

An overview of internet governance

AfriSIG – African School on
Internet Governance, 2024

Anriette Esterhuysen
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What I will try to cover...

Definitions and scope of IG

Key concepts associated with IG

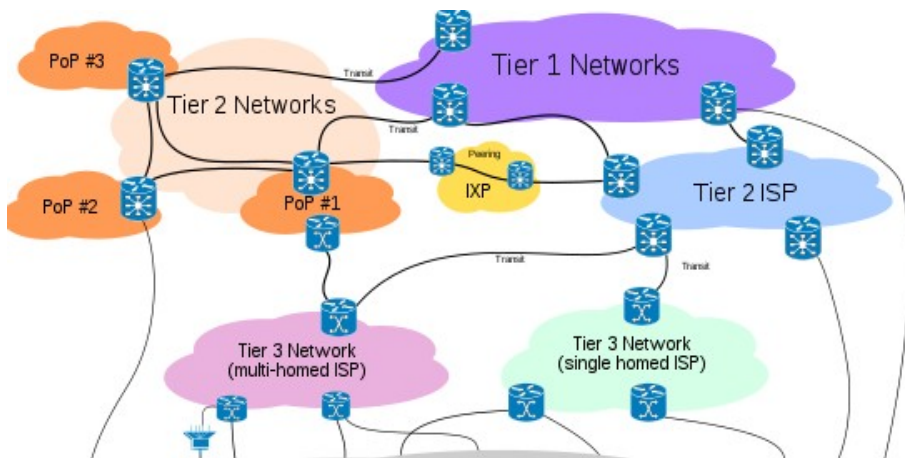
The Internet Governance Forum process

Current processes and debates

Q & A

What is the internet?

IS IT ... ?



OR IS IT ... ?

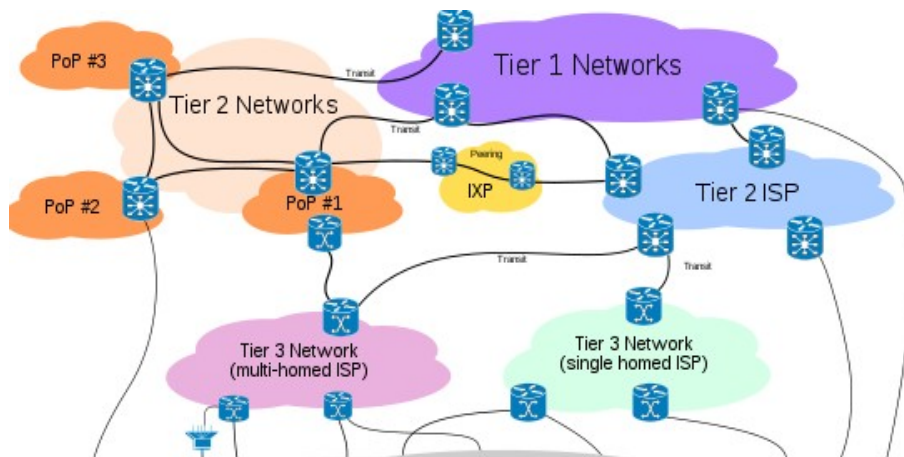


A network of autonomous networks of computing devices, which share the same core protocols enabling them to interoperate regardless of the endpoint applications and devices.

What is the internet?

What is internet governance?

GOVERNANCE OF THE INTERNET
ITSELF



GOVERNANCE THAT CONCERNS
THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNET





IG narrow definition

The handling of technical coordination required for, and policy issues related to, the interoperability and smooth functioning of the different components of internet infrastructure and the exchange of information/contents over the Internet.



Narrow definition - institutions

ICANN – Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers est. 1998

Internet Engineering Task Force: architecture and hundreds of protocols including: TCP, IP, UDP

W3C: World Wide Web Consortium - application-layer standards for the Web

ITU: International Telecommunications Union - Spectrum & digital migration


IEEE: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - Ethernet LAN & Wi-Fi standards

Internet Society – Community and infrastructure

AfTLD – African Top Level Domain Association

ccTLDs – country code top level domain associations

AfriNIC – African Network Information Centre



Narrow definition - issues

Internet logical resources

Globally unique identifiers such as
IP addresses

Interconnection

Open internet

Domain name system

Autonomous system numbers

IPV4 numbers running out and IPV6
adoption

Security...



WSIS UN approach

World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005) outcomes

Broad definition of IG and multistakeholder approach and annual IGF

Human rights oriented and people-centered

Stakeholders to be included and have respective roles and responsibilities (not very clearly defined).

Technical coordination to continue to be lead by technical organisations.

Governments: to be involved on an “equal footing” with one another and and “enhanced cooperation” to be addressed.

WSIS ten year review 2015 outcomes

IGF renewal, focus on women, affirmed broad definition and multistakeholder approach. Requested more work on enhanced cooperation.

Next review in 2025

WGIG: broad definition accepted and used by UN – Tunis Agenda

“Internet governance is the development and application by governments, private sector and civil society in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.”

WGIG report and Tunis Agenda, 2005

**Broad
approach
institutions +
processes**

National: Telecoms regulators (e.g. NTRA in Egypt, NCC in Nigeria) and Law enforcement agencies

Ministries of information and communication, finance, foreign affairs, security, science and technology, education

Civil society organisations/movements

Trade unions

Research institutions

Courts

Global: United Nations agencies: UNESCO, UNDP, ITU, WIPO, HRC, OHCHR

Industry bodies: (e.g. Facebook Oversight Board and Internet Service Providers Associations - ISPA)

Regional: African Union Commission and its organs

African Commission on Human and People's Rights

African IGF, West African IGF, Central African IGF, East African IGF, North African IGF

Broad definition - principles

WSIS principles of participation, people-centred development and human rights

netMundial.br IG principles - statement of 2014 - captures the consensus but has no formal status – updated in 2024 Sao Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines

International human rights standards

Treaties and Human Rights Council Resolutions

African Commission's "Declaration on Freedom of Expression"

Cybersecurity norms

Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace

UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE)

Global Digital Compact

New set of principles to be agreed on in 2024 at the Summit of the Future (September) – African Compact

Others: Declaration of the Future of the Internet

**Broad
definition -
principles
in Africa**

**African Commission on Human and
People's Rights - Declaration of
Principles on Freedom of Expression**

**African Union Declaration on Internet
Governance**

Agenda 2063

Digital Transformation Strategy

African Union Data Policy Framework

African Global Compact

**African Continental Free Trade Area
Digital Protocol**

What else?

Broad definition issues

Human rights – Freedom expression
and association AND economic and
cultural rights - Access - Data transfers,
trade - Competition regulation -
Security and stability of infrastructure -
Privacy and data protection - Liability of
intermediaries - Surveillance by states
and by companies - Misinformation
and abuse – Elections – Trade -
Internet shutdowns
... and more



Global
issues and
institutions

Technical
issues and
institutions

Regional
issues and
institutions

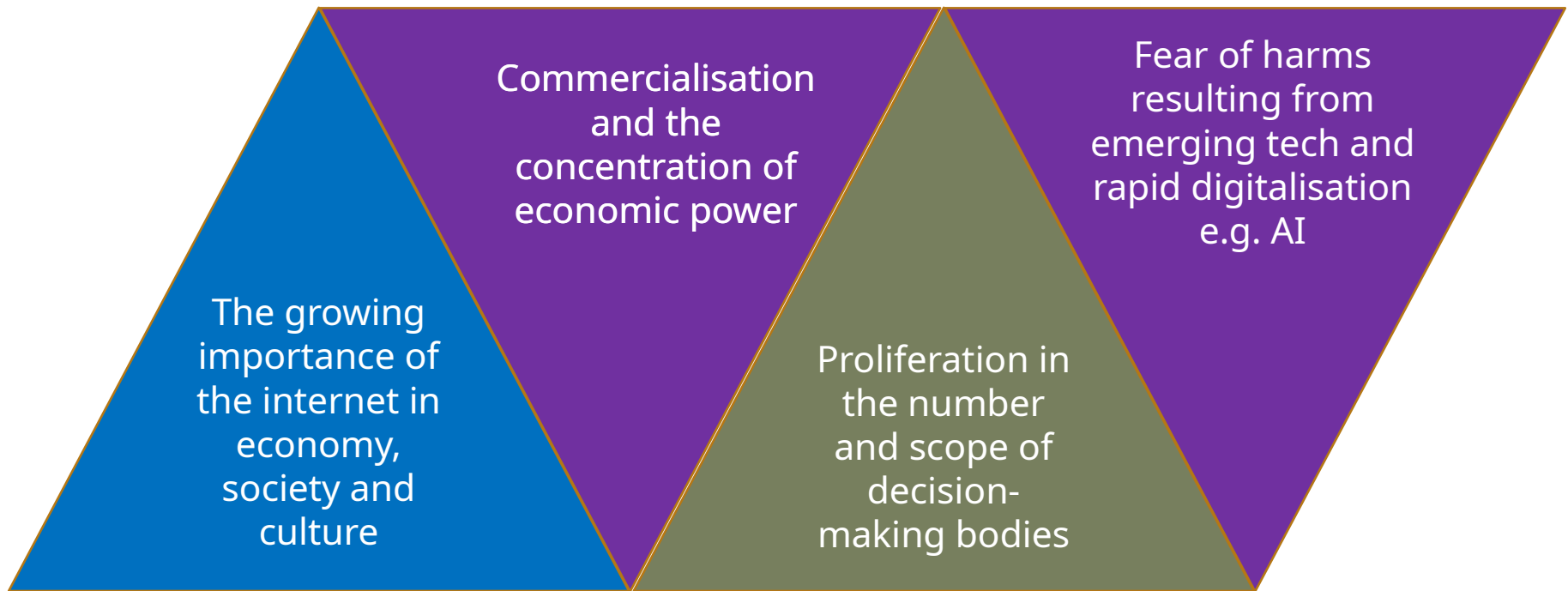
Cross
jurisdiction
issues and
institutions

National
issues and
institutions

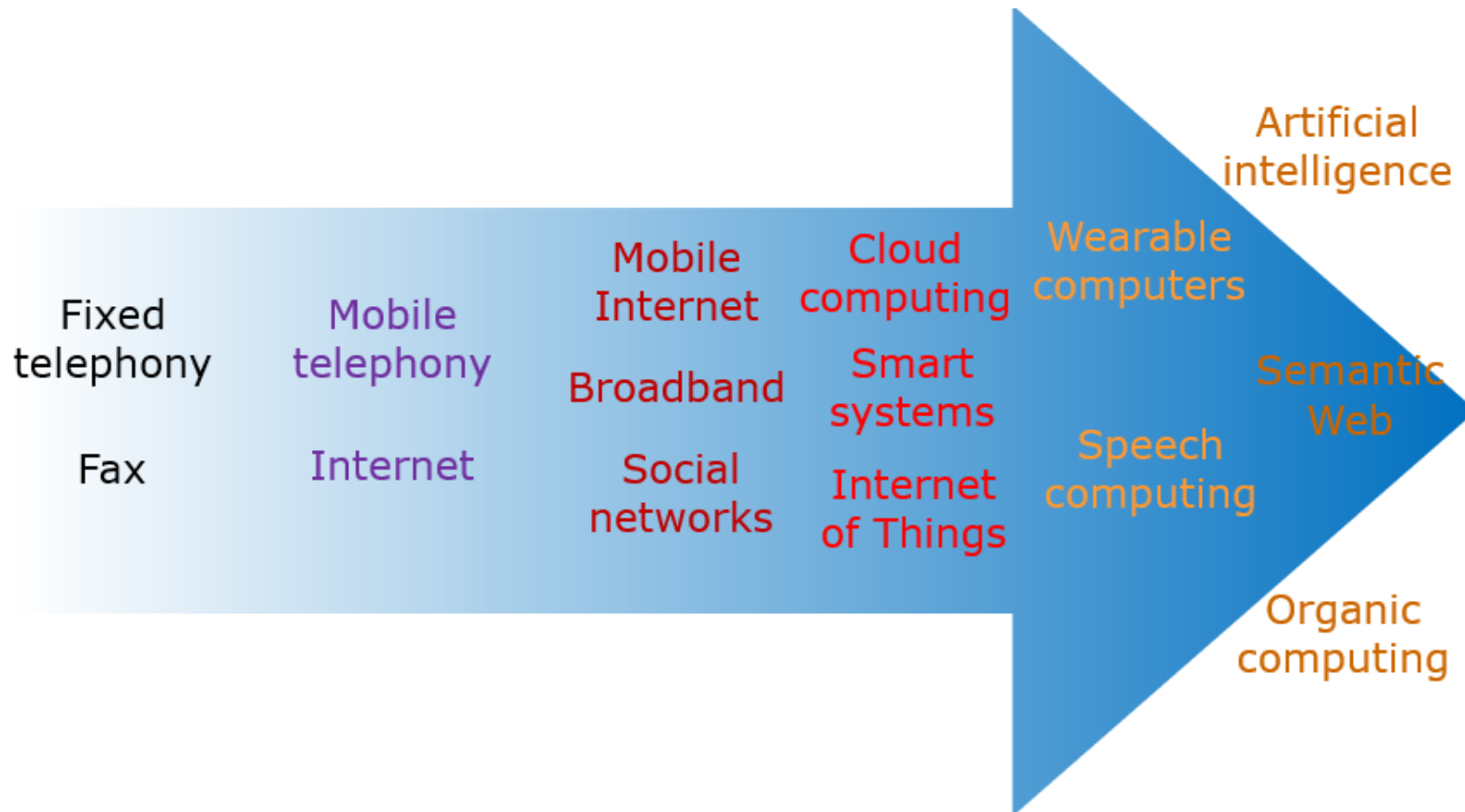
Local issues
and
institutions

**The overlapping IG
jigsaw**

Four critical changes in the ecosystem of the internet



The internet as part of digitalisation



The concentration of digital power



Current IG concerns

Continued digital inequality.. and growing in many ways

The pace of change and changing nature of the internet: scale and technology e.g. Artificial Intelligence

The internet as part of digitalisation

The concentration of digital power and platform accountability

Digital geopolitics - new “cold” war

Shaping the digital future: opportunities and risks

The future of regulation (permissionless innovation and the precautionary principle)

Multilateralism and multistakeholderism

Participation in decision-making

Environmental sustainability

Cybersecurity... peace.. war... conflict between countries – the challenge of attribution

The Internet Governance Forum intgovforum.org

An outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society 2005

A forum for dialogue, debate and information exchange among all stakeholder groups from around the world – linked to the UN but not overseen by UN member states

Organised by a Multistakeholder Advisory Group together with a UN Secretariat and a host country

“Bottom-up” approach

Evolved into more than an event with intersessional work + national and regional and youth events held throughout the year

Includes more than 135 NRIs, more than 20 Dynamic Coalitions, 2 policy networks and 2 Best Practice forums

Renewal of mandate in 2025

The Internet Governance Forum going forward...

Growth and diversification of the internet governance space

MAG Working Group on IGF Strategy and Strengthening

Global Digital Compact implementation

Digital governance or “Internet” governance?

The IGF as a process and an “institution:

- Why is it so important?
- What is needed for it to survive and thrive?
- What is its status in your country or region?



**Next steps on
your journey
as part of
internet
governance
processes**

Understand how the internet works

IG is about policy, but you HAVE TO understand how the internet works and is managed and developed

Know your local environment - people, processes, institutions, issues

Legislation and regulation

Parliament, portfolio committees

Institutions from all stakeholder groups (gov, business, civil society, technical community)

Individuals

What are the main internet policy issues in Africa? And in your country, specifically?

Get involved

Policy engagement – submissions, awareness raising, analysis, critique, implementation

Thank you!

Now it is your turn to talk :)

- Digital governance vs. Internet governance – what do you think?