

DISSERTATION - INTERNET GOVERNANCE: CHANGING GLOBAL SCENARIO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The structure of Global Internet Governance is dominated by a number of organizations and forums. These consist of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force), Internet Architecture Board, the World Wide Web Consortium, the Internet Society and the regional Internet Address Registries. Amongst them, however, ICANN is the chief policymaking organization. The other sources of policy for the Internet Governance ecosystem consist of the multistakeholder forums to discuss policies, activities and developments in Internet Governance. These include the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Forum, and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council. Additionally, the NetMundial Initiative was an active Internet Governance platform during the period of 2014-2016.

The evolution of Internet Governance begins with complete and authoritative control exercised by the US Department of Defense. The Internet itself had been developed during the 1980s as part of a research project funded by the Department. The core of the Internet consists of a system of assigned names and numbers which are now controlled by ICANN and the five regional Internet registries. The assignment and management of these numbers consists of what is known as the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) Functions. These functions have been carried out by ICANN since its creation in 1998. ICANN is a private non-profit organization that was contracted by the US Department of Commerce to carry out the IANA functions apart from other responsibilities related to the Internet including framing of policy and policy processes for issues related to management of the Internet. ICANN relinquished its stewardship role over the IANA functions to the global multistakeholder community on October 1st, 2016.

The IGF is a global multistakeholder forum to discuss issues in Internet Governance. It was established at the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in 2005, through the Tunis Agenda. The WSIS process was initiated by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 56/183 in 2001. The first summit of the WSIS, held in 2003, attempted to map out the future for Internet Governance and constituted the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) to come up with recommendations. The chief recommendation of this body was to initiate an open multistakeholder Internet Governance Forum to discuss IG issues with government, civil society and technical community participants from across the globe. The IGF has since been held as an

annual summit. It was renewed for another ten year term at the end of the WSIS +10 Review Process. The outcome document of the WSIS +10 Review of WSIS outcomes was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2015, and the IGF was thus renewed for another ten year term.

The most significant recent change in the IG ecosystem remains the IANA Transition. This consists of a transfer of the IANA functions from ICANN to the global multistakeholder community. The body now appointed and contracted to carry out these functions is the Public Technical Identifiers.

Public Technical Identifiers (PTI) was incorporated in August 2016 as an affiliate of ICANN, and, through contracts and subcontracts with ICANN, began performing the IANA functions on behalf of ICANN in October 2016. PTI is no longer under any contract with National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA) of US Department of Commerce.

Public Technical Identifiers (PTI) is responsible for the operational aspects of coordinating the Internet's unique identifiers and maintaining the trust of the community to provide these services in an unbiased, responsible and effective manner.

The shortcomings at this juncture include the fact that the work on the second phase of ICANN accountability still remains. This involves work regarding the structures of ICANN after the IANA Transition and the accountability measures that would apply to ICANN functionaries in the new structure.

WSIS and IGF both are trying to establish multistakeholder model of Internet Governance with shared principles and accordingly have done a massive work and mobilization to achieve this goal. Gradually, the ICANN is also inching towards multistakeholder model, however the present technical and infrastructure set-up of Internet Governance is very much conducive to its unhindered growth and therefore same has to be continued with.

However, the multistakeholder model should be transparent and democratic, with full involvement of all the stakeholders and it should ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet.

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