



Global Internet Governance Academic Network (GIGANet) established

Report from the joint ICA-IAMCR Symposium on Internet Governance: New Political and Regulatory Frameworks for Global Network Communication

1. A total of 52 Scholars from 30 countries, representing more than 40 academic institutions from around the world, met from June 15 – 18, 2006, in Kurort Rathen, Germany, to discuss a **global research agenda on Internet Governance**. The symposium was organized by the School of Communication and Information of Nanyang Technological University of Singapore and the Department of Media and Communication Sciences at the University of Aarhus in cooperation with the NETCOM Institute of the Media City Leipzig e.V., under the umbrella of the International Communication Association (ICA) and the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) jointly, with support from the German ccTLD Registry DENIC.

2. **Session I** analysed the present **status and development of academic related Internet Governance Research** and developed key elements for a global and regional research agenda. Bill Dutton, Director of the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) introduced the main subjects for future Internet Governance Research from a European perspective. Milton Mueller, Director of the Internet Governance Project (IGP) from the Syracuse University identified key conflict areas for Internet Governance Research and gave an overview about related academic initiatives in North America. Peng Hwa Ang, Dean of the School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, analyzed the Internet Governance research situation in the Asia Pacific. In North America, Europe and Asia, Internet Governance is becoming an increasingly significant area for academic research and teaching programme, in particular on the PhD level; however, in Latin America and Africa, there are only a very small number of researchers involved and the whole subject of Internet Governance has yet to be discovered by the regional and national academic institutions as a subject for research and education, as reported by Seiiti Arata from the University of Sao Paulo and Mwende Njiraini, representing the African Group of Internet Governance Capacity Building from Nairobi.

3. In **Session II**, non-academic stakeholders identified from their more **practical perspectives** what governments, intergovernmental organisations, private sector and civil society expect from the scientific and academic community. Axel Plathe from UNESCO informed that the issue of Internet Governance is of growing importance for UNESCO, in particular with regard to specific issues under the competences of UNESCO such as freedom of expression, human rights and multilingualism. He encouraged the researchers to go forward in the development of a global Internet Governance Research Network, which could be linked to existing initiatives of the UNESCO Programme such as ORBICOM and the network of UNESCO Chairs on Communication Policies. Michael Leibrandt, Member of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) from the German Ministry of Economics and Technology encouraged the academics to produce more input on issues such as new cooperation models or the concept of multistakeholderism. These inputs could be helpful to allow governments to

find global arrangements that are able to take more comprehensively into consideration the legitimate interests of all stakeholders. Stephan Welzel from DENIC, the world largest registry of country code Top Level Domain Names (ccTLDs/.de) expressed his hopes that researchers would give priority to issues of practical relevance. Models developed by academicians should include a litmus test of workability, he said. Philipp Grabensee, Director of the Board from Afilias Ltd. the world's second largest registry for generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs/.info), argued similarly. He called in particular for more economic-oriented research on Internet Governance and impartial analyses of domain name market development of issues such as competition and anti-trust law. Annette Mühlberg, Chair of ICANN's At Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), gave a users' perspectives. For individual Internet users, Mühlberg underlined, the respect and protection of human rights in Internet Governance are of crucial importance. More in-depth studies on issues such as freedom of expression, protection of privacy, cultural diversity and consumer protection in Internet activities are needed.

4. In **Session III**, individual researchers from around the world presented a number of **case studies** and reports on issues such as digital divide, national Internet policies, Internet development strategies, cybersecurity, regulatory aspects, freedom of expression, multilingualism and other Internet Governance issues, which had also been discussed in the framework of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS). Papers and oral contributions were presented, *inter alia*, by Daniela Dimitrova, Greenlee School of Journalism & Communication, Iowa State University, Ames (USA/Bulgaria), John Laprise, Northwestern University, Chicago (USA), Bruno Ravaz and Arnaud Lucien, Université du Sud Toulon Var (France), Laura Lopez, University of Barcelona (Spain), Seyed Reza Naghibulsadat and Ali Kia, Allameh Tabatabaee University, Teheran (Iran), Selcan Kaynak, Bosphorus University Istanbul (Turkey), Renuka Suryanarayan, Ohio University (USA/India), Hong Xue, Hongkong University (China), Thomas McPhail, University of Missouri St. Louis (USA/Canada), Steven Wildman, Michigan State University (USA), Fynnwin Prager, London School of Economics (United Kingdom), Larry Martinez, California State University (USA). Written contributions came also from Sung-Ho Park, Department of Communications, Honam University, Seoul (Korea) and Emerson S. Bañez, University of the Philippines, College of Mass Communication, Manila (The Philippines).

5. In **Session IV** members of the **Internet Governance Project (IGP)** presented some of its research. Hans Klein, Georgia Institute for Technology, Atlanta, spoke on Internet and Concepts of Legitimacy in Political Science. Jeanette Hofmann, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, discussed "Political Science and Theories of New Governance Forms". John Mathiason, Syracuse University, introduced regime theory in international relations, linking theories of "realism" and "idealism" to the global policy debate around Internet Governance. Finally Milton Mueller, Director of the IGP offered a critical review of the new book "Who Controls the Internet?" by Timothy Wu and Jack Goldsmith, taking issue with its conservative defense of traditional national sovereignty institutions and encouraging the attendees to push for new forms of global governance.

6. **Session V** analyzed the present political debate on **Internet oversight**, the future of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the US Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the process of "enhanced cooperation", established by the Tunis phase of the "World Summit on the Information Society" (WSIS). Milton Mueller, Syracuse University, analyzed the recently published Call for Comments by the US Department of Commerce with regard to the DNS principles and the DOC-ICANN MoU. Wolfgang Kleinwächter, University of Aarhus, gave an overview of the history of the debate. He began from the establishment of Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) in 1989 via milestones like Jon Postel's efforts to introduce 150 new gTLD under the umbrella of ISOC (1995), the work of the Interim Ad Hoc Committee (IAHC) and the generic Top Level Domain Name Memorandum of Understanding (gTLD-MoU) that was signed in 1997 by ISOC (Internet Society), IANA, IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force), ITU (International Telecommunication Union), WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) and INTA (International Trademark Association). He then discussed the Green and White Papers of the US government (1998), the establishment of ICANN (1999), the ICANN reform (2002), the Internet Governance debate of the Geneva phase of WSIS (2003) and the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG). He observed that the Tunis WSIS Agenda (2005) produced both the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), scheduled for October 2006 in Athens, Greece, and the process of "enhanced cooperation", launched recently by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Discussants agreed that the two processes - the DOC consultation process and the WSIS process of "enhanced cooperation" - are interlinked and should not be seen as alternatives but as complementary, leading, via discussion, to an enhanced model of cooperation with regard to the management of internet core resources and the development of policies for related public issues among all involved stakeholders.

7. **Session VI** discussed the **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**, which was established by the Tunis Phase of the WSIS. Chengetai Masango from the IGF secretariat in Geneva updated participants about the preparations of the 1st IGF planned for October 30, 2006 to November 2, 2006 in Athens, Greece, under the general title "Internet Governance for Development". The IGF Advisory Group (IGF-AG), which was established by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in May 2006, has decided to have four sub-items under the general topic of the IGF: Access, Diversity, Security and Openness. Another meeting of the IGF-AG in September, 7 – 8, 2006, will adopt the final version of the agenda and the themes for the workshops. The IGF will be based on the principle of multistakeholderism. Chengetai underlined the high expectations with regard to the role of the scientific and academic community in the IGF process and expressed the hope that the academic community will contribute constructively to the IGF by providing special expertise, knowledge, analysis, studies and other intellectual inputs.

8. The **final session** dealt with the modalities of the building of the “**Global Internet Governance Academic Network**” (**GIGANet**). Wolfgang Kleinwächter and Peng Hwa Ang, who had been members of the UN “Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), introduced the subject and reported the discussions on Internet Governance among different research and academic institutions, networks and groups during the previous 10 months since the presentation of the WGIG report in July 2005. In the WGIG report, the “technical, scientific and academic community” was singled out as a special group with its own role and responsibilities. This role was confirmed by the Tunis WSIS Summit in November 2005. Since then, the discussion within the academic community has proposed to initiate an independent academic network for Internet Governance research. Such a network, according to Kleinwächter and Ang, should not be a single “coordinated project” but a platform for “enhanced communication” both among researchers themselves and between the academic community and non-academic stakeholder groups to encourage multiple research projects. Ralf Bendrath from the University of Bremen presented a paper where he outlined key elements for such a new network, including proposals for procedures, structures and substance, membership criteria and objectives. Derrick Cogburn from Syracuse University, member of the IGP, proposed innovative tools to practise “enhanced communication” by using new Internet technologies and software.

9. The participants of the joint ICA-IAMCR Internet Governance symposium, inspired by the “Spirit of Rathen”, agreed to form a **Start Up Group** with the mandate to *inter alia*, clarify issues such as membership criteria, listserv and website administration, and recommend other practical activities of the GIGANet. The official launch of the GIGANet should be organized at the eve of the first Internet Governance Forum in October 2006 in Athens/Greece together with an academic symposium. Other ideas for future activities of the GIGANet include a learning centre during the IGF with a special lecture programme (Internet Governance Morning & Evening School) by internationally recognized academicians, the establishment of five regional summer schools on Internet Governance in summer 2007 and a larger academic symposium in connection with the 2nd IGF in Winter 2007 in Rio de Janeiro.

Members of the GIGANet Start Up Group

Peng Hwa Ang, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Seiiti Arata, University of Sao Paulo
Ralf Bendrath, University of Bremen
Avri Doria, Luleå University of Technology
William Drake, Graduate Institute for International Studies, Geneva
Jeanette Hofmann, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin
Hans Klein, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta
Wolfgang Kleinwächter, University of Aarhus
Jovan Kurbilja, Diplo Foundation Malta
Milton Mueller, Syracuse University, New York
Mwende Njiraini, University of Nairobi
Mary Rundle, Berkman Center at Harvard Law School, Cambridge.

Kurort Rathen, Germany, June 18, 2006