UNESCO's Comprehensive Study on Internet Related Issues

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

At the moment it isn't clear that there is "a right to seek and receive information in the online environment"... There are a variety of Human Rights (free expression, freedom of association, etc.) which are slowly being accepted as being applicable in the online world but this needs to be operationalized to a much greater degree. Once this is in place there is the need to ensure the opportunity for "effective use" i.e. that the means are in place to support the actual process of seeking and receiving information by all and not simply those who are already in a position to seek and receive information. I've written quite extensively about this http://firstmonday.org/article/view/1107/1027 and http://firstmonday.org/article/view/3316/2764

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?**

This seems to me to be a "specialist" question on which I have little or no useful knowledge or opinion.

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


An Internet for the Common Good: Engagement, Empowerment and Justice for All

A Community Informatics Declaration

This document was prepared by a group of Community Informatics activists and endorsed by consensus of the Community Informatics community 21.12.13 (a version edited for style and grammar and not content was re-endorsed 28.12.13.)
Effective use of the Internet will benefit everyone. Currently the benefits of the Internet are distributed unequally: some people gain power, wealth and influence from using the Internet while others struggle for basic access. In our vision, people in their communities and everywhere - including the poor and marginalized in developing and developed countries, women and youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, those with disabilities -- will use the Internet to develop and exercise their civic intelligence and work together to address collective challenges.

More than a technology or a marketplace, the Internet is a social environment, a community space for people to interact with the expectation that principles of equity, fairness and justice will prevail. Internet governance must ensure that this online social space functions effectively for the well-being of all.

A community informatics approach to Internet governance supports equal distribution of Internet benefits and addresses longstanding social, economic, cultural and political injustices in this environment. Questions of social justice and equity through the Internet are central to how the Internet and society will evolve. People in different communities must be empowered to develop and adapt the Internet infrastructure to reflect their core values and ways of knowing.

We support development of an Internet in which communities are the "first mile" and not the "last mile." We believe the primary purpose of the Internet is not to mine data and make knowledge a commodity for purchase and sale but rather to advance community goals equally and fairly within these distributed infrastructures.

We aspire to an Internet effectively owned and controlled by the communities that use it and to Internet ownership that evolves through communities federated regionally, nationally and globally. The Internet's role as a community asset, a public good and a local community utility is more important than its role as a site for profit-making or as a global artifact. The access layer and the higher layers of applications and content should be community owned and controlled in a way that supports a rich ecology of commercial enterprises subject to and serving community and public interests.

As citizens and community members in an Internet-enabled world we have a collective interest in how the Internet is governed. Our collective interests need to be expressed and affirmed in all fora discussing the future of the Internet. As a collective, and as members of civil society, we have developed a declaration for Internet governance based on principles of community informatics. We appreciate your interest and welcome your support.

A just and equitable Internet provides:

Fair and equitable means to access and use the Internet: affordable by all and designed and deployed so that all may realize the benefits of effective use. The poor and marginalized, women, youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, those with disabilities, Internet users and non-users alike; no one, from any community globally, should be without Internet access.
Equitable access within communities to the benefits of the Internet, including information, opportunities to communicate, increased effectiveness of communications and information management, and opportunities to participate in system development and content creation. Everyone, within all communities, should have the right, the means and the opportunity to use the Internet to share the full intellectual heritage of humankind without undue cost or hindrance.

Respect for privacy -- people must be able to conveniently use the Internet in a way that is credibly protected against large-scale surveillance or interference by government authorities or corporate interests.

Infrastructure that ensures the maximum level of personal security and reliability.

Opportunities for all within all communities to build, manage, and own Internet infrastructure as and when it is needed.

Internet governance by democratic principles and processes - including privileging input from communities affected by decisions and ensuring inclusion of the widest possible perspectives supporting the development of our digital environments.

A peer-to-peer architecture with equal power and privilege for each node or end point and complete neutrality of the architecture and medium for all users and all applications.

Recognition that the local is a fundamental building block of all information and communications and the "global" is a "federation of locals."

Equal opportunity for all to connect and communicate in a language and culture of their choice.

Recognition and equal privileging of many types of knowledge and ways of knowing, building from the capacities of each individual, community and knowledge society.

The means for information freely provided on and through the Internet to be freely available for the use and benefit of all.

Support for collaboration, engagement, education, solidarity, and problem-solving as the stepping stones to civic intelligence and the capacity of communities, civil society, and all people to equitably and effectively engage in informed self-governance.

4. **How can accessibility be facilitated through increases in locally produced and relevant content in different languages?**

Can accessibility be facilitated through increases in locally produced and relevant content in different languages?

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

It is really impossible to give a useful short answer to this. As you know UNESCO among others have been working in this area for a very long time and the solutions are complex; often particular to local jurisdictions; evolving with local political, cultural and economic conditions and so on.

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

Surveillance as per the Snowden revelations are a huge challenge to freedom of expression since they lead inevitably to self-censorship.

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

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

Yes, and the Human Rights Commissioners are doing an excellent job in promoting these.

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

It varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

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?

Hate speech is probably little different online than off except for the reach and permanency of the online. So existing laws need to be adapted to the changing technology conditions. MIL as an element of all education systems would be of considerable value.

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

I'm not sure if self-regulation is possible/useful in the online world given the huge range of actors, the possibility of cloaking, the speed of change including technological.

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

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

They are all elements of a similar complex of issues around identity on the Internet. Privacy is the general principle, anonymity is the personal attribute and encryption is the technical process. I have an overall sense that the best approach to this complex of issues is around "identity management"—personal, social, legal, and technical.

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

Transparency is an administrative/regulatory process which is governed by admin/regulatory/legal systems, privacy is a personal attribute with legal supports. The balance between these is still evolving.

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

This is not an area where I have useful knowledge or experience.

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

There is a need for legal/regulatory intervention at a global level in this area and the need to develop global mechanisms which allow for the development and enforcement of these regulations.

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

Big data represents a big challenge to "respect for privacy" and there needs to be the establishment of norms and then regulatory structures around these.

18. How can security of personal data be enhanced?

See above re: regulatory structures.

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

Good question... I don't have any useful (short) answers.

20. How can ethical principles based on international human rights advance accessibility, openness, and multi-stakeholder participation on the Internet?
This question is too complex and ill-defined for a useful answer. I'm not sure that "ethical principles based on international human rights" can in fact "advance accessibility, openness, and multi-stakeholder participation on the Internet". Also, I'm not sure what "accessibility, openness, and multi-stakeholder participation on the Internet" means, particularly "multi-stakeholder participation" in what???

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?

I'm afraid that I find this question too complex to give a useful answer to.

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

Standards of equity should prevail in the Internet sphere as in others.

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

Ethical principles should provide the background and framework for the law and regulation of the Internet as elsewhere.

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


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

There is a need for global norms, regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to ensure freedom of expression and privacy.

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

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 play the role that it has always played as a forum within which global norms may be established in these areas as in others.

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

These stakeholders might be included in the processes of consultation relative to this norm setting.

30. For each study field, what specific options might UNESCO Member States consider?