

# UNESCO's Comprehensive Study on Internet Related Issues

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## **Submitted by :**

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**Country:** Switzerland

**Region:** Europe and North America

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

On 24 January 2007, the Swiss Federal Council adopted a national eGovernment strategy (see <http://www.egovernment.ch/egov/01038/index.html?lang=en>). It is a partial strategy of the "Strategy of the Federal Council for an Information Society in Switzerland" (see <http://www.bakom.admin.ch/themen/infosociety/00695/index.html?lang=en>). The goal of the eGovernment strategy is to enable both businesses and the population to carry out important transactions with the authorities electronically. The authorities in turn are called upon to modernize their business processes and to communicate electronically with each other.

One of the prioritized project of the eGovernment strategy is the Open Government strategy: its goal is to promote the use of freely accessible official data as much as possible. Publication of data in terms of Open Government Data (OGD) is suitable only for data held by the administration and the use of which is not restricted for legal reasons, in particular in terms of data protection law, copyright law or information protection law (see <http://www.egovernment.ch/umsetzung/00881/00883/index.html?lang=en>).

## **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?**

On the initiative of the Swiss Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM), the "Digital Integration Switzerland" national network was founded in 2007. The members of the network jointly drew up an Action Plan. This was updated in 2012 (see <http://www.einclusion.ch/en/e-inclusion-in-switzerland.html>, Action Plan available only in German and French).

The Action Plan is also a part of the implementation activities in relation to the Federal Council's strategy of March 2012 for an information society in Switzerland. As one of its principles for action, the latter provides for equal opportunities, according to which the deployment of ICT should always take account of the needs of potentially disadvantaged groups in Switzerland (see <http://www.bakom.admin.ch/themen/infosociety/index.html?lang=en>).

On the 20 June 2014, the new National law on continuing education has been adopted by the Swiss parliament. It contains also provisions for the promotion of basic skills in the fields of reading, writing, numeracy as well as of use of internet and the information- and communication-technologies (ICTs). The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI; <http://www.sbf.admin.ch/themen/index.html?lang=en>) within the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) has the lead for the implementation of this new law, together with the cantons and the private sector.

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

**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?**

One of the big challenges facing freedom of expression might be censorship: from government and from the private sector. As it may be nearly impossible to influence governments' decisions to censor their own citizens on the web, some rules have to be set for the global firms ruling the Internet. This should particularly be the case when those firms deliver personal data (e.g. of journalists) to governments: a set of rules should prevent this from happening.

**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?**

Journalists should particularly be protected to guarantee freedom of expression and information, and the protection must occur offline and online.

Freedom of expression principles should be reinforced, materialized (e.g. safe platform for journalist, see Diplo Foundation) and extended to the specificity 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?**

The citizen has to be educated, already at the primary school level, to be aware of the risks concerning the privacy of his personal data. Leadership of all government levels is needed on privacy issues, in order to promote transparency and best practices that may be needed to build the user confidence in the Internet and realize the best appropriate data protection.

- 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?**

1) Educate the young generations to the risks related to privacy and data security on the Internet. These concepts should (already) be taught in primary school and should be considered as basic knowledge along with math and language.

- 2) Integrate the concept of "data" in national legislations, not only as special laws, but fully integrated in national private / public laws. Legally recognizing data as a matter of importance may raise the awareness of the population/government on the importance of that topic.
- 3) On a more technical level, encryption should become a standard in all internet transactions, especially those involving data transfers containing personal data.
- 4) The Internet infrastructure should also guarantee safer data transfer and avoid data leakage, hacking and spying.
- 5) Citizens should always have the right to access, edit, delete their personal data.

**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?**

**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?**
  
- 29. What might be options for the role of UNESCO in relation to stakeholders outside the UN system?**
  
- 30. For each study field, what specific options might UNESCO Member States consider?**