

CANADIAN INTERNET FORUM

VISION AND LEADERSHIP FOR A CANADIAN INTERNET



July 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2015 Canadian Internet Forum (CIF) drew more than **100 participants** to discuss global Internet governance issues. The event was built around the theme 2015: ***A year of change for Internet governance***. It included:

- Two panel discussions focused on global Internet governance and Canada's role in the global discourse.
- Presentations by Byron Holland, CIRA's president and CEO and John Ralston Saul, president of PEN International.
- Discussions amongst the participants on issues related to domestic and global Internet governance.

The day's proceedings culminated discussions on the future of Internet governance and what Canada can bring to the table when its future is debated. In particular, participants at the CIF identified a set of principles that should underpin global Internet governance structures and process. In general, Canadians support a global Internet governance system that:

1. Is inclusive, facilitates meaningful participation of all stakeholders including governments, civil society, the technical community, and the private sector, and addresses the power inequalities between those stakeholder groups.
2. Promotes freedom, openness, innovation, and access for all of the world's citizens, including underrepresented groups like Indigenous peoples.
3. Is apolitical. All stakeholders should work together to ensure the success of the global Internet.
4. Is accountable. While the multi-stakeholder model results in a distributed governance system, there must be mechanisms in place that ensure decisions are made in a responsible manner and that the decision-making body can be held accountable for those decisions.

Videos of the day's presentations and discussions are available on [CIRA's YouTube channel](#).

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WHAT IS THE CANADIAN INTERNET FORUM?

Internet governance has traditionally been the purview of the technical community and a limited number of policy-makers, non-governmental organizations and academics. However, issues such as online surveillance, cyber-security and the transition of the oversight role historically played by the United States' Government over the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions have pushed Internet governance discussions and debates into the mainstream.

The Canadian Internet Forum (CIF) is a national discussion hosted by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) about Internet governance issues with Canadians. It is inspired by the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) that has been held annually since 2006. Industry Canada had also encouraged CIRA to host a Canadian Internet governance forum, as it is in line with CIRA's corporate objective to develop, carry out and/or support any other Internet-related activities in Canada.



In 2010-11, CIRA held the first-ever CIF, and it has been held annually since.

The CIF has become a critical component of the national discussion about Canada's Internet future. As stated in the report from the 2012 CIF,

“The discussions suggested that the fast evolving nature of the Internet requires all stakeholders not only to position themselves to leverage the opportunities it offers, but also to cooperate in the development of innovative, multi-stakeholder governance approaches to the challenges it raises.”

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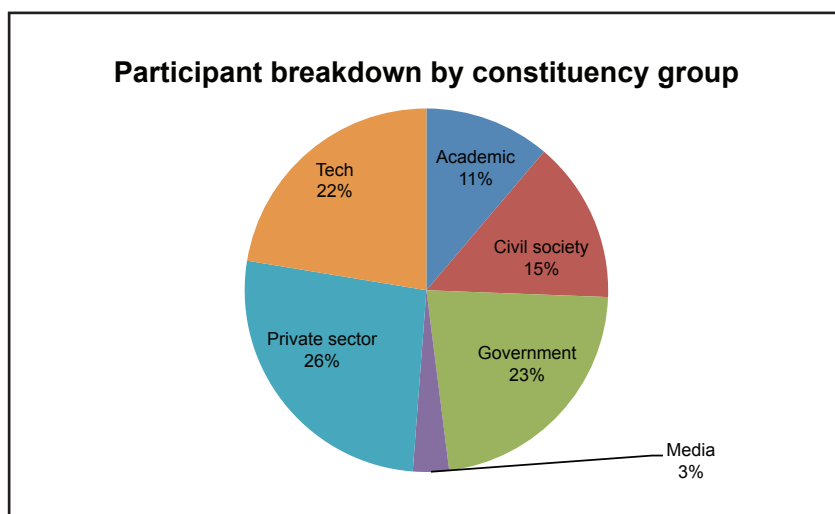
THE FIFTH CANADIAN INTERNET FORUM

From the United States' Government withdrawing from its historical stewardship role for certain key technical Internet functions – the IANA Stewardship Transition – to the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10) goals, 2015 may prove to be a landmark year for the Internet governance ecosystem. For this reason, the 2015 CIF was among the most important in the event's five-year history.

The 2015 CIF was held on June 10th at the **Canadian Museum of Nature** in Ottawa. Including more than 100 participants from across Canada, the United States and around the world, representing governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community, academia, and youth, the 2015 CIF was one of the most diverse in the event's history. This was done to ensure a balanced representation from each stakeholder group.

Seating at the in-person event was assigned to the **100+ delegates** in attendance to ensure each table had a balanced mix stakeholder groups in an attempt to mirror, at a micro level, the multi-stakeholder Internet governance ecosystem.

The theme of the CIF was 2015: ***a year of change for Internet governance***, and featured two panel presentations, a presentation on a recent survey conducted by CIRA and Ipsos Reid, a key address, and table-level discussions guided by a CIRA team member. The day's proceedings were moderated by David Akin, a senior Canadian journalist. In the morning, a panel of experts from around the world discussed and debated the global Internet governance ecosystem in 2015, including the IANA Stewardship Transition and the WSIS+10 process. In the afternoon panel, leading Canadian experts discussed Canada's role within the Internet governance ecosystem.



An agenda and the table-level discussion questions are included in the appendices to this report.

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OPENING REMARKS

Byron Holland, CIRA's president and CEO, opened the day's proceedings with the following quote from The Guardian:

“Internet governance is the biggest geoeconomic and geopolitical battlefield you’ve never heard about – dictating the rules, emperors, winners and losers of our online lives, fortunes and destinies.”¹

He used this quote to reinforce two points: that the Internet has become one of the most important tools for economic, social and cultural development in the modern history of humankind, and that the world's citizens pay little to attention to how Internet resources are governed. Holland called on the participants at the CIF to get more engaged and involved in Internet governance, stating that the Internet has become far too valuable for Canadians to take for granted.

Holland also asked the participants to consider the values or principles they believe are important to underpin the structures and processes that govern Internet resources, as this would form the final discussion for the day.

PANEL 1

The first panel of the CIF was titled *2015: a year of change for Internet governance* and included the following panelists:

- George Sadowsky, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
- Wolfgang Kleinwächter, Aarhus University
- Fiona Alexander, U.S. Department of Commerce
- Milton Mueller, Syracuse University



¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/apr/17/can-the-internet-be-saved-without-harming-democracy>

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The discussion was moderated by David Akin, who began by asking the panelists to explain what the term ‘Internet governance’ means to them. While the responses from the panelists varied, they were in agreement on the following:

- There is a distinction between governance of the Internet versus governance on the Internet. Whereas the former deals with issues related to the management and development of critical Internet resources (how it works), the latter is concerned with issues of content (how it is used). The discussion at the CIF was primarily focused on governance of the Internet.
- Internet governance is global; it is distributed and is not confined by territorial divisions.
- It is broad, and often confusing.

In 2005, the Working Group on Internet Governance (of which Kleinwächter was a member) defined Internet governance as,

“the development and application by governments, the 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.”²

The panel went on to discuss the key Internet governance processes and events that are taking place in 2015, including the IANA stewardship transition, the enhancing ICANN accountability process and the 10-year review of the goals set out at the World Summit on the Information Society. The processes were contextualized within the ongoing debate that has been fundamental to global Internet governance discourse – who should be in charge of global Internet resources, the multi-stakeholder community or a multi-lateral body such as the United Nations (UN)? While the multi-stakeholder model which has been in place since the inception of the public Internet has proven to be successful, there are numerous state actors that have been advocating for a multi-lateral approach – one that is government-led.

² <http://www.internetsociety.org/history-internet-governance>

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Panelists identified significant support for the multi-stakeholder model among nations, including the U.S. and the member states of the European Union. However, the debate over multi-stakeholderism versus multi-lateralism was seen as a distraction from the real threat to a free and open Internet - a growing process of nationalization movements around the globe that are potentially insular (content blocking and cyber-security initiatives were raised as examples) and as such, could result in a fragmented Internet.

Panelists also raised the fact that we should not treat multi-stakeholderism as an end in itself. Rather, the core objectives of Internet governance should be international development, free expression and economic growth. The multi-stakeholder model should be viewed as a tool to achieving these objectives.

However, as **a billion** new users will be added to the Internet over the next few years primarily from the developing world, the question of whether the institutions that are currently in place to govern the Internet are adequate and appropriate has to be considered. Generally, panelists agreed that those institutions need to be reformed, but the principles of open standards, permissionless innovation, a participatory environment, and consensus decision-making must remain. The fact that the multi-stakeholder model is very young needs to be recognized; it is a work in progress.

With regard to the IANA stewardship transition, the majority of panelists agreed that the transition will not happen by September 30, 2015, the expiration date of the current contract between the NTIA and ICANN to perform the IANA functions. Kleinwächter reminded the CIF participants that multi-stakeholderism is a time consuming process. As a result, issues like the IANA stewardship transition process take time, but it is time well-invested. The result is stronger when all invested stakeholders are involved in the development of the solution.

To conclude the panel discussion, Akin asked each panelist to explain why Canadians should be interested in Internet governance. Kleinwächter proposed that good Internet governance “begins at home.” He explained that the multi-stakeholder model employed on the global scale should and could be supported by similar mechanisms employed on the national level. Using CGI.BR, a multi-stakeholder body in Brazil that coordinates and integrates all Internet service initiatives in Brazil, as an example, Kleinwächter explained that good national experiences can be internationalized.

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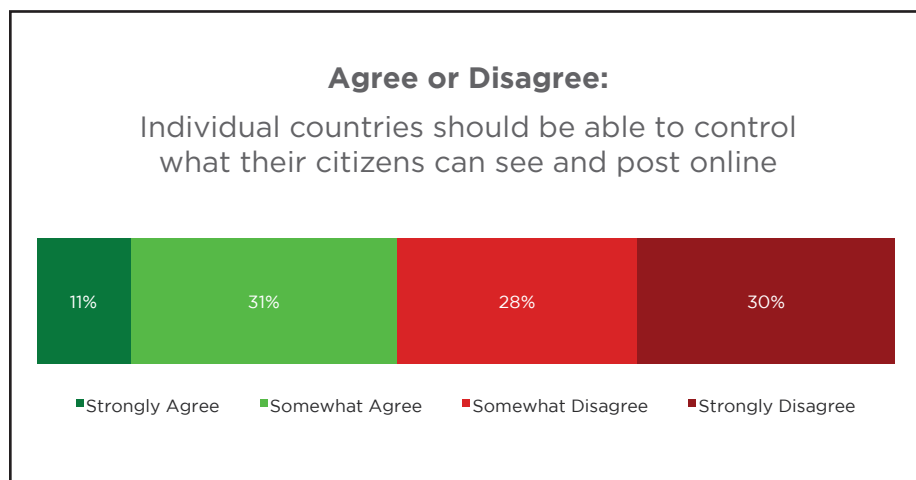
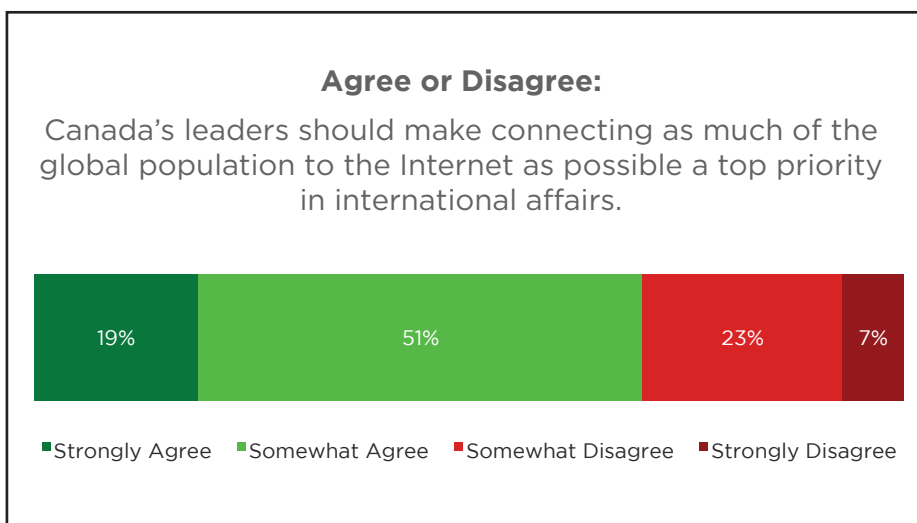
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CANADIAN VIEWS ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Holland presented the results of a national survey on Canadians' views on Internet governance conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of CIRA. With the survey, CIRA wanted to better understand where Canadians stand on issues like Internet access, cyber-security, censorship, and the role of governments in Internet governance. As 2015 is a year when the institutions and processes that govern the Internet are undergoing reform, CIRA believed it was important to inform those discussions to ensure Canadians' interests are represented.

A brief overview of the survey results follows. The full report can be found on [CIRA's website](#).

When asked about the use of the Internet as a tool for international development, 70 per cent of survey respondents agreed that Canada's leaders should make connecting as much of the global population to the Internet as possible a top priority in international affairs.



While Canadians believe the government has a role to play in increasing access to the Internet in the developing world, they believe that the role of governments should be limited in the online space. Sixty per cent of survey respondents did not believe that nation states should be able to control what their citizens can see and post online.

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And, Canadians were split on the question of who should run the Internet. Half of survey respondents believed individual countries should be given more control over Internet governance.

Canadians are split on whether more control by individual countries, or more multinational control would be best, but a clear majority favor global standards.



Furthermore, survey respondents were also evenly split on whether they felt that the private sector should be more involved in Internet governance.



While there is no consensus among Canadians about who should govern the Internet, it can be deduced from these results that issues of Internet governance are complex and not well understood. It was clear, however, that Canadians support a global, interconnected Internet

Two thirds of survey respondents supported global interconnected standards over specific local technologies, an indication of support for the free and open Internet.



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Holland stated that he understood from these results that Canadians recognise the tremendous role the Internet can play in terms of promoting democratic values and engendering economic empowerment around the globe. He also stated that he understood the results to mean that Canadians support a global Internet that is apolitical, inclusive, interoperable, and free of censorship.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: JOHN RALSTON SAUL

John Ralston Saul, renowned Canadian author and president of PEN International, delivered the keynote address at the CIF. As an outspoken advocate for freedom of expression, Saul challenged CIF participants to consider the role of the private sector in online surveillance in addition to governments. Saul also discussed the multi-stakeholder model in the context of power dynamics – he encouraged the multi-stakeholder community to understand the importance of issues like human rights in development of global Internet governance systems and processes.

PANEL 2

The second panel of the CIF was titled *What is Canada's role in Internet governance?* It included the following panelists:

- Byron Holland, CIRA
- John Knubley, Industry Canada
- Daniel Jean, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
- Michael Karanicolas, Centre for Law and Democracy
- Marc Blanchet, Viagenie



If panel one positioned 2015 as the year of change for Internet governance on the global stage, panel two brought that focus domestically and worked to establish what Canada's role is and should be in the Internet governance ecosystem. Panel two held a diverse representation from the Internet governance world including the public sector, the public sector, civil society, and the technical community. In the true spirit of multi-stakeholderism, what became of immediate interest in the discussion was not the is and should be of Canada's role in Internet governance, but what is Internet governance?

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There were two goals of Internet governance proffered by the panel. Both Jean and Knubley saw the need of governance to protect the Internet as a “global engine of economic and social development,” as Jean put it. Karanicolas worked from a broader definition that saw Internet governance concerned with digital human rights and restrictions, which is especially relevant considering the recent Snowden revelations.

The remaining discussion on Canada’s role in Internet governance panel was framed within these two goals. **How do we ensure that the Canadian Internet remains viable and economically powerful, whilst also imbued with the values that we hold dear as Canadians?** In all, the panel saw Canada’s role of Internet governance as being two-fold – the of and the on the Internet. And while this arrangement has traditionally been defined as a “church and state separation,” according to Holland, the consensus was that these lines appear to be blurring.

From a technical standpoint, the “of” the Internet, defining Canada as a leader in the development of the Internet was met with some resistance. While both Holland and Karanicolas spoke to the issues of speed and price as well as the digital divide between urban and rural, advancements in the development of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) as well as the Broadband for Rural Nova Scotia initiative were held of examples of positive developments. Knubley also highlighted Industry Canada’s **Digital 150 strategy** as a clear example of an ambitious policy undertaking.

Despite these advancements, there remained concern that Canada has not progressed nearly at the rate of other developed nations such as Finland, Sweden and South Korea. This was evidenced, according to Holland, in Canada’s falling standing in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Internet-based research reports. In regards to Canada’s role on the global technical Internet stage, Blanchet saw this representation as something harder to define. When he works with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), he does so as a member of the technical community, not necessarily as a Canadian. What he does bring with him however is his background as a Canadian, defined by the values and ethics that ultimately drive Canada’s relationship with the on of Internet governance.

The *on* of the Internet represents how online content is governed and there appeared consensus from the panel that the traditional values held dear by Canadians are aligned with those that have underpinned the development of the Internet of date. Openness, permissionless, distributive, and multi-stakeholderism were not only descriptors used to describe the ideal Internet governance model, but also emblematic of the inclusive democratic process that has defined Canada politically. Echoing back to their statements

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on what Internet governance is, Jean and Knubley maintained that these values would help ensure continued advancement online. Karanicolos countered that Canada has lost some degree of moral leadership following the Snowden revelations, and that in order to promote a free and open Internet, we should also focus on these issues at home. Thinking globally, Karanicolas also urged Canada to join the international digital rights discussion, rather than simply promoting a Canadian message.

So where does that leave Canada in the future? Akin wondered whether Canadians would hold Internet governance as a topic of interest in the upcoming Canadian election, especially following such recent talking points as lawful access and Bill C-51. While Blanchet highlighted privacy issues continuously facing Canadians as being a necessary policy discussion, Holland spoke about the need for a “moonshot” in digital development at home. Speed and price form the digital currency of our world, and Holland felt that Canada should be aiming higher in creating policy that emboldens the Canadian digital economy. Knubley echoed this sentiment when highlighting that there remains a regulatory responsibility to promote a regime that facilitates open ideas and promotes new technologies.

On the panel there was no doubt that Canada’s role in Internet governance remains an important one. However, it was clear that there is still plenty of work for Canada to accomplish in order to ensure that the Internet continues to be a driver of positive change, both socially and economically.



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TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Following each panel discussion, CIF participants engaged in table-level working groups led by a CIRA team member. Participants discussed the roles of state governments, intergovernmental organizations such as the UN, and technical organizations like ICANN in global Internet governance. Participants were also asked what they believed Canada's role in Internet governance should be.

There appeared to be broad support among CIF participants for the multi-stakeholder model for Internet governance. It was viewed as open, and as the only governance model that could promote freedom, access and innovation; its fluidity and flexibility ideally suited to govern an entity as dynamic as the Internet. The organic, bottom up nature of the multi-stakeholder model was identified by many as critical for the effective governance of the Internet. In spite of this support, participants identified what they believed to be flaws in the multi-stakeholder model:

- **Power inequality:** the costs to participate in the various Internet governance for a (ICANN, IETF, Internet Governance Forum, etc.) were identified as a barrier for many, especially civil society.
- **Accountability:** in a multi-stakeholder governance system, it is difficult to identify which entity bears the responsibility for the actions of the multi-stakeholder community.
- **Complexity:** the multi-stakeholder model was viewed as complex and overwhelming to newcomers. Furthermore, this complexity was seen to engender a system where decision-making could be slow if there is conflicting goals on the part of the various stakeholder groups. However, a number of participants believed that this complexity is necessary to govern an entity as wide-reaching as the Internet.

The effectiveness of the multi-stakeholder model, even with these flaws, was summed up by George Sadowski (paraphrasing Winston Churchill),

“Multi-stakeholderism is the worst form of governance, except for all the others.”

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The notion of a completely new system, a hybrid between multi-stakeholderism and multi-lateralism, was raised as a possible solution to the current debate over multi-stakeholderism and multi-lateralism. The two systems of governance will have to co-exist for an indeterminate amount of time, as multi-lateralism is the preferred mechanism for many developing states. And, we risk the fragmentation of Internet policy if the two systems do not work together.

Broad support was expressed for Canada's participation, including government, civil society, the technical community, and academia, in global Internet governance. In fact, numerous participants believed Canada is well-positioned to be a leader in the Internet governance space. Globally, Canada is seen as apolitical, and has experience overcoming significant technological challenges, such as developing a national telecommunications network over a vast and rugged geography. Canada is also uniquely positioned to call for the inclusion of human rights into the Internet governance agenda.

While Canada may be well-positioned to be a leader on the global governance stage, many CIF participants felt that Canada should work on improving Canadian infrastructure before worrying about the world as a whole. Canada could and should lead by example. Participants also identified the need for an ambitious national digital strategy that would position Canada as a digital innovation leader.

Other concerns identified by CIF participants included the following:

- Security and privacy.
- Access, speed and cost.
- Lack of competition in the telecommunications market.

Participants also discussed ways to engage Canadians in discussions about Internet governance. It was believed that Canadians need access to educational materials on these issues, presented in a manner that makes them relevant to the average Internet user. By making the issues relevant, the participants believed that the apathy towards these issues shown by Canadians could be overcome. A forum, offline or online, for discussing Internet governance issues was also seen as important.

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Time	Event	Description
8:00-9:00	Coffee and continental breakfast	
9:00-9:15	Welcome from CIRA	Byron Holland, President and CEO, CIRA and Chair, ccNSO
9:15-10:30	Panel discussion - 2015: a year of change for Internet governance	Moderator: David Akin, Sun Media Panelists: George Sadowsky, ICANN Wolfgang Kleinwächtaer, Aarhus University Fiona Alexander, U.S. Department of Commerce Milton Mueller, Syracuse University
10:30-10:45	Health break	
10:45-11:15	Table working groups	
11:15-11:30	Working group reporting	
11:30-11:50	Canadian views on Internet governance	Byron Holland, CIRA
11:50-1:00	Lunch	
12:30-1:00	Keynote presentation	John Ralston Saul, Author
1:00-2:00	Panel discussion - What is Canada's role in Internet governance?	Moderator: David Akin Panelists: Byron Holland, CIRA John Knubley, Industry Canada Daniel Jean, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Michael Karanicolas, Centre for Law and Democracy Marc Blanchet, Viagenie
2:00-2:30	Table working groups	
2:30-2:45	Working group reporting	
2:45-3:00	Health break	
3:00-3:20	Plenary discussion - Moving forward with a national vision for a global Internet	David Akin, Sun Media
3:20-3:30	Closing remarks	Byron Holland, CIRA
3:30-4:00	Reception	

TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Objective: To identify the values that Canadians believe should underpin global Internet governance systems?

Discussion 1: 2015: a year of change for Internet governance

Questions:

1. What are the top two or three things that resonated with you from the panel discussion?
2. Do you think Canadians should be more engaged in these debates? Why, or why not?
3. There are a number of competing directions about how the Internet should be governed – UN-led, multi-stakeholder. Which of the directions discussed by the panelists do you believe is in the best interests of Canada and the global Internet?
4. What should be the role of Canadians (civil society, technical community, government, Internet users and so on) in these processes and discussions? / Should Canada take a leadership role in these discussions?

Discussion 2: What is Canada's role in Internet governance?

Focus: What role, if any, should Canada play in the Internet governance ecosystem?

Questions:

1. Quickly, what stood out for you from this panel?
2. We've heard a lot of competing perspectives for driving Internet governance (for example, economic, social, freedom of expression, cultural, political) – do you feel there are any contradictions inherent in these points of view?
3. The panel discussion was called Canada's role in Internet governance – in your opinion, do you think Canada is doing all it should be doing?