

## REMARKS BY BRIAN CARPENTER AT THE OPEN CONSULTATION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE

GENEVA, JUNE 14, 2005

I am Brian Carpenter. Until two years ago, I was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Internet Society. I am a Distinguished Engineer at IBM. I am also currently Chair of the Internet Engineering Task Force, but I am not speaking for the IETF today.

I am here today because for more than 15 years, first at CERN and now at IBM, I have been a member of the Internet technical community, which has helped define the standards, technologies and operational practices that have made the Internet possible.

But the most important reason that I am here is because I am an Internet user, and I care deeply about how the Internet develops and evolves. In particular, I want to help ensure that the Internet continues to grow, that innovation is fostered, and that more and more people in every corner of the world can enjoy its benefits.

I think the three most important accomplishments of WGIG and the entire World Summit on the Information Society process have been to: (1) Demonstrate that the Internet is for everyone and that Internet technologies can benefit every country, even the poorest, (2) Help convince Economics Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Finance Ministers, and even Prime Ministers and Presidents that they need to learn more about how the Internet works and how they can help foster its growth in their country, and (3) Make clear to political leaders in hundreds of countries that there are dozens, if not hundreds of different groups who play a role in shaping the development of the Internet – intergovernmental organizations, Internet standards bodies, ICANN and Internet registries, the Internet Society, researchers, service providers, businesses and business groups, ad hoc consortia, and groups of users who influence the products vendors produce.

The Internet was designed to provide individual users with as many choices and as much flexibility as possible while preserving the end-to-end nature of the network. And the amount of choice and flexibility continues to increase. Because there are competing groups with competing solutions to users' problems, users, vendors and providers get to determine how the Internet evolves. The genius of the Internet is that open standards and open processes enable anyone with a good idea to develop, propose, and promote new standards and applications.

One of the tasks your working group has been assigned is to define “Internet governance.” Definitions are important. I would propose a simple one. “Internet governance” is a term that covers all the different mechanisms that shape the function and use of the Internet on a global scale. So it includes the standards process at organizations such as the IETF, the ITU, and the World Wide Web Consortium, as well as dozens of other groups. It includes the work of ICANN and the regional Internet registries. It includes the spectrum allocation decisions regarding WiFi and WiMax. It includes trade rules regarding e-commerce set by the World Trade Organization. It includes procedures for fighting cyber-crime by international groups of law enforcement agencies. It includes agreements among ISPs regarding peering. It includes efforts by multilateral organizations such as the World Bank to support the development of the Internet in less developed countries.

But while definitions are important, it is even more important that WGIG focus on results and solving real problems.

The Internet Society is working with governments to promote, support, and defend five "abilities" on behalf of all Internet users: The Ability to Connect, the Ability to Speak, the Ability to Innovate, the Ability to Share, and the Ability to Choose.

Personally, during the debate over Internet governance, I feel there has been too much time spent on domain names, IP addresses, and root servers. These are largely technical matters for the technical community.

The farmer in central Africa, the teacher in the Andes, or the small merchant in Central Asia doesn't care about where ICANN is incorporated or how the GAC is structured. But they care about the cost of access and whether they can get technical advice on how to connect to and use the Internet. They care about whether the Internet is secure and reliable. They care about whether there is useful Internet content and services in their native language. And they probably care about whether they'll be thrown in jail for something they write in a chat room.

So what can WGIG do to help Internet users – and the 90% of the world's population who are not yet Internet users?

First, I think WGIG can help policy makers around the world understand the wide scope of organizations involved in “Internet governance.” I think the International Chamber of Commerce has done a great service by compiling a

matrix of many of the groups involved. The WGIG could update and expand that compilation.

Second, WGIG could suggest ways that many of those organizations might do a better job of explaining their processes and the decisions they are making. This would enable more people and more interest groups to ensure that their concerns are considered when decisions are made. For instance, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), which I currently chair, has set many of the fundamental standards of the Internet and the standards we are working on now will define the continued evolution of the Internet - and the types of applications it will support. For the uninitiated, the IETF process and IETF standards – like similar standards set by the W3C, the ITU, and other technical groups - are not easy to comprehend. So we are starting a newsletter to help make the IETF process more accessible and to invite input from an even larger community. Of course, the IETF is open to all. You don't even have to come to the three meetings we hold each year; much of the work is done online.

I know other standards groups are also eager to find ways to ensure that their work - and its implications - are understood and supported by the broadest possible community. I urge them to follow the IETF and make draft standards available online and to reach out to the non-technical community.

One way WGIG could foster a broader understanding of all of the work being done by all of the different groups involved in Internet governance would be to encourage such groups to convene regularly scheduled online forums where specific issues could be examined and the people in this room, their colleagues back home, and other interested parties could gain a better understanding of key decisions being debated - and weigh in where they have concerns.

Ten or fifteen years ago, when the Internet was still mostly the domain of researchers and academics, it was possible to bring most of the key decision-makers working on Internet standards and technology - and the people who cared about the implications of those standards and technology - together in a single meeting. But today, we have to reach a much larger community, and we can use the Internet itself to do that.

Suppose we set up a Webcast with a chat room and every two weeks invited an expert from organizations such as the IETF, ICANN, the ITU, W3C, OASIS, the Global Grid Forum, or the regional Internet registries to provide a high-level briefing about a specific problem they are working on (e.g. Internationalized Domain Names, spam, authentication, wiretapping, online privacy). They would identify the key decisions that are being made - the critical choices. I

think such presentations would illustrate how the bottom-up approach to Internet governance is trying to meet the needs of Internet users (and prospective users). And they could generate some very useful feedback that could influence the decisions being made.

The Internet Society is already starting to reach out to other organizations to explore which other organizations might be interested in participating in such online briefings.

I feel strongly that the WGIG should avoid recommending the creation of new independent groups that will merely discuss Internet. We already have enough of those. Nor should WGIG recommend a new group to duplicate the work already being done elsewhere, or to look into technical matters such as the infeasibility of geographic addressing without deep expertise on the technical issues involved. Your working group will not be a success if its main recommendation is the creation of another working group. I hope we can reduce the number of meetings that we all have to attend. Let's instead find ways to build on the institutions that have served the Internet and the Internet community so well.

More than a year ago, at a meeting of the UN ICT Task Force in New York City, Vint Cerf, the Chairman of ICANN, said "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Some people have misinterpreted his words to mean that nothing is wrong and nothing needs to be fixed. No one believes that. We have many issues to address. We need to reduce the cost of Internet access and "connect the unconnected;" we need to improve the security of cyberspace and fight spam; we need to make it easier to support non-Latin alphabets; we need to promote the adoption of new standards such as IPv6, which will enable new, innovative uses of the Internet; we need better ways to fighting and stopping cyber-criminals.

The good news is that we have many different institutions competing and collaborating to find ways to address these problems. And many of those institutions - from the IETF to ICANN to the ITU - are adapting and reaching out to constituencies that were not part of the process in the past. They are becoming more open and transparent. That is helpful and healthy. I hope WGIG will recommend effective ways that this can be done better. I think it would be particularly useful if the WGIG could identify sources of funding so that the most talented engineers from the Less Developed Countries could take more of a role in the IETF, the ITU-T, and other Internet standards bodies.

I hope WGIG will keep one thing in mind. Focus on the individual - the individual Internet user and the individual who has not yet been able to connect. Focus your attention on issues that will affect their lives and the way they use the Internet. And most of all focus on giving them more choice and more control over this incredibly powerful, enabling technology.