The Role of the Technical Community in Internet Policy

***Approved by the
IEEE Board of Directors***

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IEEE believes that technologists and the technical community should work proactively alongside policy makers and other stakeholders to evolve governance of the internet.

1. **Technologists created the internet's technology and will continue to be active in shaping its future**. Technologists have expertise in technology areas that impact the internet. As policy debates are global in nature, technology development and deployment must align with policymaking for viable and effective governance structures. Technical expertise and innovation linked to internet governance could open paths for solutions to address user, policy maker and societal concerns.

2. **Technologists can help policy makers address societal challenges**. There is a need to integrate the interests of humanity with the continuing evolution of the internet and to build frameworks that address the fundamental issues at hand – particularly issues around privacy, security, trust, accessibility and affordability. These issues are not purely technical in nature. Therefore, all stakeholders need to work together to explicitly take them into account at the earliest stages of technology development.

Addressing these issues is critical from the perspective of both technical and policy communities. Technologists must understand policy implications of technology and use their expertise to address societal challenges in innovative ways. Policy makers must understand the benefits and limits of technology as they address societal interests. Working together, technologists, policy makers and other stakeholders can produce better solutions than any of the groups working alone.

BACKGROUND

Technologists need to be mindful of the many and complex issues arising from national differences in law, public policy, and social and cultural values, which in turn inform decisions pertaining to internet governance. There are important differences in perspectives that need to be taken into account – with all communities' views and expertise recognized appropriately within the policymaking process.

Technologists contribute regularly to technology policy development through, amongst other things, participation in policy-making forums, involvement in national legislative and regulatory consultation processes, the development of codes of practice and the education of influencers and decision-makers.

A number of forums already exist in which technologists sit with policy makers, working together to address security, safety, trust, privacy, participation, fairness and access for all. The depth and variety of technical contribution at different stages of the policy development process is broad. Standards are one example of this, with thousands of specific international technical standards supporting the internet and many technologists participating in the global development landscape for the internet.

Professional associations such as IEEE play a role by bringing together technologists and policy makers to share expertise and educate all stakeholders on what is possible and what is not possible in technology application to the mutual benefit of all.

IEEE is committed to developing trust in the internet and its underlying technologies through transparency, technical community building, partnership across regions and nations, service to humanity and professional integrity.

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