

An overview of internet governance

AfriSIG – African School on
Internet Governance, 2023

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What I will try to cover...

What is internet governance?

Definitions and scope of IG

Key concepts associated with IG

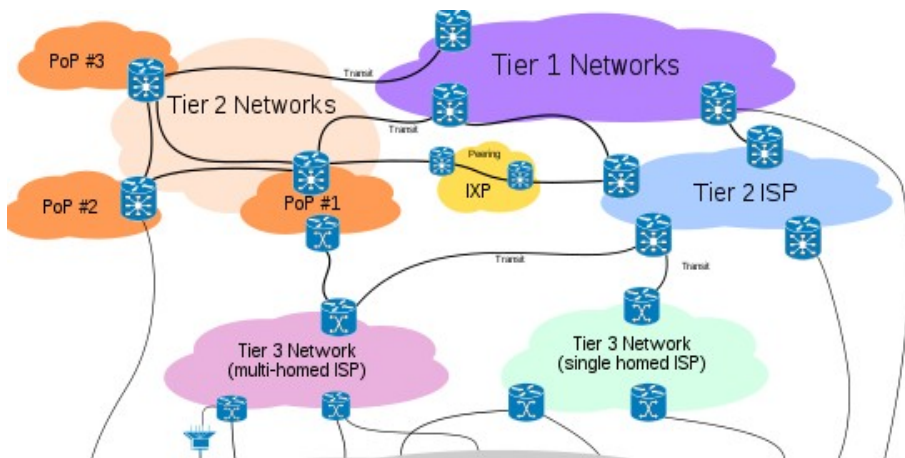
Current debates

The Internet Governance Forum process

Q & A

What is the internet?

IS IT ... ?



OR IS IT ... ?



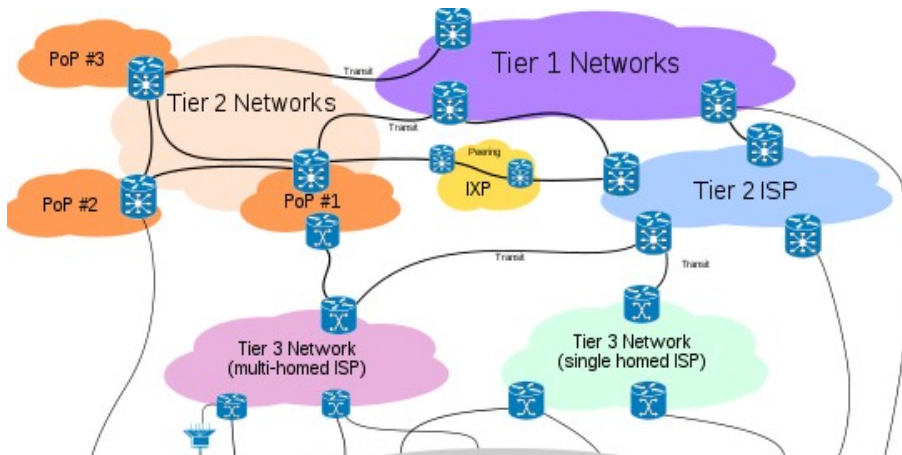
A network of autonomous networks of computing devices, which share the same core protocols enabling them to interoperate regardless of the endpoint applications and devices.

What is the internet?

What is internet governance?

GOVERNANCE OF THE
INTERNET ITSELF

GOVERNANCE THAT
CONCERNS THE IMPACT OF
THE INTERNET



A red, irregular, blob-like shape with a soft, organic edge, containing the text 'IG narrow definition'.

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

- 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
- ICANN – Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Number
- Internet Society
- 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

Domain name system

Autonomous system numbers

IPV4 numbers running out and
IPV6 adoption

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)

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

East 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

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

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**

**African Union Data Policy
Framework**

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

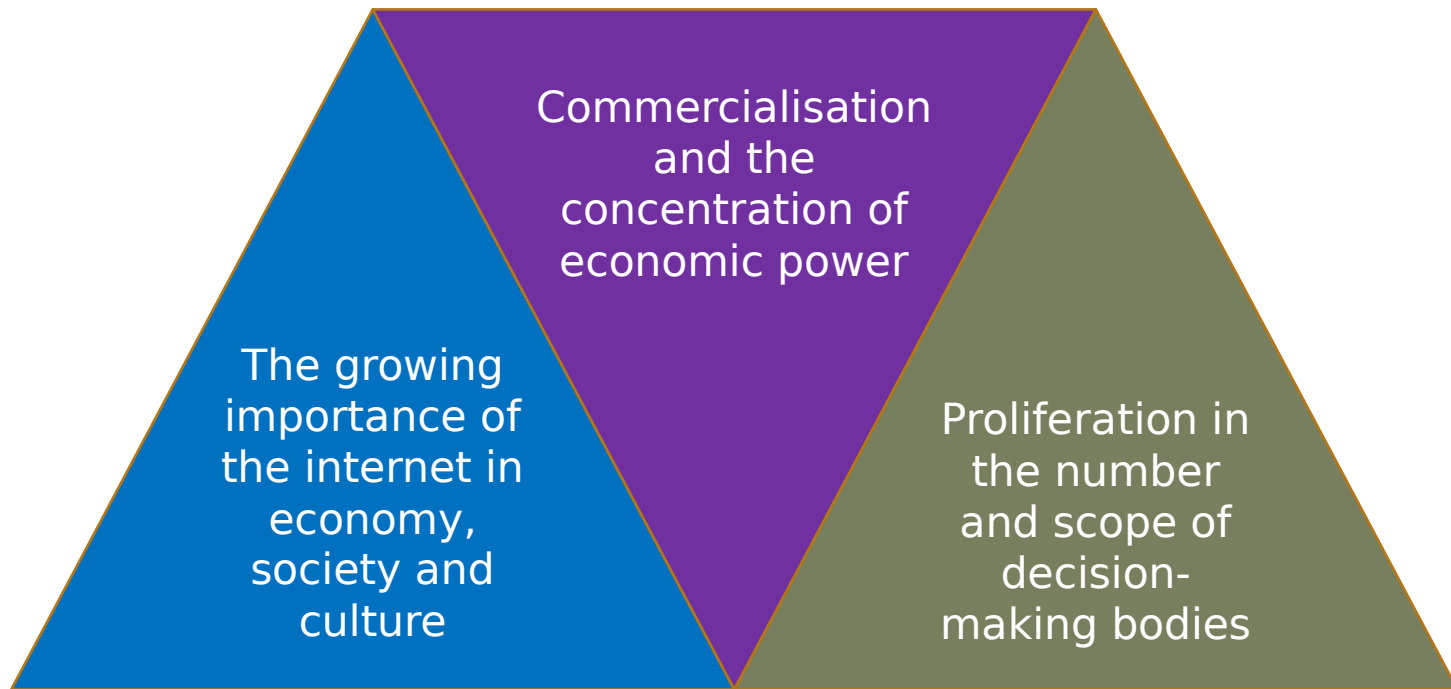
Cross
jurisdiction
issues and
institutions

National
issues and
institutions

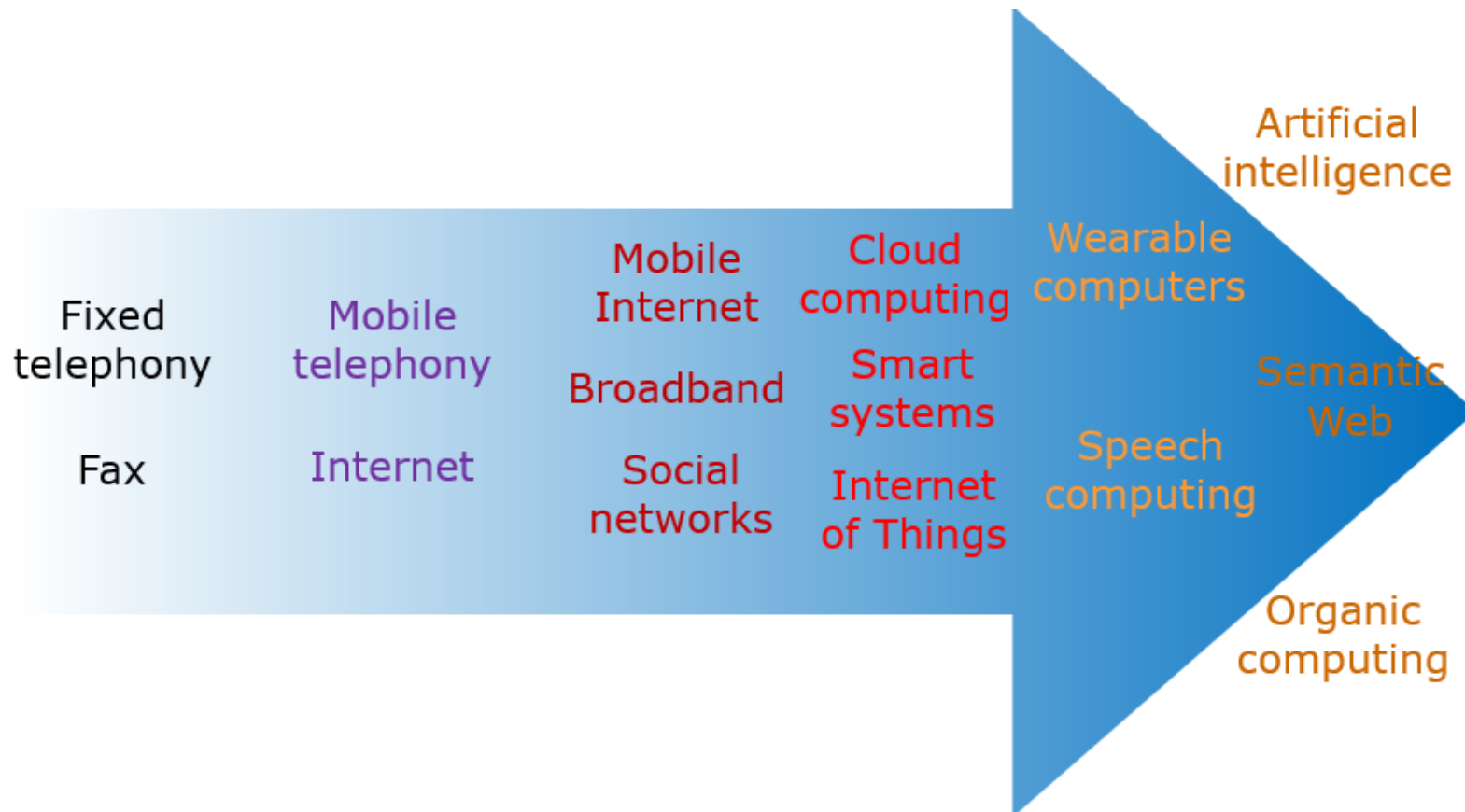
Local
issues and
institutions

**The overlapping IG
jigsaw**

Three critical changes in the ecosystem of the internet



The internet as part of digitalisation



The concentration of digital power



Current IG concerns

The pace of change and changing nature of the internet: scale and technology

The internet as part of digitalisation

The concentration of digital power

Digital geopolitics

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

Artificial Intelligence

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 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

UN Secretary-General's **Roadmap for Digital Cooperation**

“Our Common Agenda” and the Global Digital Compact, and the Summit of the Future in 2024

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?