



President & CEO Report

April 2025

Sally Wentworth

Introduction

We enter 2026 encouraged by strong 2025 results and confident in the direction we're headed. We also know the broader context remains uncertain, with shifting global dynamics and volatility that can affect the Internet ecosystem. We are taking deliberate steps to stay prepared, manage risk thoughtfully, and remain firmly focused on our mission.

The [2025 Annual Report](#) reflects meaningful progress across our programs, alongside a significantly improved financial position driven by disciplined financial management and the success of our co-funding approach. These outcomes demonstrate that our 2030 Strategy is translating into real impact and a stronger, more resilient organization.

The combination of solid program results, financial discipline, and organizational confidence puts ISOC on firmer footing as we move forward. This progress is also evident internally. Staff survey results point to greater clarity around priorities, stronger alignment to strategy, and growing confidence in our collective ability to execute well. At the same time, we see the need to simplify internal processes to improve effectiveness and staff morale.

We are seeing that progress reflected in the start of the year. With clearer priorities and early steps to streamline how we work, Q1 results have been encouraging, and in several areas the organization has been able to begin executing at pace. Clearer strategic direction meant that 2026 plans were underway from the outset. In a few cases, additional funding and emerging opportunities have already allowed us to exceed initial expectations and we are prepared to pivot our programming as global conditions require. The Executive Team is monitoring progress and will propose target or plan adjustments at mid-year as needed.

CEO Focus and Oversight

During Q1, leadership attention was concentrated on three closely connected priorities.

The first was **external engagement** — raising ISOC's visibility, influence, and credibility across the global Internet ecosystem. The Board has emphasized the importance of this, and early results suggest that increased senior-level engagement is strengthening relationships and opening doors in meaningful ways.



The second priority was **organizational resilience**, with a focus on ensuring ISOC is financially, operationally, and culturally positioned to operate confidently in a challenging global environment. This includes strengthening risk management practices, supporting staff safety and wellbeing, and improving coordination and clarity across the organization.

The third priority was **fostering a culture of excellence**. This work centers on clarity, accountability, and pride in how we do our work — not as a short-term initiative, but as a sustained commitment to leadership practices and organizational norms that support consistent, high-quality execution.

During this meeting, Managing Directors Yogesh and Chris provide more detailed updates on Society performance to date, including philanthropic giving programs, co-funding plans, and efforts to reinvigorate corporate and organizational membership relationships. CFO Sae Park will present our 2025 financial reports and provide an early glimpse of 2026 finances. Ilona Levin, General Counsel, will provide more detail on our enterprise risk management framework, including emerging risks. Katie Bengaard, SVP of Strategy, will show the board how our growing body of evidence shows that our advocacy and investments are moving the needle.

All of these efforts are central to sustaining impact at scale and reinforcing ISOC's role as a trusted partner across the Internet ecosystem.

Advancing Impact Through Leadership and Organizational Strength

Over the first quarter of 2026, we have deliberately worked to strengthen both ISOC's **external leadership presence** and its **internal foundations**, recognizing that long-term impact depends on both.

External Engagement and Leadership Presence

One of the Board's clear directions has been to raise the level of ISOC's external engagement, and the results to date are encouraging. Increasing CEO- and senior-level participation is strengthening relationships, opening doors, and helping position ISOC as a trusted and credible partner.

Our presence at **APRICOT** was the strongest it has been in several years and allowed us to deepen relationships with **APNIC** and the broader APAC technical community. These conversations led to tangible outcomes. In Indonesia, discussions with the Ministry of ICT helped catalyze a **Community-Centered Connectivity** grant proposal from the Jakarta Chapter — an encouraging signal of growing confidence in ISOC's approach.



In **Kenya**, Chris Locke led ISOC engagement at the APC Community-Centered Connectivity Network Managers Bootcamp, strengthening the partnerships that underpin our connectivity strategy and development of co-funding opportunities.

We also continued to engage at the regional and global policy level. Chris's keynote at the **IX CITEL Assembly** advanced ISOC's work on connectivity and Internet safety within a multistakeholder framework. Yogesh's participation at **NDSS** enabled productive discussions on how the symposium can evolve as part of ISOC's broader cybersecurity portfolio, linking research more deliberately to deployment and policy. In parallel, our advocacy team led the third encryption advocacy workshop for European civil society organizations working on the front lines of digital security.

At **ICANN in Mumbai**, ISOC's senior-level engagement was visible and substantive, particularly around **WSIS+20 and Internet governance**. Follow-on meetings with the Indian government in **Delhi** led to concrete outcomes, including collaboration with ISOC and our chapters on capacity-building initiatives, as well as requests for ISOC input into digital inclusion consultations.

Grantee engagement is now more consistently incorporated into senior-level travel and meetings, strengthening relationships with funded partners and improving leadership visibility into on-the-ground impact.

Overall, these engagements are demonstrating the value of raising the level of representation. They are strengthening partnerships, reinforcing ISOC's credibility, and creating real opportunities for mission-aligned impact.

Organizational Resilience

Alongside this increased external activity, we have continued to strengthen ISOC internally to ensure the organization remains resilient and well prepared in an uncertain global environment.

Building on foundational work completed in 2025, we further operationalized the **Enterprise Risk Management framework** in Q1, introducing a more structured approach to risk reporting and mitigation with regular visibility at the CEO level. This has improved our ability to identify and address enterprise risks proactively. **Ilona Levine, General Counsel**, is leading this work for the Society.

Given ongoing global volatility, we have advanced targeted mitigation efforts to support **staff safety and travel**, including scenario planning and appropriate program contingencies.

Much of this work happens behind the scenes, but it is essential to ensuring that ISOC can continue to operate responsibly, support our people, and deliver reliably on our mission.



Culture of Excellence

Underlying both our external impact and our internal resilience is a deliberate focus on strengthening ISOC's **culture of excellence**, which is a key priority in 2026.

For ISOC, excellence is not about doing more or striving for perfection. It is about being clear about our goals, holding ourselves to high standards, making thoughtful decisions, and taking pride in how we work and how we engage with our community.

In January, the Executive Leadership Team and Vice Presidents met to focus on leadership practices that empower staff to make decisions, take ownership, and solve problems, while also knowing when to seek clarity. Emphasis was placed on clear goal-setting and ensuring that individual contributions are visibly connected to organizational priorities and outcomes. This is long-term work, and the leadership team remains fully committed to sustaining it.

This focus on excellence also extends to how ISOC shows up externally. The addition of **Niki Masghati as Chief of Staff** to the CEO is already strengthening how Executive engagements are planned and executed, helping ensure that senior-level interactions are purposeful, well prepared, and effective.

Looking Ahead

In 2026, we will build on this strong start by staying tightly focused on the few priorities that matter most, deepening the partnerships that extend our reach, and continuing to strengthen the operational and cultural foundations that make consistent execution possible. In a period of ongoing global uncertainty, these investments in leadership, resilience, partnership and excellence will help ensure ISOC remains agile and accountable — delivering credible, mission-aligned results throughout 2026.