

Internet Way of Networking

Championing a healthy foundation for the global Internet



Internet Society: a champion for the global Internet

The Internet Society is a global non-profit organization connecting and empowering communities to ensure the Internet remains trustworthy—open, globally connected, secure, and a force for good in the world. Founded by Internet pioneers, the Internet Society defends and promotes collaborative inter-networking, standards, and protocols that create access and build trust in the way the world exchanges information.

We believe the Internet is for everyone, but it's not just our privilege to use. It's our responsibility to improve it, fulfilling the Internet's potential as an instrument of opportunity for all.

Promoting the 'Internet Way of Networking'

The Internet is an incredibly successful and powerful tool that empowers people to connect, speak, innovate, share, choose, and trust. It is a key technology underlying radical changes in the way that we communicate personally and do business. And, the Internet owes its success not only to the technology, but to the way it operates and evolves. This is what we call the Internet Way of Networking (IWN). It is how independent networks connect to one another and, all together, form the global Internet. When the IWN is under threat, so are the opportunities it offers.

One of the key characteristics of the network of networks, primarily responsible for its success, is that it has neither a center nor a central authority forcing it to behave in certain ways. However, an increasing number of state responses to evolving regulatory issues could intentionally or unintentionally change this model, or some of its properties, reducing its sustainability and the opportunities it continues to generate.

This year, the Internet Society is working to identify the inherent properties of the decentralized, open, and global Internet. These properties stand in contrast to other models of networking that may be centralized, less open, or less global in nature. The need to articulate the fundamental properties that describe how the Internet was built

Want to know more?

To learn more about the Internet Society's Internet Way of Networking project, please visit:

www.internetsociety.org/issues/internet-way-of-networking/

and operates, and the consequences these properties generate, is increasingly important to support a healthy foundation as technologies and uses evolve.

Based on these properties, we are developing a framework to define and champion a positive vision for the Internet so it can keep evolving as an innovative force for good and continue to be the incredible resource it is today.

Why is the Internet Society leading this work?

The Internet Society and its global community are the voice for a bigger, stronger Internet. Our staff and community have been deeply involved at the IETF, creating standards and norms to help the Internet become what it is today. They are experts who have built networks – in many different shapes and forms – across the world. They have the technical knowledge to actually develop and implement the systems and security measures that Internet protocol relies on to function.

The Internet Society's community is also made up of academics and policy experts with a deep understanding of how the laws, regulations, treaties, and norms that impact the Internet have helped it develop throughout the decades. We have participated in national, regional, and international policymaking processes and led multistakeholder processes around the globe. Together, we represent a unique viewpoint in the Internet ecosystem – one that is equally balanced between technology and policy priorities. We understand the interests of policymakers, but also know the limits of what is technologically advisable.

While other experts, academics, and civil society organizations have attempted to carry out similar work to the Internet Way of Networking project, they have primarily focused on the application layer of the Internet. Many of the existing frameworks and initiatives about regulation and competition conflate current user experience online with the generative foundation of the Internet and its model of internetworking. While they serve the purpose they were created for, the Internet Society is uniquely positioned to create a framework that focuses on the architecture and design characteristics that make the Internet, the Internet.

A brighter future for the Internet

Perhaps now more than ever, the Internet has proved its worth in terms of keeping people connected and enabling us to collaborate on solutions to address global problems. We can do this because the Internet is open and for everyone. It's up to everyone who values and uses the Internet to keep it that way. The Internet Society's work to develop the IWN Framework will help us mobilize our diverse community to create the Internet we want rather than the one we fear.

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