



## **Internet Society Board of Trustees Calls on the Global Internet Community to Stand Together to Support Open Internet Access, Freedom, and Privacy**

Fundamental ideals of the Internet are under threat

[Berlin, Germany, 4 August 2013] – The Internet Society Board of Trustees during its meeting in Berlin, Germany today called on the global Internet community to stand together in support of open Internet access, freedom, and privacy. Recently exposed information about government Internet surveillance programs is a wake-up call for Internet users everywhere – the fundamental ideals of the Internet are under threat.

The Internet Society Board of Trustees believes that government Internet surveillance programs create unacceptable risks for the future of a global, interoperable, and open Internet. Robert Hinden, Chair of the Board of Trustees, stated, “Berlin is a city where freedom triumphed over tyranny. Human and technological progress are not based on building walls, and we are confident that the human ideals of communication and creativity will always route around these kinds of attempts to constrain them. We are especially disappointed that the very governments that have traditionally supported a more balanced role in Internet governance are consciously and deliberately hosting massive Internet surveillance programs.”

In the brief period since these surveillance programs were revealed to the general public, the Internet Society Board stated there are already chilling effects on global trust and confidence on the Internet ecosystem. The fact that information about surveillance programs is emerging primarily from countries with a long history of supporting the open Internet is particularly disturbing. As the next billion people come online, these countries should be expected to demonstrate leadership in support of the values that underpin the global Internet. In the wake of these announcements, the Internet Society encourages a return to multistakeholder cooperation to preserve the benefits of the Internet ecosystem for all.

The Internet Society Board of Trustees expects governments to fully engage with their citizens in an open dialogue on how to reconcile national security and the fundamental rights of individuals. Security should not be at the cost of individual rights and, in this context, the Board welcomes the initiative by some civil society organizations to promote "International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance." The Internet Society endorses these principles, and emphasizes the importance of proportionality, due process, legality, and transparent judicial oversight. The Internet Society believes that surveillance without any such safeguards risks undermining the sustainability of the open Internet.

“In the spirit of the pioneers and early innovators of the Internet that were honored this week at the [2013 Internet Hall of Fame](#) ceremony, we urge the global Internet community to defend against

attempts by governments to fragment the Internet either through overt regulation or hidden surveillance programs,” commented Lynn St. Amour, President and CEO of the Internet Society. “We must reassert the global spirit of community that is at the heart of the Internet’s growth and success, and stand firm in our belief that openness and collaboration is the best path forward.”

### **About the Internet Society**

The Internet Society is the trusted independent source for Internet information and thought leadership from around the world. With its principled vision and substantial technological foundation, the Internet Society promotes open dialogue on Internet policy, technology, and future development among users, companies, governments, and other organizations. Working with its members and Chapters around the world, the Internet Society enables the continued evolution and growth of the Internet for everyone. For more information, visit [www.internetsociety.org](http://www.internetsociety.org).

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