For decades, we’ve been promised secure, strong, end-to-end cyber encryption. Yet, the Snowden revelations have challenged our belief in a secure Internet and caused major Internet companies to harden their networks and systems.

ISOC’s North America Bureau, led by Paul Brigner, focused on this important topic in 2014 and collaborated with its Chapters to host several important events highlighting the promise of a trusted Internet.

In May, the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the Internet Society held its Second Cyber Surveillance Conference at the Mayer Theater on the Santa Clara University Campus. Participants engaged in an interactive forum that posed several unique questions:

1. Whether you consider them valid or not, what harm have recent revelations about NSA cyber surveillance activities had on companies in Silicon Valley?
2. What will happen if nothing is done to change those activities?
3. And what can Silicon Valley companies do to mitigate that risk? What can or should public policy advocates do to help?

Public policy experts, members of the business community, and members of the press drove discussion of those questions in several focused panel discussions:

- Silicon Valley businesses shared concerns about the impact on their customers and their operations.
- How are companies planning technological enhancements to protect their customers and themselves?
- Which news stories have had the most impact on Silicon Valley companies?
- What public policy changes should be made to protect Silicon Valley business and their customers—and what can policy advocates do to advance those changes?
- What opportunities—and challenges—exist for better collaboration between the business community and those involved in the world of public policy and governance?

By encouraging evaluations from several perspectives—this conference helped redefine the way stakeholders discuss and resolve the issues that affect them most.

In December, the Washington DC Chapter of the Internet Society hosted a seminar, “Towards a Trusted Internet: Backdoors to the Crypto Promised Land,” which was the third in a series of seminars focused on Internet trade, economics, and governance issues.

Moderated by Dr. Eric Burger of the Internet Society Board of Trustees and Georgetown University, the panel discussion featured Russ Housley, Chair of the Internet Architecture Board; Lance Hoffman, Founder and Senior Staff Researcher, Cyberspace Security Policy and Research Institute at George Washington University; Quentin Liu, Senior Director of Engineering, Symantec; and Christopher Soghoian, Principal Technologist of the ACLU Speech, Privacy & Technology Project.