UNESCO's Comprehensive Study on Internet Related Issues

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Category of Stakeholder: A. civil society and NGOs including individual users

Country: Luxembourg

Region: Europe and North America

1. **What can be done to reinforce the right to seek and receive information in the online environment?**

Since access terminals to information (smartphones, tablets etc) have plummeted below the 100 euros watermark, what becomes essentially crucial is the connection of these terminals to online services, which nowadays is practically reduced to universal WiFi access.

Furthermore, provisioning of internet access via public libraries’ computers would turn out to be an important feature for the less privileged.

2. **What mechanisms can develop policies and common standards for open-licensed educational resources and scientific repositories, and for the long-term preservation of digital heritage?**

Publicly funded projects that incentivise entities to pool efforts is said direction, that of developing policies and common standards for open-licensed educational resources and scientific repositories, certainly have a role.

3. **How can greater progress be made as regards inclusive strategies for women and girls as well as marginalized and disabled people?**

A quota based system as regards access to information (eg. public library time) could certainly be of use, to counter-act problematics patterns whenever there is congestion.

For people that cannot follow suit and/or have physical constraints (also mothers can be included in such category) some support-at-home info service could be of help.

4. **How can accessibility be facilitated through increases in locally produced and relevant content in different languages?**
Certainly accessibility can be facilitated through increases in locally produced and relevant content in different languages. It is not clear what kind of incentives would perform best in order to achieve increased content though.

5. **What can be done to institutionalize Media and Information Literacy (MIL) effectively in national educational systems?**

Media and Information Literacy should be developed in complementary mode to the existing activities. Time and again, it has be shown that people pick up their most strong IT skills outside of (slowly evolving) formal education tracks, therefor it may be best to supplement formal education tracks with "skills development incentives", which could be directed towards either the students, teachers, parents or, tuition schools.

6. **What are the current and emerging challenges relevant to freedom of expression online?**

Given that centralised authorities exploit the medium more and more to build profiles of user behaviour, with the inevitable loss of privacy that that entails, it possibly started to become more and more imperative the need to provide for better anonymity. Anonymity could prove to be a big factor in order to ensure plurality of opinions, whereby identity of author is not so important for the subjects being discussed.

7. **How can legislation in a diverse range of fields which impacts on the Internet respect freedom of expression in line with international standards?**

unclear question

8. **Is there a need for specific protections for freedom of expression for the Internet?**

Yes, there is a need for specific protections for freedom of expression for the Internet.

Namely, it should a) not be harder to publish opinions online than it is offline b) any enforcement via authority to subtract content should be exposed to public scrutiny and with ability for stakeholders to appeal the process via formal judicial means.

9. **To what extent do laws protect digitally interfaced journalism and journalistic sources?**

Currently, journalism is very weakly protected at worldwide scale and it is country-specific and ad-hoc the measures taken to counteract this situation.

10. **What are the optimum ways to deal with online hate speech? How can Media and Information Literacy empower users to understand and exercise freedom of expression on the Internet?**
Online hate speech should be subject to scrutiny, however this is easier said than done, because of the difficulty to define what is hate speech; fi. "all X are Y" phrases have generally a very subjective interpretation as regards if they are provocative or informative.

Perhaps a mechanism should exist to retract or "overstrike" content, in relation to users’ preferences. It would be a serious omission if the control of such mechanism is not directly on the side of the (reading) user, otherwise it is virtually certain that someone else’s rights would be oppressed (a citizen on either side of the fence).

Such mechanism, would allow users to pool together *user-designed* own filters and prevent from seeing on their screens, fi. "defamatory content for religious figures". Let’s be emphatic on this: such a self-filtering system should be *voluntary*.

11. What are the optimum systems for independent self-regulation by journalistic actors and intermediaries in cyberspace?

As regards journalists, self-regulation via professional and collective entities that represent the sector would likely be the best means.

It is important to realise that cyberspace breaks down the monopoly on information that existed in previous centuries and differentiated services are now the norm (just like ground transportation has many different forms of implementation and levels of regulation).

12. What principles should ensure respect for the right to privacy?

Public and private authorities should be held accountable for retrieving and storing data about any legal entity, primarily by recognising their activity in doing so and providing evidence of legitimate interests in performing such activity.

fi. Public cameras are often claimed as means by public authorities to preserve the order; by using the same token, citizens should possibly put cameras inside police stations, to ensure good conduct of assigned officers. The issue privacy surfaces exactly when the flow of information is asymmetric and unsolicited.

13. What is the relationship between privacy, anonymity and encryption?

A very fundamental concept that joins many others together is that of identity.

- Anonymity is the ability to selectively reveal the identity.
- Privacy is the ability to selectively reveal further information around an identity
- Encryption is means to carry information from one identity to another, in tight control

Example:
Even up to today, people in the medical profession think that they "anonymise" DNA data by removing the human name label from it; alas, this is not the case because DNA itself actually IS identity therefor removing a name does not offer any real form of privacy. Encrypting the dataset though CAN help to ensure that the recipient and/or sender is the desired entity and that MAY offer privacy, depending on implementation.

14. What is the importance of transparency around limitations of privacy?

This is a very difficult question, so let's consider an example:

Sweden is well known for total transparency in tax matters, to the point of releasing tax records of citizens in the public. However, this creates the situation that citizens, who would rather not share their status with everybody, will seek to find solutions to prevent that form happening. Many people would consider their deductible expenses to be a quite private matter and rightly so.

The extreme end is IKEA whose profits end up in Liechtenstein. Privacy and transparency are seemingly perfect, within certain legal domains, however the question asked remains: *are the original goals achieved?*

15. What kinds of arrangements can help to safeguard the exercise of privacy in relation to other rights?

Any possible violation of privacy should require the informed consent of the affected party/ies and provision for some traceable communication for the fact of doing so.

16. How can openness and transparency of data be reconciled with privacy?

This is more a question for society than a legal technicality, in the sense that each given society of people may have different answers in the spectrum of possible options. fi. Brits seem to be quite comfortable with plenty of cameras on the street, in the name of safety, yet that would make quite a few honest citizens of south european countries very annoyed.

17. What may be the impact of issues relating to big data on respect for privacy?

Uncontrolled accumulation of big data is very problematic, because it creates an asymmetry that cannot be counter-acted by all those affected (unless the data is public). Best approach is perhaps that such data is state-regulated and safeguarded.

btw. The undersigned has found -some years ago- his name, car plate and other intimate data leaked on the public internet, along with 1000s dutch records of parking offences, with no ability to "give a fine to the fining authority". We are obviously still living in the Wild West of the Information Age, whereby plenty of checks and balances are missing.
18. How can security of personal data be enhanced?

Ask the Computer Engineers/Scientists, on per project basis.

I am a Computer Engineer but this is not a question to ask via such a survey; 
it sounds like "how buildings should be built? what is your opinion on that?".

Please define requirements, that society is will to invest upon, to improve current status.

19. How can Media and Information Literacy be developed to assist individuals to protect their privacy?

Media and Information Literacy can be developed to assist individuals to protect their privacy, a whole lot.

In fact, the biggest factor in favour of privacy likely relates to personal training and awareness, just like safety on the road is largely conne

20. How can ethical principles based on international human rights advance accessibility, openness, and multi-stakeholder participation on the Internet?

Ethical principles need to be negotiated with society and they can even be changing over time.

21. What conceptual frameworks or processes of inquiry could serve to analyse, assess, and thereby inform the choices that confront stakeholders in the new social uses and applications of information and knowledge?

Assuming that society has agreed on a set of ethical principles (case for thought: which age level makes an individual "adult"?), requirements and/or recommendations can be drafted, which in turn can be converted to technical designs/protocols/implementations. And the cycle goes on, because this is an iterative process, just as ethical principles are...

22. How does ethical consideration relate to gender dimensions of the Internet?

Gender is just one dimension of many more: ability/disability, colour, physical dimensions, family origin etc etc.

Factually, there is nothing about gender that is special on the Internet, nor any other dimension of the ones aforementioned, so it’s better if left alone, as regards ethics.

23. How can ethics, - i.e. the simultaneous affirmation of human rights, peace, equity, and justice - inform law and regulation about the Internet?

Internet is largely unregulated by design:
you can drop a nuclear bomb on it and still expect it to survive.

The law can be adjusted though, according to the prevailing ethics of the time.

24. **What international, regional and national frameworks, normative guidelines and accountability mechanisms exist of relevance to one or more fields of the study?**

Very broad question; not aware of any standard.

25. **How do cross-jurisdictional issues operate with regard to freedom of expression and privacy?**

Poorly

26. **What are the intersections between the fields of study: for example, between access and freedom of expression; ethics and privacy; privacy and freedom of expression; and between all four elements?**

There is an implied concept of common "medium" for these virtues to be expressed. It could be the Internet, it could be a Society or the Forum or the Ancient Agora. That's the only important intersection, really.

27. **What pertinent information materials exist that cut across or which are relevant to the four fields of the study?**

Declaring agnostic.

28. **What might be the options for role of UNESCO within the wider UN system in regard to the distinct issues of online Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Ethical dimensions of the information society?**

UNESCO could take as an example the turbulence occurred over last decade in relation to defamation (or perceived as such) of religious figures and proceed with iterative efforts to build consensus on either a) how things should be or b) where the divergence of opinions comes from - agreeing on disagreement is already a step forward

29. **What might be options for the role of UNESCO in relation to stakeholders outside the UN system?**

same as above, with citizens at large as stakeholders

30. **For each study field, what specific options might UNESCO Member States consider?**
Ensure that youth has access to this dialogue and receives information about it as first-order citizens; there is a serious issue in modern societies in that at school age you should mostly care about "not current affairs". This simply disengages the most important resource, the one that may bring about the change.