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?

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?

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

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

ICANN is happy to recognise the progress made by many different players in the introduction and promulgation of International Domain Names (IDNS). The goal of enhanced multilingualism on the Internet - which UNESCO have done so much to promote - is also shared by ICANN. We are delighted that the first new generic top level domains (gTLDs) to be designated were of non-latin script.

Today there are 43 ccTLDs in non-latin script and 37 generic top-level names now in the root.

I attach a blog post which gives an overview of progress.

https://www.icann.org/news/blog/making-progress-on-internationalized-domain-names

5. What can be done to institutionalize Media and Information Literacy (MIL) effectively in national educational systems?
6. What are the current and emerging challenges relevant to freedom of expression online?

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

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

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

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?

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. What may be the impact of issues relating to big data on respect for privacy?
18. How can security of personal data be enhanced?

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

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

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?

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

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

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

There are a number of global and regional fora where Internet Governance issues are discussed; not least the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). At the latter, and also in the regional and national associated fora, stakeholders come together to debate both existing and new issues of concern; these including content, multilingualism and Human Rights issues.

While the IGF is recognised as the prime fora for discussions on Internet Governance issues, other bodies and organisations also develop policy, produce guidelines and discuss both technical and policy issues; these including the ITU, the OECD, the IETF, the Council of Europe and of course UNESCO. A recent initiative by ICANN, WEF and Brazil, following on from the NETMundial Conference in Sao Paulo in April 2014, is the NETMundial Initiative (https://www.netmundial.org) that, inter-alia, will establish a virtual Platform for discussion of IG issues and (where appropriate) promulgation of policy positions.

In terms of future initiatives; we would also site both the proposed OECD ICT Ministerial in Mexico in 2016 and the renewal of the Council of Europe IG Strategy, in 2015, for the years 2016-19.
25. How do cross-jurisdictional issues operate with regard to 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?

While ICANN, as an NGO and only an Observer in the UN system, has limited expertise in this arena; we believe some coordinated discussions between all the relevant agencies on specific Internet Governance issues, such as human rights, access to information and privacy, might well me beneficial. Such co-ordination would allow governments an enhanced and clearer picture on what was being discussed across the UN system.

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

While ICANN has no specific expertise in the UNESCO mandate or portfolio, we would observe the benefit that dialogue with a variety of stakeholders can bring in the development and promulgation of policy positions. This was clearly evidenced by the comprehensive and influential Statement that emerged from the March 2013, UNESCO hosted; WSIS+10 Review event.

Looking forward, and in recognition of the mandate of UNESCO with respect to the WSIS Action Line; we would see the benefit of some form of annual consultation/ discussion - that could of course be virtual - with a multitude of stakeholders; including governments. This would we believe, recognise, in a more specific way, the importance and value of the UNESCO mandate.

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