prof. Kumon, GLOCOM)
- Online advocacy becoming social power
  - Slash-dot, 2-Channel (Japan)...
  - Political influence observed in Korea, China, US, Philippines...
- The rise of "Smart Mobs" (Howard Rheingold)
Reasons why Netizens need to be involved:

- Governance requires: Consent of the Governed
- As main actor of innovation at the edge
  - Internet developed by Netizens: WWW, Browsers, Yahoo, ICQ, Amazon
- Decisions affect end-users directly:
  - Spam, virus, crimes, copyright, P2P
  - ICANN: Domain Name Fee, Competition around DNS, gTLD introduction, ccTLD status, SiteFinder issues
- For appropriate Checks and Balances
  - Civil Society to counter interests of business and bureaucrats
- For responsible activities
Merits of Netizen Participation:

- Netizens have direct knowledge and experience with the issues
- More flexible, efficient than incumbent institutions
- Global: crossing the national borders and making communities of interests freely, will add diversity
- Embody diverse values in the Information Society (senior citizens, women, people with disabilities, minority groups...)
- Not captured by economic interests
Netizen participation as measures to ensure Diversity

- **Geographic diversity:**
  - Make it compulsory to have regional balance

- **Economic diversity:**
  - Take inclusive approach

- **Cultural diversity:**
  - Build Multilingual working environment: English is not enough

- **Un-marginalize the minority:**
  - Affirmative efforts to listen and implement the needs of many minority groups
"Freedom at the edge" is the core principle of Internet shared by both engineers and Netizens.

- **Technical freedom** – core for Internet development
- **Freedom of use** – core user value

It should be maintained and further developed:
- Mobile Internet, CATV Internet may modify this
- Traditional operators tend to "close" the system; control the network from center
- It will stifle the innovation and rapid development Internet has enjoyed so far
The Risk of excluding Netizens

- Techno-centricism – lack the human viewpoints
  - Technology can self-reproduce, “out of control”
  - May ignore human interests: Accessibility, cultural diversity, digital divide

- Corporate-centricism – may lack the social justice
  - Profit-drive may raise price, end with monopolistic dominance in market
  - May lead to violation of Human Rights (privacy, free speech…)

- Bureaucracy - may lack accountability/transparency for public interests
  - Government tends to make “top-down” decisions
  - Small number of closed circle making decisions – for their own interests to get unfair advantage
  - Need checks and balances
Conclusion: Netizen participation a must to keep self-governance work

- Approach A: Technologist/private sector can manage the public interest issues
- Approach B: Governments should handle public policy issues, not the technologist/private sector
- Balance: Self-governance with Netizens
  - Government intervention under the name of public interest could be excessive
  - Netizens (demand side) participation adds balance – including from developing parts of the world
Netizens network as the base for participation

- IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force) as one model
- ICANN AtLarge, a valuable experiment
- Main characters:
  - Autonomous, distributed and collaborative network of networks
  - Bottom-up, open, vernacular, local optimum with global coordination
  - Based on “subsidiarity principle”
- Functions similar to unions or political parties in industrial society
- Need for self-certificate mechanism
The way forward

- Be open and inclusive:
  - Involve more stakeholders from developing countries and non-Western regions

- Out Reach
  - Regional meetings are essential

- ICANN Rome WSIS Workshop
  - ALAC co-hosting with other groups
  - Mar 4, 11:00 – 12:30
  - Open to anyone