President & CEO Report

June 2025

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Our ability to achieve the goals of Strategy 2030—and to deliver meaningful impact around the world—depends on how effectively the Internet Society and the Foundation work toward a shared strategy, with all programs and activities aligned in support of it. Internally, we call this the "all of ISOC approach" to our work, ensuring that all parts of the Internet Society and the Foundation are working together in support of common objectives. During the Board meeting, I will share with you a story from Bolivia that illustrates the kind of results we see when we bring this approach to our work. Beginning with this Board meeting, our reports to the Board will increasingly present a more cohesive and consistent way of measuring and communicating the impact of our work.

Organizational Performance

Q1 results and early Q2 data indicate that the Internet Society and Internet Society Foundation are on track to meet our annual goals. Katie Bengaard, Senior Vice President of Strategy, Yogesh Khanna, Internet Society Managing Director, and Chris Locke, Foundation Managing Director, will provide more detailed Internet Society and Foundation reports during this meeting, and Sae Park, our CFO, will present our financial results.

While we're delivering on our annual targets, we are also looking ahead to 2026, a year when both organizations will need to be ready to scale our work through programmatic excellence and efficiency, strong donor and partner relationships, brand visibility, and community engagement. Specifically, leadership is focused on:

- Standing up appropriate Infrastructure to effectively manage co-funding initiatives;
- Enhancing strategic and operational alignment between the Internet Society and the Foundation;
- Simplifying internal systems, structures, and practices to be more agile and collaborative; and,
- Improving impact measurement to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and demonstrate progress toward our mission.
- Identifying core delivery partners for our two co-funds and strengthening our measurement capabilities.

Organizational Sustainability and Adaptability

Our new revenue strategy is showing early signs that we are on the right path. Our goal in 2025 was to launch the first initiative under our new co-funding approach, which leverages Internet Society and Internet Society Foundation's significant financial resources, technical expertise, granting capabilities, and wide community reach to attract partnerships with peer donor organizations and allow us to do more together than each of us could do on our own. This year, instead of launching one such co-funding initiative, we are launching two. We believe that this co-funding strategy will help diversify the Internet Society's resources and enable us to expand our impact across the globe.

In March, we signed the first donor, Meta, to our Connectivity Co-Funding Initiative. This initiative provides critical financial and technical support to marginalized and underserved communities to access affordable and resilient Internet through a community-centered connectivity model. We are having productive conversations with potential partners who may also join this fund.

In June, the second co-fund initiative, the Common Good Cyber (CGC) Fund, will be launched. The Fund will provide grants to nonprofits that develop and maintain critical cybersecurity infrastructure, deliver scalable support to secure high-risk actors from digital harm, and advocate for a safer Internet for vulnerable groups. Additional details will be provided during the Board meeting. The Global Cyber Alliance (GCA) is a key partner for this co-fund.

Community

Supporting, engaging, and celebrating our global community remains a top priority for the Internet Society and Foundation. We are enhancing our community communications to ensure a consistent flow of information about our community's achievements. This includes monthly community snapshots and chapter success stories published both internally and externally (see the blog). We continue to invest in community events and engagement opportunities. ISOC@events have been reimagined as well-branded, inclusive, community-focused events that provide opportunities for our community to meet in a social setting. We are also thrilled with the response to the increase in admin funding for Chapters and the add-on funding through the Beyond the Net program. 83 Chapters have received Admin funding so far in 2025 and 65 chapters have received the add-on funding.

We are also experimenting with new ways to support our chapter community. We launched the PartnerUp pilot program to match Internet Society and Foundation staff with chapters to provide support on a selection of pre-defined activities, including help with preparing an Internet Impact Brief, speaking at a chapter event, or getting training on how to use Internet Society Pulse data to support local advocacy efforts. Additionally, in response to requests from the community to collaborate on WSIS+20, the **WSIS+20 Focal Points** pilot between staff and the community has kicked off.

Our community remains engaged and committed to advocacy. **19%** of organization members and **74%** of chapters have been mobilized since the beginning of the year. This includes:

- Endorsing the Five Point Plan for an Inclusive WSIS Review (UN Advocacy).

- Signing the Joint Letter on the Swedish Data Storage and Access to Electronic Information Legislation (Ongoing Advocacy).

- Publishing a blog post to explain the negative impact of IP blocking (Ongoing Advocacy).

- Participating in sessions to co-create an empathy map for product development design – read out coming soon (Online Trust and Safety Co-Creation).

- Co-organizing Peering Roadshows and Workshops (Sustainable Peering Infrastructure).

- Providing quotes for media and community stories for Internet Society Pulse – see media coverage here (Internet Measurement).

In Q2 and Q3, we will organize two community workshops, one in Chile and one in Nepal, that will bring together 56 members of our community from 41 countries through a brand-new community fellowship program that has online and in-person components. Participants were selected through an open and transparent application process and will undergo a six-month online learning program before joining one of the two in-person workshops. They will leave with concrete advocacy plans to take action in their respective regions and countries.

Diplomacy and Advocacy

2025 is shaping up to be a pivotal year, marked by intensifying political and commercial pressures that threaten the open, global nature of the Internet. Around the world, governments are advancing agendas to impose digital sovereignty over the Internet within their borders, often at the expense of openness, privacy, and user rights. Top-down models of governance are once again gaining traction, and we need to remind the world why the multistakeholder model is the governance structure that helps ensure that the Internet remains open, resilient, secure, and trustworthy for everyone. While the Internet Society has a strong reputation for advocacy at the national, regional, and global level, we need to do more to position the Internet Society as a thought leader and a powerful voice in defense of the open Internet and the multistakeholder model.

It is within this context that the WSIS+20 negotiations are taking place. WSIS+20 is an opportunity for the international community to recommit to the multistakeholder model of Internet Governance and to support the Internet Governance Forum as the primary platform for multistakeholder dialogue on

Internet governance. There are definite risks in this negotiation – we are concerned that the global trends away from international cooperation will influence the debate and weaken the consensus that has underpinned Internet governance for the past 20 years.

Working together with our community and our partners across the Internet ecosystem, we are engaging in a strong diplomatic campaign to ensure that UN Member States understand our views and why the multistakeholder approach ensures that the Internet continues to evolve to meet the future needs of digital societies.

As an initial step, in early June the Internet Society and ICANN will release a joint paper that captures how the IGF's dialogues have contributed to concrete impact around the world. We will have a strong presence at the Internet Governance Forum in Norway and at the WSIS High-Level Event in Geneva, and we will be a strong voice during all the stakeholder consultations. Through the WSIS+20 community group, we hope to inspire our chapters and Org members to engage with policymakers in their countries in the run-up to the negotiations in New York and final document in December.

The WSIS+20 review is, of course, only a moment in time. The need to promote the value of the open Internet and the multistakeholder model continues doesn't stop with WSIS+20. While the Internet Society has a strong reputation for advocacy at the national, regional, and global level, we need to do more to position the Internet Society as a thought leader and a powerful voice in defense of the open Internet and the multistakeholder model and you can expect that this will be a strong part of my own advocacy over the years ahead. Given the changing regulatory landscape, we need to be proactively shaping discussions and advocacy on openness while promoting the benefits and success of the multistakeholder model.

Organizational Resilience

In April, we welcomed Yogesh Khanna as the new Managing Director of the Internet Society. Yogesh brings decades of proven leadership, and his impact is already being felt across the organization. With his appointment, our Executive Leadership Team is now fully staffed and well-positioned to drive forward the Internet Society and Foundation's 2030 strategy.

The Executive Leadership team is working to strengthen collaboration between the Internet Society and the Foundation and to ensure that we are all working toward one strategy. During our March team retreat, we focused on leadership development and on how to drive high performance and accountability across the Internet Society. We are on track to issue our first survey of staff to get feedback on the team's performance and to identify areas of focus for the remainder of 2025.

Business and leadership continuity and enterprise risk management are major focus areas this year. To proactively manage risks, we are developing an enterprise-wide risk management framework and

register, which will be presented to the Board for discussion at the September 2025 retreat. Internet Society leadership is also closely monitoring the evolving policy and economic landscape to assess the impact on the Internet Society's operations and strategy and will keep the Board informed of our analysis.

A draft CEO succession policy and plan has been presented to the Leadership Continuity Committee for consideration. To ensure organizational resilience, top executives now have their own continuity plans in place, and we will implement talent development strategies to support these plans.

Accessibility

A quarterly report on Accessibility is attached and provides a detailed overview of our progress on implementing the Accessibility Operational Framework and the Website Accessibility Plans as adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2024. There are two items of particular note:

- We have started the annual audits of our primary websites and have achieved a major success: our main www.internetsociety.org site scored 99/100 for the desktop view.
- We are now prominently encouraging grant recipients for local Internet Governance Forum (IGF) events to use the IGF DCAD Accessibility Guidelines.

As noted in the update, the accessibility working group will continue additional forms of testing, but it was good to see this initial result.