

Media Caucus on Internet Governance, Tracey Naughton

It is important that there be no legal bars for anyone to practice journalism freely, on or offline. Access to publicly held information must be provided to all on an equal basis. Any exceptions to the general rule that such information is publicly available must be precise, narrow and clearly legitimate in the public interest.

The world of journalism must be given its rightful place at the table to discuss Internet Governance. It is both bizarre and unjust that the Working Group on Internet Governance does not number a single practicing journalist. Consideration of communication without communicators is like talking about farming without consulting farmers. In the words of the recent Marrakech Declaration, "Representatives of the media must be involved as full partners in any future Internet governance system."

The term "governance" must not be taken to mean government regulation of Internet content. Internet Governance mechanisms must not be reorganized to permit this internationally nor to encourage it nationally.

Any changes to the Internet governance system should not involve controls over content, nor modifications of the Internet's technical "architecture" that facilitate or permit censorship of news or opinion. "Self-regulation" must not be allowed to become a surrogate for governmental regulation of content on the Internet.

Security concerns must not serve as pretexts to limit freedom of expression in cyberspace. Nor should considerations of "ethics" be allowed to become a veiled way to justify censorship. In relation to media content, it is a long held standard