

Telecommunities Canada

President's Report

December 4, 2023

A year goes by quickly and there is never enough time to address all the possible issues that we, in the TC community follow as part of our interest in seeing the internet evolve in a way that truly serves the public interest. The following are the initiatives we have formally engaged in over the last year.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

TC Statement to the Global Digital Compact

This was a UN project seeking to outline principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all. TC responded to a questionnaire with responses to questions concerning the digital commons as a global public good. Our statement to this process is currently highlighted on the TC webpage.

WSIS+20

What is this?

In Tunis in 2025, the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) legitimized the idea that the internet should be governed through a multistakeholder model. This is a very revolutionary idea, that governments should share governance with other stakeholders. The 2025 review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) implementation is a critical opportunity to reaffirm support for multistakeholder internet governance. This governance model still in its evolutionary phase and its survival depends on input from stakeholders outside government.

As the TC representative at ICANN76 and ICANN77, I organized the following panels on the WSIS+20 review

WSIS+20 Public Forum Puerto Rico -- March 15 2023

Objective of this panel was to update the community on the current stage of the process and propose intervention strategies that stakeholders might adopt. Participants from a wide spectrum of constituencies agreed that participation from as many groups as possible was essential to ensure the future of multistakeholder internet governance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uGdMHRQne4>

WSIS+20 At Large panel - Hamburg -- Oct 25, 2023

This session discussed the process underway and ways various stakeholders could engage in a process that, being UN driven, will move forward in a highly structured multilateral space. Any input on behalf of stakeholders outside government will have to be organized and coordinated with respective governments in order to find any traction.

Other international meetings

NARALO Roundtable on Broadband Access in US and Canada -- ICANN77 Washington June 2023

The Roundtable considered various government efforts to expand broadband access in the US and Canada. The panelists explored and critiqued federal, state, and local initiatives to make broadband more available, affordable, and usable. The Roundtable looked at different approaches taking place in urban, rural, and Indigenous communities and how these efforts are progressing, including programs seeking to improve access, financial affordability, device availability and end user activation.

On behalf of TC, Marita Moll and NCF staffer Andrew Marty Asare presented Canadian perspectives on this panel. Andrew spoke about what NCF is doing on the ground to stimulate digital access and equity in Ottawa. Andrew is developing a free community wifi pilot for neighbourhoods facing higher inequities, and other new services NCF can offer to ensure everyone is able to harness the digital skills and tools they need to participate in the community fully. Opinions from TC members were requested and used in the context of these presentations.

Broadband Strategies in United States and Canada -- North American School of Internet Governance (NASIG) - June 10, 2023

Broadband connectivity is a critical factor for economic growth and social inclusion in North America and Canada. This session explored the strategies that both countries are implementing to improve access and adoption rates. A wide range of topics were covered, including the role of public-private partnerships in expanding connectivity, and the impact of emerging technologies on broadband infrastructure. On behalf of TC, I was among the panelists who shared their experiences and insights on national broadband initiatives, including community-led broadband projects, policy interventions, and innovative technologies that are helping to bridge the digital divide. The session was designed to provide valuable insights for policymakers, community leaders, and anyone interested in advancing digital equity and economic growth in the United States and Canada.

Some information and tables reflecting the state of broadband in Canada and US came out of this session and were distributed to the TC list.

Women pioneers and inclusion -- June 10 NASIG

I was part of a 3 person panel discussing the role of women in internet governance

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Panel on WSIS+20 proposed and organized for the Canadian Internet Governance Forum (CIGF) - Montreal - Oct 4, 2023

Session description: In 2005, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) recognized the importance of multistakeholderism in internet governance and the respective roles played by governments, the private sector, civil society, intergovernmental and international organizations. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is one of the major outcomes of WSIS. The IGF and its extension will be a critical aspect of the WSIS +20 review process, which will inevitably be informed by the proposed Global Digital Compact. Since WSIS, the world has changed – so too have the political, social and economic dynamics with it. As we head towards WSIS +20, this breakout session discussed the future of global internet governance. What should the Canadian priorities be and how can Canadian stakeholders engage in the process effectively?

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Nominated TC member, Adrian Schmidt, for the position of NARALO secretariat. Adrian was subsequently elected to this 2 year posting. NARALO -- North American At Large Organization - is the umbrella group for all enduser organizations and individuals active in the ICANN ecosystem. TC is an important member (and one of the founding members) of this group.

Participated in the steering committee for the Canadian Internet Governance Forum (CIGF) -- attending meetings, proposing and organizing sessions

Populating the TC list -- Sharing various articles of interest and postings about meetings national and international that impact our interests and where we can be active

NEXT STEPS

On WSIS+20

- filling out an input questionnaire on behalf of TC and encouraging other Canadian input -- deadline January 30
- Possible attendance at an in person consultation in March to be organized through ICANN
- contacting relevant individuals at Global Affairs to seek standing on any Canadian input

Other foreseeable activities:

Continued participation in ICANN At Large constituency, North American School of Internet Governance and Canadian Internet Governance Forum

THANKS

There are many people whose skills we depend upon and I am grateful for their assistance at all times:

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Garth Graham -- listserv maintenance and general backup/support, zoom master

Adrian Schmidt -- youtube and large file storage, occasional zoom master