

IGF History & 2009 Structure  
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IGF was formed as an output of the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society. It resulted from lengthy and painful negotiations that took place over three years leading up to the Tunis event. Its purpose, mandate and some ground rules for it are spelled out quite clearly in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The WSIS principles for Internet governance and the material concerning the IGF are available [here](#). The Tunis Agenda calls for the IGF to be multilateral, multistakeholder, democratic and transparent, with all stakeholders playing their appropriate roles. And most importantly, IGF is not to be a negotiating forum or a decision making body. Instead, the idea is for the IGF to be constituted as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process. It would have no involvement in day-to-day or technical operations of the Internet. In short, it is to be a place where issues can be explored in an open environment. In practice, the IGF has proven to be a place where issues are “conditioned” through a developmental process. Or as Nitin Desai, the Chair of the IGF multistakeholder advisory group (MAG), has said: “The IGF is a place where people who do not ordinarily talk to one another can come to talk.”

ISOC has participated at all stages of WSIS and the follow-on IGF. In this process we have succeeded in gaining significant recognition for our positions that support an open and globally accessible Internet. Much of this has been achieved through cooperation with our Chapters, members, and partner organizations from around the world.

Matthew Shears, and then myself have been members of the IGF MAG. We have also participated to all the Open Consultations that were led for the past four years:  
<http://www.isoc.org/isoc/conferences/wsis/IGF.shtml>

The ISOC membership survey we did in February 2009 to help us prepare for the Open Consultations, showed our members’ continuous interest and involvement in the IGF process. 42% of the respondents indicated they will participate in IGF 4. This was a confirmation for us that we needed to pursue our engagement and advocacy efforts, this year again, in the Forum: <http://www.isoc.org/pubpolpillar/docs/ig-survey-report-200905.pdf>

The survey also showed that ISOC members are more and more active in the preparation of this Forum, at the local level: 80% of those participating to IGF 4, have met or are planning to meet with local policymakers to discuss Internet governance issues.

The 2009 IGF is the fourth of five events called for by the WSIS. The United Nations Secretary General will be carrying out the broad public consultation about its future during the meeting in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. You can expect to hear quite a bit of discussion about whether the IGF should continue as is, be changed, or come to an end during the meeting, as well as in the formal session.

In the membership survey we conducted in February, 83% of the respondents expressed their desire for the IGF to continue past its initial five-year mandate.

### **IGF 2009 Themes**

Over time, the IGF has addressed almost all of the issues specified in the Tunis Agenda, at varying levels of detail. Yet some of the issues remain contentious. At their February meeting, the MAG decided that different themes need to be dealt with differently. The MAG identified three different types of formats:

**Type A:** Issues where there is no convergence of views. In these cases there is no need for any panel or introductory speeches. An open discussion is best suited for these issues.

**Type B:** Issues that are generally understood, but which need further exploration. For these issues, an introductory panel of experts followed by a discussion was seen as the most appropriate format.

**Type C:** Issues where there is a convergence of views on the principles and the need for action. These issues could be dealt with by round table discussions which could look at solutions and best practices.

That understanding informs the themes of the IGF for 2009.

**“Internet Governance – Creating Opportunities for all”** was accepted as the overall title of the meeting. The proposed agenda is built around the following sub-themes, with a large “main session” devoted to each:

- Managing critical Internet resources;
- Security, openness and privacy;
- Access and diversity;
- Internet governance in the light of WSIS principles;
- Taking stock and the way forward – on the desirability of the continuation of the Forum;
- Emerging issues: Impact of Social Networks.

Each of the sub-themes is described in more detail in the [program paper](#) posted by the IGF Secretariat, available on their web site or from the link above. To the extent possible, workshops related to the sub-themes will be scheduled to run before the main session, although that was not possible in all cases. The idea there was to encourage people to prepare themselves to take part as actively as possible in the main sessions. The sub-themes are reviewed briefly from an ISOC perspective [here](#):

#### **Managing Critical Internet Resources:**

As a type A issue, this session will be held in the form of an open discussion, without panelists, in order to promote greater participation by all stakeholders to inform and provide their perspectives. The following issues are certain to be discussed, among others that can be presented from the floor:

- Transition from IPv4 to IPv6 – the RIRs and friends are sponsoring one workshop on this, but unfortunately it (and the other one) will happen after the main session.
- The JPA, the IANA contract and the role of governments – a few related workshops are planned on this topic, although the announcement of the outcome of the JPA may have an impact. The Internet Governance Caucus and LACNIC are organizing workshops. In addition, ICANN is holding an open forum that is obviously related.
- The internationalization of critical Internet resources management – there are fewer workshops here, but the topic is broad and will come up in several workshops.
- The importance of new TLDs and IDNs for development -- two workshops are organized on this topic, one by UNESCO and a second specifically looking at the case of the Arabic language.
- Enhanced cooperation – there are no workshops being held on this topic.

### *ISOC's interests*

This is the primary area of interest for the Internet Society. As home of the IETF, and as an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the Internet model, ISOC members are active in developing the session, and the Chennai Chapter has developed a Workshop on Fundamentals: Core Internet Values.

### **Security, Openness and Privacy:**

The discussion will be introduced by a panel of practitioners to set the stage for the discussion and bring out options for how to deal with the policy and practical choices related to the different clusters of issues. The discussion should cover practical aspects of the coordination needed to secure the network (e.g. to fight spam) and their relationship to issues pertaining to openness (e.g. ensuring the open architecture of the Internet). Issues to be discussed will include:

- The respect for privacy as a business advantage;
- Identity theft, identity fraud, and information leakage.
- Web 2.0;
- Social networks;
- Cloud computing and privacy, e.g. control of one's own data and data retention;
- Cultural and technical perspectives on the regulation of illegal Web contents;
- Regulatory models for privacy;
- Ensuring the open architecture of the Internet;
- Net Neutrality;
- Enabling frameworks for freedom;
- Ethical dimensions of the Internet.

This is a wide range of topics, and at the last MAG meeting, a large number of highly qualified speakers were proposed for the panel. Work goes on now to confirm their intention to be in Sharm El Sheikh. There are also a large number of workshops organized on the topic, including one from the Chennai Chapter of ISOC, entitled: “Roundtable: Balancing the need for Security and the concerns for Civil Liberties.” Discussion promises to be highly charged, because the topic bridges issues that some see as being diametrically opposed. In addition, the topic of openness has a connotation of protecting human rights is always contentious in global gatherings.

### **Access and Diversity:**

This session draws in the outcomes of workshops, which could compare and contrast approaches and best practices. Here too a panel of practitioners is planned, in the hope that participants may decide to take some steps to make progress. That is not inconsistent with the IGF’s non-decision-making role; participants are encouraged to form networks and to take action with colleagues on issues they have discussed at IGF. Issues mentioned for this session included:

- National and international regulatory issues;
- National and regional backbones;
- Infrastructure;
- Interconnection costs;
- Enabling Internet Exchange Points (IXPs);
- Modes of access and regulatory challenges;
- Safety and redundancy of access, e.g. cable cuts;
- Issues in mobile access;
- Multilingualism and IDNs;
- Access for people with disabilities.

The topic has been discussed in depth at previous IGF meetings, and there has been some positive alignment of views. That is reflected in the large number of workshops organized on the list of possible themes. ISOC has been working in several of these areas, so members and ambassadors can be expected to participate actively.

### **Internet Governance in the light of the WSIS Principles**

This session builds on the WSIS Principles, as contained in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, and is directly related to the mandate of the IGF. The Session will be based on Paragraph 72 i) of the Tunis Agenda which mandates the IGF to “promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes”. This session will be held in the form of an open discussion without panelists. Ambassador Janis Karklins, who chaired the preparatory process for the second phase of WSIS, Anriette Esterhuysen from the Association for Progressive Communications, and Bill Graham of ISOC will be co-moderators.

### **Emerging Issues: Impact of Social Networks**

The final substantive session of the IGF will be devoted to a discussion of emerging issues. It is intended to be a forward-looking session with a focus on policy instead of technology. The impact of social networks was chosen as the theme for this session. This was also seen as a way to attract young people and bring them into the discussion, including through remote participation. A panel will be composed to open the discussion, but there will be lots of time left for participation from the floor.