UNESCO global study on Internet-issues

Questionnaire launched

Until 30 November 2014, UNESCO is asking for inputs and research around a global questionnaire on Internet-related issues in the four areas of (i) **Access** to information and knowledge, (ii) Freedom of **expression**, (iii) **Privacy**, and (iv) **Ethical dimensions** of the information society. The questions also explore the intersections between these areas and options for future UNESCO action in these fields. (See attached list).

The findings, on topics which relate to UNESCO's mandate, will feed into a comprehensive Internet-related study mandated by UNESCO's 195 Member States through Resolution 52 of the Organization's 37th General Conference Resolution in November 2013. The questions and design of the study have been elaborated through a five-month multi-stakeholder consultation process with civil society, academia, the private sector, the technical community, inter-governmental organizations and UNESCO's Member States.

Inputs needed and methodology

Please submit evidence-based studies, analysis, research or other documents to questions below where you have a contribution to make, specifying which questions in the list that the material covers. UNESCO also welcomes reference material pertinent to the fields of the study. Where possible, submissions will be put online or referenced as part of the process of gathering information for the study.

The submissions will be complemented by literature surveys and additional research into areas identified as gaps. All materials will be taken into account for the study based on the extent to which they are in alignment with international standards and UNESCO values, and have relevance to the specific mandate and scope of the study.

In regard to the 30 questions, UNESCO is interested in gender-disaggregated data, as well as answers that consider gender dimensions. Similarly, UNESCO would like to know if the answers to the questions vary when considering communities of various levels of economic development, varying levels of access to ICTs, minorities and other vulnerable groups across the four fields of the study.

The framework for the study, proposed by UNESCO's Secretariat, is informed by its draft concept of "Internet Universality", which summarizes UNESCO's positions on the Internet and highlights four R-O-A-M principles: (i) that the Internet should be Human **Rights-based** (ii) "**Open**", (iii) "**Accessible to All**", and (iv) nurtured by **Multi-stakeholder Participation**.

Questionnaire, concept note and related UNESCO publications available at
www.unesco.org/new/internetstudy
Questions or submissions to **Internetstudy@unesco.org**
Twitter hashtag: **#netstudy**

The context of the study

The study is mandated by a consensus resolution adopted by UNESCO member states following a debate on Internet-related issues of relevance to UNESCO's mandate. The discussion focused on ethics and privacy in cyberspace, as well as freedom of expression and access.

The digital revolution is impacting on all spheres of public and private life. More and more personal and public information is collected, stored, processed and shared via the Internet. All this brings with it unparalleled opportunities as well as challenges. Cyberspace is especially complex and sensitive, because of its transnational and multidimensional character. This calls for a holistic approach to address the broad range of issues relating to its access, participation and use. UNESCO as a universal organization with a mandate relevant to many cyber-related issues has proven to be well placed to foster trust and dialogue at the global, regional and national levels. Through UNESCO, an inclusive multi-stakeholder process as mandated in 37 C/Resolution 52 of the 37th General Conference of UNESCO can provide an important platform for all relevant actors to examine complexities of the issues raised and to propose for consideration well-informed options for action by UNESCO and its 195 member states.

The results of the requested Study will inform the Organization's reporting on the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes to the 38th UNESCO General Conference in 2015.

Background

UNESCO works to build peace and sustainable development in the world through education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information. UNESCO is the specialized agency within the United Nations that promotes freedom of expression and associated rights.

Over the past 15 years, UNESCO has been actively involved in all Internet-related areas under its mandate, particularly through advancing the concept of Knowledge Societies at the World Summit on the Information Society (2003, and 2005), and the Internet Governance Forum. The Organization's Member States have adopted positions in favour of:

- Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003)[1],
- Multistakeholder participation in the Internet-related debates (2011, 2013)[2],
- Human rights protection online (2013)[3]

UNESCO is also active in the UN Group on the Information Society (www.ungis.org), and co-convenor with ITU of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development (www.broadbandcommission.org).

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[1] *Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace* http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/about-us/how-we-work/strategy-and-programme/promotion-and-use-of-multilingualism-and-universal-access-to-cyberspace/
[2] *Reflection and Analysis by UNESCO on the Internet,* http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001920/192096e.pdf; and *Final Statement of the WSIS+10 review event* http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/wsis/WSIS_10_Event/wsis10_final_statement_en.pdf
[3] *Resolution on Internet related issues: including access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy and ethical dimensions of the information society* http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/news/37gc_resolution_internet.pdf

QUESTIONS FOR UNESCO'S COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON INTERNET RELATED ISSUES*

*please read the fact sheet and/or study concept note prior to submitting contributions

A. Questions related to the field of Access to information and knowledge

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?
5. What can be done to institutionalize MIL effectively in national educational systems?

B. Questions related to the field of Freedom of Expression

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 impact 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?

C. Questions related to the field of Privacy

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?

D. Questions related to the field of Ethics

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?

E. Broader issues

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? Responses may wish to distinguish between normative and empirical dimensions to these questions.
27. What pertinent information materials exist that cut across or which are relevant to the four fields of the study?

F. Questions related to options

28. What might be the options for the 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 such as individual governments, Internet companies, civil society and individual users, in regard to the distinct issues of online Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Ethical dimensions of the information society.
30. For each study field, what specific options might UNESCO Member States consider, including for the Organization's Global Priorities of Africa and Gender Equality, shaping the post-2015 development agenda, supporting the goals of Small Island Developing States and taking forward the Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures?