Template for Comments to WGIG on Draft Working Papers Identifying Issues for Internet Governance

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Do you have any comments on the process of determining the issues and their presentation by the WGIG?

For each paper you wish to comment on (Please repeat as many times as required) Name of the paper: Draft WGIG Issue Paper on Technical Standards

Has the issue as it applies to the question of Internet Governance been adequately identified?

Comments:

Not enough. The important perspective of **how the written standards are actually produced** is completely missing.

Written standards are **produced mostly by experts from developed countries**. It is efficient and has no problem as long as the standards are purely technical and the goals of the experts are the same as those of consumers and people in developing countries. Unfortunately it is not always the case. Some standards are closely related with other factors like culture, custom, etc. Those standards that seem to be the best for producers may not be so good for their users including governments, enterprises and consumers. It may lead to mistakes and problems. Even in these cases, it is not always allowed to change the published standards, in the name of "stability of standards."

This is not an imaginary story. A typical example is the case of character encoding related with respective cultures. Encoding standards are not exclusively for Internet, but indispensable for it because no text data could be exchanged without them. Among them, the importance of the international standard for universal multi-octet coded character set, namely ISO/IEC 10646 (UCS), and its compatible standard, The Unicode Standard (TUS), are salient. They have been encoding as many scripts in the world as possible and widely used as the basis of localization and multilingualization. Unfortunately some scripts, including Khmer, primarily for Cambodians, have been encoded without enough participation of their native users and not allowed to correct the problems, which have led to unsatisfactory results for some users of the standard including misunderstandings,

inefficiency and unfavorable effect on their culture of writing.

The more widely a standard is used, the more important its quality and legitimacy becomes. In this respect, we cannot just rely on the respective experts who are sincerely concentrating on technical work. Clear rules in the higher level have to be set down. We already have the WTO's Technical Barriers for Trade Agreement, which demands WTO members to take measures to promote active participation of relevant bodies with special consideration for developing countries. Despite efforts of such standardizing bodies, such participation has not been secured, as shown in the case above. **More concrete and effective frameworks, including revision of the Directives for standardizing processes in ISO, IEC and ISO/IEC JTC1 as well as similar documents of other standardizing bodies, and other means with the broader basis and necessary fiscal care, have to be established to make standardization based more on the initiatives of actual users and interest parties, especially considering minorities, developing countries and consumers**. Sometimes it may be better for the most interested parties to have no standard at all until they really need and propose it later than to have an unsatisfactory and unchangeable standard made by others now.

Does the paper cover the topic with sufficient depth and accuracy?
Comments

Does the paper achieve a reasonable balance in weighing relevant matters?
Comments

Any other comments