UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Free expression

Privacy

Ethics

Access

3–4

CONNECTing the Dots:
Options for Future Action

Conference on UNESCO's Internet Study:
access, free expression, privacy and ethics

A multistakeholder Conference on UNESCO's Internet Study on access, free expression, privacy and ethics

Introduction

The digital revolution is impacting on all spheres of public and private life. The Internet affects access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, and the field of ethics and privacy. This intensifies as more and more personal and public information is collected, stored, processed and shared via the Internet. In a multistakeholder governed Internet ecosystem, all stakeholders also contribute to shaping the Internet. These developments bring unparalleled opportunities as well as challenges.

Cyberspace is especially complex and sensitive, because of its transnational and multidimensional character and its growing importance. This calls for a holistic approach to address the broad range of issues relating to its access, participation and use. UNESCO as a universal organization with a mandate relevant to most of the important cyber-related issues has proven to be well placed to foster trust and dialogue at the global, regional and national levels. In this context, the international multistakeholder Conference will discuss the zero draft of UNESCO's Internet Study and possible options for future action. It will be convened at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 3–4 March 2015.

Participants: Approximately 300 participants from the multistakeholder community including governments, civil society, academia, private sector, technical community, intergovernmental and international organizations and others. Plenary sessions will be streamed online for the global public.

Background

The Internet Study was mandated by Resolution 52 of the 37th General Conference of UNESCO in 2013, which requested a comprehensive study on Internet-related issues produced through an inclusive multistakeholder consultation process. The Study covers Internet issues within the mandate of UNESCO, including access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy, and ethical dimensions of the information society. It also contains options for future actions.

The framework for the Study, proposed by UNESCO's Secretariat, is informed by its concept of "Internet Universality", which summarizes UNESCO's positions on the Internet and highlights four R-O-A-M principles: (i) that the Internet should be Human Rights-based (ii) "Open", (iii) "Accessible to all", and (iv) nurtured by Multistakeholder participation.

During a five-month multistakeholder consultation process on the Study concept paper in 2014, 30 study questions were refined, and calls for responses were launched. The consultations further recognised that a conference on the draft study would be an important opportunity to secure external input and expertise before finalizing the study.

UNESCO convenes the CONNECTing the Dots Conference in time to incorporate comments and feedback on the Study and its recommendations ahead of reporting about progress on the Study to the 196th Executive Board in April 2015. The final outcomes of the process will be presented to the 38th General Conference, in November 2015, within the framework of UNESCO's report on the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society.

Dates: 3–4 March 2015

A meeting of the Internet Governance Forum's (IGF's) Multistakeholder Advisory Group may also take place at UNESCO, adjacent to the **CONNECTing the Dots Conference**

Duration: 2 days Conference

Location: UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France

Working languages: French and English

Consultations on the Study in 2014

During 2014, consultation events on the Study design and elements have been conducted at a dozen global fora and online submissions to the Study questionnaire available on the webpage www.unesco.org/new/internetstudy have been ongoing as of July. In 2014, consultations on the Study were held at fora including the World Press Freedom Day International Conference, the Stockholm Internet Freedom Forum, the Freedom Online Coalition Meeting, the WSIS+10 High Level Review Event, the International Association for Media and Communication Research meeting in Hyderabad, the 9th Internet Governance Forum in Istanbul and the Global Internet Governance for Academia Network (GigaNet) conference.

The Study builds on existing publications and also includes new research on sub-themes. UNESCO's previous Internet-related documents are being examined, and all stakeholders have been invited to submit research in the fields covered by the study.

A range of related new research has also been commissioned, including on Media and Information Literacy, hate speech, online licensing and free expression, and protection of journalistic sources.

Objectives and outcomes

1. Concentrate the insights of experts in the fields of the Internet Study to review and contribute to the findings and options for future action proposed by this Study

2. Reaffirm UNESCO's global, consultative and multistakeholder approach with regards to Internet debates

3. Advance understanding, exchanges and agreement on pressing issues in the fields of access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy and ethics in Information and Knowledge Societies as they relate to the Internet

4. Adopt at the Conference a multistakeholder Statement concerning the Study and options for future actions for consideration at the 38th General Conference of UNESCO, in November 2015

Draft Agenda:

TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2015	
9.00–9.30	Registration
9h 30–10.30	**Opening remarks**
10.30–10.45	**Presentation of key findings** of the draft study
10.45–12.30	**High-level dialogue:** The Internet Ecosystem and UNESCO's role – which options for future action?
12.30–14.00	Lunch
14.00–15.30	**4 breakout sessions** 1. Access 2. Freedom of Expression 3. Privacy 4. Ethics
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
16.00–17.00	**4 breakout sessions** (participants circulate to 2nd topic of their choice) 1. Access 2. Freedom of Expression 3. Privacy 4. Ethics
17.15–18.00	**Plenary:** Reporting from breakout sessions
18.15–19.30	Drafting Group: Conference outcome document

WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2015	
9.30–11.00	**4 breakout sessions:** Intersections of the fields of the study 1. Freedom of Expression and Privacy 2. Access and Ethics 3. Privacy and Ethics and 4. Access and Freedom of Expression
11.00–11.15	Coffee break
11.15–12.30	**4 breakout sessions:** Intersections of the fields of the study: 5. Freedom of Expression and Ethics 6. Access and Privacy **Options for future action:** 1. What might be the options for future action within UNESCO's mandate with regards to online access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy and the ethical dimensions of the information society? 2. What might be UNESCO's role in relation to key stakeholders of the Internet ecosystem, including governments, technical community, private sector, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and users, specifically with regards to issues concerning online access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy and ethical dimensions of information and knowledge societies?
12.30–14.00	Lunch
13.00–14.00	Drafting Group: Conference outcome document (continues, if need be)
14.00–15.30	**Plenary:** Reporting back from the breakout sessions
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
16.00–17.00	Plenary: Discussion and adoption of the Conference outcome document
17.00–18.00	**Closing remarks**

Contact : For more information please visit our website at www.unesco.org/new/en/netconference2015 or contact us about the Conference at: netconference@unesco.org, or about the Study at: internetstudy@unesco.org