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FORUM FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

INTERNET GOVERNANCE 2016

Messages from Lisbon

November 2016

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Messages from Lisbon

To guarantee a development of the governance model, which keeps up with the Internet's development, it is demanded an evolution, not a disruption, bearing in mind that, over the years, there has been a continuous evolution of the role and vision of the various stakeholders throughout this process.

The evolution of the Internet has been greatly driven by the technical community, however the monitoring of agents such as legislators is much slower, and one should expect them to play a more active role in discussing the future of the Internet. This finding allows us to recognize that the Internet Governance multi-stakeholder model is not perfect, but there is almost a concordance around the idea that it is still the best model, guaranteeing the greatest counterbalance and power sharing between the stakeholders.

There are still questions about who should participate in the discussion, what role each stakeholder should play, and whether it should be re-evaluated over time. The truth is that they are not on an equal level, following their own political and economic agendas, or others, which are not always very clear. Who has the true decision-making power?

Greater transparency in the processes and information sharing are required, as well as greater accountability by the several stakeholders. The resolution of global litigation based on a local legal framework, namely that of the State of California with regard to the Domain Name System (DNS) is pointed out as another of the problems in this multi-stakeholder governance model. But until now no credible alternatives have emerged.

From Lisbon urged the idea that global issues affect everyone and no one is protected by the fact of *being distant*.

It is necessary to achieve a greater involvement of the Portuguese multi-stakeholder community, in particular of the civil society in the discussions, through a bottom-up process that has been difficult to implement but needs reinforcement to reach out more interlocutors, and a greater dialogue between government, Internet users, academic and technical communities, civil society and the private sector. Only in this way will it be possible to truly democratize and share power on the Internet.

PRIVACY ON THE INTERNET | RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, WHAT FUTURE?

The ubiquity of the Internet and the growing digital transformation of society have changed habits, behaviors, aspirations, rules, jobs, fears, prejudices and the citizens' needs. Therefore, the implementation of new privacy standards, e.g. the Regulation on the European Data Protection of the European Union, which will enter into force in 2018, is particularly relevant to the various representatives of the Internet community.

Too often, issues surrounding privacy need more transparency and more stakeholders should be involved in the discussion, implementation and regulation. The argument that users must have full control over their own data implies alongside a better preparation of users and consumers to this process through proper skills and training. On the other hand, it is required greater responsibility and accountability of actors who provide services and products over the Internet. The "by-design" and "by-default" principles should be the private sector priorities which could reduce eventually government regulation. In addition to legal frameworks, governments should also prioritize citizens' digital literacy, training and education.

INTERNET GOVERNANCE FOR AN INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The Internet is increasingly present in all aspects of society - be it information, communication, digital content and even in the resolution of problems involving public administration. Thus, citizens' access to the Internet, limited by outlined issues related to infrastructure and digital skills, is today a spring of social inequalities.

There is a need to strengthen the promotion of digital and media literacy as it is not enough for people to have access to information. They must also learn to question the information they are accessing and to counteract the feeling that their opinion is somehow invalid.

A strategy for inclusion must engage everyone and also look at people as an important resource in this new digital based Knowledge Society.

NET NEUTRALITY

There is an ongoing conflict on the stakeholder's positions. On the one hand, it has been pointed out that certain regulations create an imbalance between network operators and service and application providers, the former imposing market rules and not being subject to the same type of obligations. On the other hand, it is considered that ensuring access to any kind of content - whenever, wherever and in whatever application the consumer wants – is an essential requirement.

In a context where Internet access is considered a utility, access restrictions continue to be unacceptable.
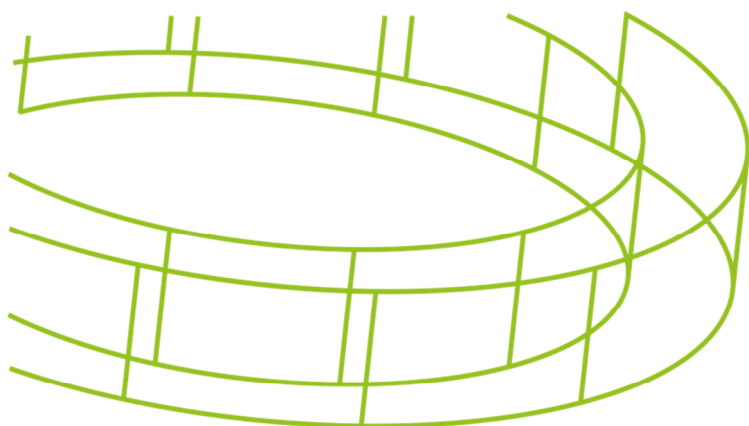
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