



Internet Society Board of Trustees Calls on Policymakers to Preserve the Internet’s Openness, Innovation, and Interoperability in Proposed Changes to the International Telecommunications Regulations

At the World Conference on International Telecommunications, the 193 ITU Member States will modify the International Telecommunications Regulations

[Washington, D.C. and Geneva, Switzerland – 22 October 2012] – During its recent meeting in Toronto, Canada, the Internet Society Board of Trustees called on policymakers, in advance of the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) in December, to preserve the openness, dynamism, and growth of the Internet when modifying the International Telecommunications Regulations (ITRs).

The Internet Society Board was encouraged by recent remarks by ITU leaders that the WCIT is about promoting greater connectivity and not about regulating the Internet. At the same time, the Board noted that some of the proposals to modify the ITRs could have far-reaching impacts on individuals who use the Internet, businesses that rely on global interoperability, and developing-market economies where Internet growth is essential to economic prosperity. The Board underscored the need for care, pointing out that seemingly small word changes in the treaty could have unintended consequences for the Internet.

“ITU Member States have important decisions to make at the WCIT,” stated Eva Frölich, Chair of the Internet Society Board of Trustees. “It is the Board’s sincere hope that delegations to the WCIT will chart a course that supports global interoperability and enables continued growth, competition, and innovation in the telecommunications sector.”

As in previous statements on WCIT, the Internet Society Board reiterated its belief that any revisions to the ITRs should:

- Reinforce Member States’ commitment to open, transparent, and inclusive policy-making processes;
- Enshrine a commitment to open, voluntary international standards;
- Emphasize policy approaches such as competition, liberalization, and transparency;
- Be based on thorough technical and socio-economic analysis; and
- Retain the high-level nature of the ITRs.

The Board noted that a number of proposals to the WCIT would apply telecommunications regulations to Internet traffic. This approach could result in fragmentation of networks, higher costs for end-users, and could ultimately stifle innovation and creativity.

“The Internet Society, along with our members and Chapters around the world, remains committed to working with all stakeholders in preparation for the WCIT,” said Internet Society President and Chief Executive Officer Lynn St. Amour. “The 1988 ITRs encompassed high level principles that enabled exceptional growth for the telecommunications industry and provided countless benefits for people

around the world. It is the Internet Society's hope that WCIT will build on what has worked in the past, and that the new treaty will have an even more profound and positive impact."

For more information on WCIT, visit <http://internetsociety.org/wcit>.

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.

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