

Internet Society @ WSIS FORUM 2013

ISOC's participation to the 2013 WSIS Forum and WSIS+10 tracks

13-17 May 2013, Geneva

The WSIS Forum 2013 was held from the 13-17 May 2013 at the ITU Headquarters in Geneva.

Annual WSIS Forums provide an avenue to take stock of the progress made by all stakeholders in advancing Action Lines, as defined at the World Summit on the Information Society. This event is co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNDP.

In addition, the WSIS Forum provided various discussion tracks on the WSIS process including the Overall Review of the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes (WSIS+10). WSIS+10 related sessions formed the "WSIS+10 Visioning Track". These discussions followed the first phase of the WSIS+10 review led by UNESCO (25-27 February 2013, Geneva), in which ISOC was heavily engaged: <http://www.internetsociety.org/wsis/isoc-participation-wsis10-review-and-wsis-forum>

The Internet Society (Markus Kummer, Constance Bommelaer, Christine Runnegar, Nicolas Seidler and Konstantinos Komaitis) participated to both the workshops and WSIS+10 tracks. An account of ISOC's contributions can be found in the current report.

WSIS+10 Visioning track

The ITU organized several WSIS+10 related sessions under the appellation of WSIS+10 Visioning Track.

The discussions followed the first phase of the WSIS+10 review, which was led by UNESCO in February 2012¹. Through its engagement, ISOC's objective was to ensure that the preparatory process leading to the 2014 WSIS+10 Review event stays as open and multistakeholder as possible and that its outcomes preserve the Openness of the Internet.

To that end, the Internet Society (Constance Bommelaer) made the following intervention in the WSIS Forum 2013 plenary:

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We would like to congratulate again UNESCO, ITU, UNDP and UNCTAD for organizing a very successful WSIS Review event in February. The Internet Society was involved in all phases of the WSIS and had the privilege to participate to the February discussions as well. We were pleased to see that the essential ingredients for a successful WSIS Review process have been gathered:

- Firstly, a multistakeholder preparatory process, including governments, inter-governmental organizations, Civil Society, the Business and the Technical Communities: In the spirit of the Tunis Agenda every step of the process involved those various communities - on an equal footing - working together towards the adoption of a Joint High-Level Statement on the Post 2015 Agenda;

- And secondly, a shared vision for a forward-looking exercise, laying the foundations of a constructive dialogue, and recognizing the fundamental principle of an Open Internet - based on open development processes and empowering Internet citizens for the enjoyment of Human Rights. We see the WSIS+10 Review process as an extraordinary opportunity for our communities to build on this shared vision.

We would like to thank again the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD for the important progress made to date within the WSIS Review process. The Internet Society is confident that the WSIS community will continue working on this constructive path, and we very much look forward working with all of you.

¹ <http://www.internetsociety.org/sites/default/files/Report-WSISplus10.pdf>

The ITU produced a statement summarizing the different tracks of a week of WSIS+10 discussions:

- http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2013/forum/inc/doc/outcome/WSIS10_Statement.pdf

Summaries of the participative WSIS Visioning Challenge sessions, in which the Internet Society contributed, are available (note that these links may be temporarily deactivated):

Day1:

http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2013/forum/agenda/session_docs/69/DRAFT_WSIS_World_Cafe_Report_DAY_1.pdf

Day 2:

http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2013/forum/agenda/session_docs/101/DRAFT_WSIS_World_Cafe_Report_DAY_2.pdf

Following the publication of the ITU statement, the Internet Society (Markus Kummer) invited the ITU to open its Council Working Groups on WSIS, and Council Working Group on Internet Policy. Indeed, the spirit of the Tunis Agenda commends to include all relevant stakeholders, on an equal footing, in the preparatory process.

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We would like to congratulate the ITU for organizing a successful WSIS Forum, including new formats of participation in the WSIS+10 Visioning track.

During this same week, the WTPF was a very successful meeting as well, marked by a spirit of openness and inclusiveness.

*We suggest building on ITU Secretary-General Touré's promise at the closure of the WTPF to **ask Member States of the ITU Council to open the Council Working Group on Internet Policy and suggest doing the same with regards the Council Working Group on WSIS**, opening up the participation to all stakeholders. Experience has clearly shown that multistakeholder participation is beneficial to all parties.*

The next milestone of the WSIS+10 Review will be the ITU-led event planned in April 2014, in Sharm el Sheikh, back-to-back with the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC, April 2014). The format of the formal 2015 Review remains to be decided by the UN General Assembly, in December 2013. The Internet Society will further engage to contribute to the open and inclusive nature of these discussions.

WSIS Forum 2013 workshops

The Internet Society was engaged in various workshops during this event:

To be or not to be identified: Hamlet's quandary in the digital era

Organized by the Internet Society

The Internet Society (Christine Runnegar) organized and moderated a thematic workshop exploring the realities of anonymity, identity and privacy on the Internet. The panel comprised representatives of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, Microsoft, Google, the WEF, InternetNZ and OISTE/Wisekey. We covered a quite a lot of ground in the short time. These are a just a selection of points drawn from the discussion in the workshop:

- Individuals want to be able to choose whether they are identified or not, and the way that they are identified on the Internet.
- Anonymity is an important enabler for the exercise of human rights, particularly the right of freedom of expression.
- Identifiability is context dependent and in some definitions extends to "singling out" or "individualizing".
- Identity management is an important issue for the Internet economy.
- We need to look to new technical, business and legal solutions that offer individuals greater control over their identity information.

*Full ISOC report:

<http://www.internetsociety.org/doc/be-or-not-identified-hamlets-quandary-digital-era>

Interactive Facilitation Meeting on Action Line C5: Cybersecurity

On the topic of national cybersecurity strategies, the Internet Society (Christine Runnegar) provided the following contribution:

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A security paradigm for the Internet ecosystem should be premised on protecting opportunities for social and economic prosperity that the open Internet enables, as opposed to a model that is based simply on preventing harm.

Therefore, any framework for tackling cybersecurity needs to understand and preserve the fundamental principles of the open Internet.

There is growing recognition that security within the Internet ecosystem, with its high degree of interconnection and dependencies, needs to be approached from the perspective of managing risk. Security and resiliency of the Internet depends not only on how well risks to the organization and its assets are managed, but, importantly, on the recognition and management of risks that the organization itself (by its action or its inaction) presents to the Internet ecosystem (these could be called “outward risks”).

Some risks need to be managed by more than one actor. This brings in the notion of shared and collective risk management.”

The Internet: an environment for creativity

Organized by WIPO

This workshop sought to identify the nexus between creativity and the Internet. Konstantinos Komatitis was one of the panelists and the main focus of his contributions was on demonstrating the value of the Internet as a creative platform. As part of this rationale, he promoted the need for maintaining the current architecture of the Internet and the idea of openness -- what it means and how it can benefit creative expression. The discussion also focused on international law and the Internet - the idea of regulation and how it applies within an environment where jurisdiction is being challenged.

Multi-Stakeholder approach to Governance of the Internet

Organized by ICANN

Markus Kummer participated in this session, which examined the current model deployed by ICANN and other bodies involved in the Internet ecosystem, and how this reflects the diverse interests of the Internet Community and users. Markus introduced the panel by providing a historical perspective on the evolution of this model since the first WSIS in Geneva in 2003. He also emphasized that while we don't necessarily all have a common understanding of what the term multistakeholder means, there are key characteristics that define this model, such as openness, inclusiveness and transparency of processes, and the fact that everyone can participate and has a right to make their voices heard. Several examples of open cooperation were provided, including that of the Internet Engineering Task Force.

* A blog post by Markus Kummer further reflecting on this issue is available here:

<http://www.internetsociety.org/blog/2013/05/multistakeholder-cooperation-reflections-emergence-new-phraseology-international>

Ethics in the Information Society

Organized by Globethics.net

This workshop discussed the role of ethics in the information society. Konstantinos Komaitis focused on how the Internet technology and platforms are based on some ethical considerations: the fact that everyone should have access to the Internet, the fact that the Internet does not distinguish who participates in its social construction and technological evolution (equality of participation), the principle that there should not be any discrimination in relation to the services available to users (the end-to-end principle) and the Internet's paradigm of open standards are invaluable principles, which reflect ethical propositions.

* A blog post further reflecting on this issue is available here:

<http://www.internetsociety.org/blog/2013/05/thinking-about-ethics-internet-space>

* ISOC's presentation on the ethics of open standards development in Action Line C10 (ethics) meeting at the WSIS Forum 2012:

<http://www.internetsociety.org/doc/technology-and-internet-freedom-wsis-2012>

Giganet roundtable on the future of the multistakeholder model in Internet governance

This roundtable, chaired by Rolf Weber, gathered inter-governmental organizations, academics and the technical community to address emerging issues in global Internet Policy-making such as: what are the limitations of multi-stakeholder models of governance? What role should non-hierarchical networks play in global Internet governance?

Constance Bommelaer shared the perspective of the Internet Society, as the facilitator of many different multistakeholder participation mechanisms. Since the WSIS, ISOC has led the technical community in various fora, assisting in the creation of new multistakeholder practices (ITAC/OECD) and can attest that tremendous progress has been made since 2003. By becoming acquainted to one another and working together, mentalities of each stakeholder group have evolved. The evolution of the multistakeholder model to date can let us predict an as important evolution in the future.

Useful links

UNGIS Joint Statement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (WSIS Forum 2013):

http://www.ungis.org/Portals/0/documents/JointInitiatives/DRAFT.UNGIS_Joint_Statement.pdf

ISOC Participation at 2013 WSIS Forum and WSIS+10 Review:

<http://www.internetsociety.org/wsis/isoc-participation-2013-wsis-forum-and-wsis10-review>

WSIS ISOC Resources

<http://www.internetsociety.org/wsis-isoc-resources>