

OMAC Roundtable #7

Meeting Summary



22 March 2022



⇒ Get Involved in the Digital Sovereignty Project!

- If you were unable to attend the roundtable, [share your thoughts](#) on digital sovereignty.
- If you attended the roundtable, [tell us how and when](#) you'd like to hear from the project.

Topic of OMAC Roundtable #7

"Digital Sovereignty and the Internet: Your Views"

The Internet Society observes the increased use of the term “digital sovereignty” to rationalize Government measures and policies that either target or involve the Internet. Through the [Digital Sovereignty project](#), the Internet Society plans to study how such efforts could affect the Internet’s development and evolution. The seventh OMAC roundtable provided an opportunity for organization members to share their views on digital sovereignty while informing the Internet Society how to best approach this issue-specifically how digital sovereignty has or might affect organization members, to help ensure that the output of the project is relevant to everyone's work.



Key Take Aways

- It is important to understand the reasons behind each of the countries/regions. For many developing countries, the appeal of digital sovereignty lies in the potential for enabling autonomy and reducing dependencies to foreign technologies and businesses.
- Internet fragmentation is a result of the push for digital sovereignty. The world is going from globalization to nationalization -- digital sovereignty is just one aspect of this trend.
- Some country-level practices by the technical community may be viewed as asserting digital sovereignty -- one example is the .AU registry requirement that registrants must be an entity registered in Australia.
- If an entity lauded as a supporter of the multi-stakeholder model isn't loudly called out when they stray, then those who don't support the model will be empowered even more.

Discussion Points

- **Recommendations from the roundtable participants on the digital sovereignty project:**
 - "Digital sovereignty is about "power and control", the Internet Society project could look at the under explored issues such as:
 - What are the motivations behind these policies? In some cases, policies don't correlate with the stated objectives. One example is cybersecurity and the sovereign cloud: for a service provider, this means creating different versions of the same product for different countries, thus increasing operational complexity and reducing its ability to secure the service properly.
 - What could be the economic implications of digital sovereignty?
 - What are the implications of digital sovereignty from a human rights perspective?
 - Are there aspects of digital sovereignty that can be seen as tolerable or reasonable? How we define sovereignty will also shape whether we see it in a negative or positive light.
- **In addition, participants advised to:**
 - Provide a direction of what the Internet Society will do after the white paper will be finished - how can organization members use the white paper?
 - Connect with other organizations that are working on digital sovereignty -- the Electronic Frontier Foundation is one.
 - Consider case studies to demonstrate the effect of digital sovereignty on key parts of the Internet ecosystem.



- Explore how this project would help policymakers in seeing the difference between the Internet infrastructure and services, so they can better understand the impact of their policy making.
- Distinguish between proposals under extraordinary circumstances like war (such as the Russia/Ukraine conflict) and policies being enacted routinely in the name of digital sovereignty.
- Try to appeal to countries who have yet to make up their mind on digital sovereignty and demonstrate its unintended effects.
- Consider developing a taxonomy of escalating measures with regards to digital sovereignty and their impact on the internet.

Next Steps

- Get involved in the Digital Sovereignty project!
 - If you were unable to attend the roundtable, share your thoughts on digital sovereignty: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XHY3TCC>
 - If you attended the roundtable, tell us how and when you'd like to hear from the project: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X6TZSVY>

Useful Resources

Sovereignty 2.0

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3904949

Russia's Quest for Digital Sovereignty

https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/dgap-analyse-2022-01-en.pdf

Europe's digital sovereignty: From rulemaker to superpower in the age of US-China rivalry

https://ecfr.eu/publication/europe_digital_sovereignty_rulemaker_superpower_age_us_china_rivalry/

A Chinese Perspective on the Future of Cyberspace

<https://cyberstability.org/paper-series/a-chinese-perspective-on-the-future-of-cyberspace/>

