

### ZERO RATING DOMINATES IGF 2015

It often happens at the IGF that an issue emerges as the “hot topic” of the week. A couple of years ago, in Bali, it was online surveillance. This year, it’s zero rating.

Zero rating is the practice of not charging customers for specific applications or services they use. The most famous example is Facebook’s internet.org, now rebranded ‘Free Basics’. The Free Basics service provides free access to content and applications to populations in a selection of developing countries, with the aim of providing some level of Internet service to people who otherwise would have no service.

However, for critics of zero rating, this ‘walled garden’ approach is a violation of network neutrality principles, and in some cases, law. The debate at the IGF this week has been complex. Different understandings and interpretations of net neutrality and zero rating have added to the difficulty of perhaps reaching a more nuanced understanding of which zero rating version may be (un)acceptable in the context of which version of network neutrality.

While zero rating in developed markets may have stronger implications about competition and unfettered access to information, in an undeveloped market, where there is otherwise very limited or no access to the Internet, does the provision of some services through zero rating actually empower, not disempower, the users?



Photo by Samantha Dickinson

Some have asked whether the angst of the mostly middle class participants at the IGF, who are already connected to the Net, is overly paternalistic in trying to stop service providers from offering zero rated services to people who otherwise have no access to the Internet at all? Is this a new ‘cyber’ imperialism we are witnessing, with the well-resourced telling the non-resourced that it’s better for them to remain non-resourced until they have full resources rather than partial resources? Is zero rating better considered, as its supporters have argued this week, as one of many access options available that can help bring the next billion fully online? Or does zero rating create an underclass of users of a half-Net?

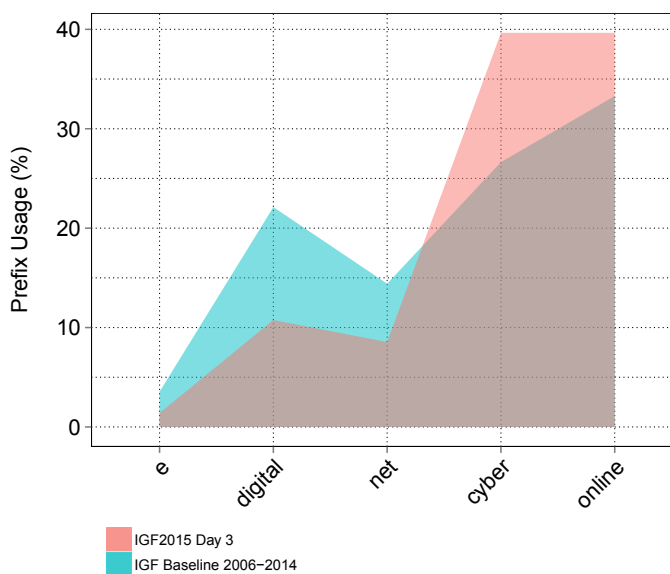
Some of the IGF participants from the least developed countries of the world have said they prefer some access over no access. Facebook has said that users of its Free Basics services generally move to paid subscriptions within a month of starting Free Basics. But according to Helani Gilpaya of LIRNEasia, there is very little research into how much zero rating helps move people into a framework of subscriber-based open Internet access.

As with the two previous IGF hot topics, online surveillance and human rights, it may be that this IGF is the initial brainstorming phase of zero rating discussion, with all parties passionately telling each other what they think without listening quite as intensely to other viewpoints. As with online surveillance and human rights, perhaps IGF 2016 will see a more focused and matured discussion on zero rating – possibly as part of the wider discussion on how to bring access to all.

### PREFIX MONITOR

Compared to Days 1 and 2, the trade-off between *cyber* and *online* on one hand, and *digital* and *net* on the other hand, continues. A sharp decrease in the use of *digital* on Day 3 in comparison with Day 2, as well as a similar decrease in the use of *net* on Day 2 when compared to Day 1, have now completely reversed the initial Prefix Monitor (Day 1 was dominated by *net* and *digital*).

This analysis is based on 14 available transcripts from Day 3 of IGF 2015. Prefix Monitor follows the use of prefixes and identifies trends in discourse shaping, session by session, at the end of each day. Percents represent the relative presence of a particular prefix among all characteristically prefixed IG terms used. The Prefix Monitor is powered by Diplo’s CreativeLab text-mining DTAF platform. [↗](#)



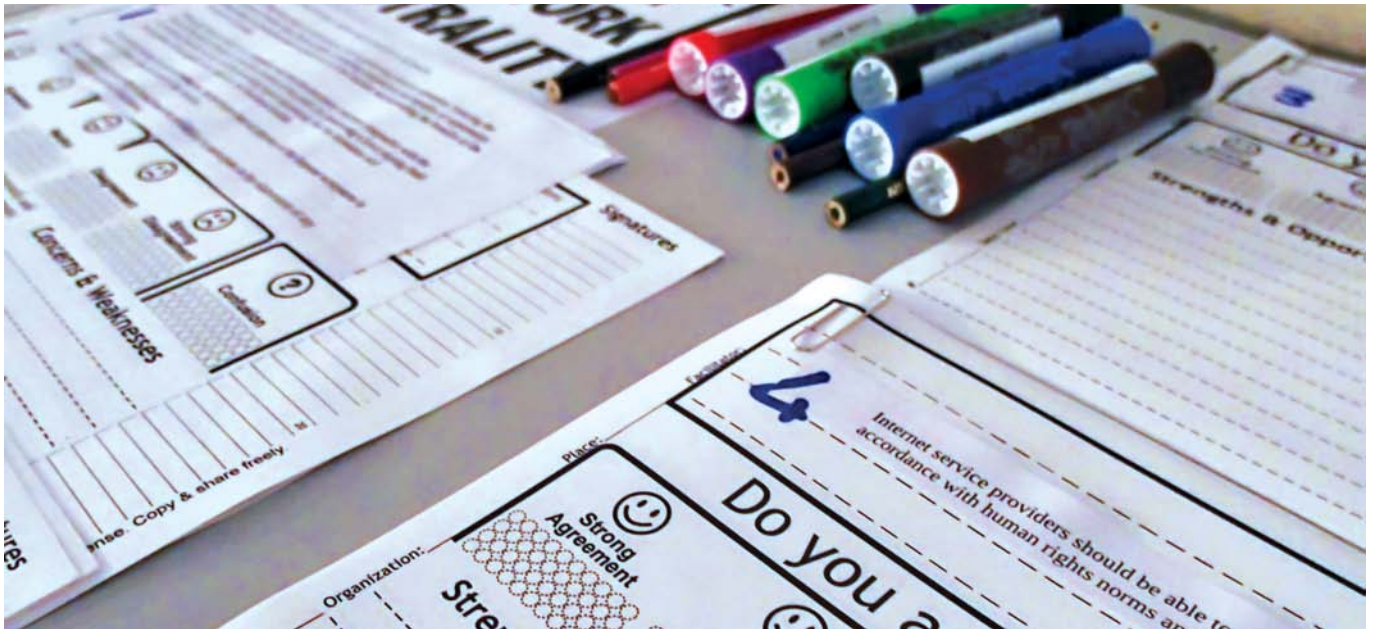


Photo by Samantha Dickinson

## SESSIONS FOR DYNAMIC COALITIONS

The **Main Session on Dynamic Coalitions** [🔗](#) (Part I) was an innovation at this year's IGF. The pilot project was aimed at facilitating a process among bottom-up organisations to work together, discuss and reach an outcome.

In the first of two sessions, several Dynamic Coalitions presented their work to the larger IGF community for feedback. Part II will take place on Day 4 of the IGF.

## ANONYMITY AND ENCRYPTION

While greater protection for encryption and anonymity online is required, encryption needs to be viewed as more closely related to security, rather than a purely economic issue. During the workshop on **Encryption and Anonymity: Rights and Risks** [🔗](#) (WS 155), panellists discussed the pros and cons of legislation on encryption, and considered the implications of two jurisdictional cases on anonymity and encryption. Although anonymity is important for the free flow of ideas, the principle is not absolute and needs to be balanced with other aspects.

## TACKLING THE NEEDS OF SIDS

Small island developing states share unique characteristics and circumstances. Generally, SIDS have small economies, and require innovative solutions for remoteness and environmental challenges. Many suggestions emerged from the **SIDS Roundtable** [🔗](#) (WS 21), including the need to reduce costs for underserved areas, to rethink the concept of zero rating services and their impact on small markets, to encourage local content, and to expand on stakeholder involvement, especially non-technical players such as civil society and academia.

## MANAGING DIGITAL LEGACIES

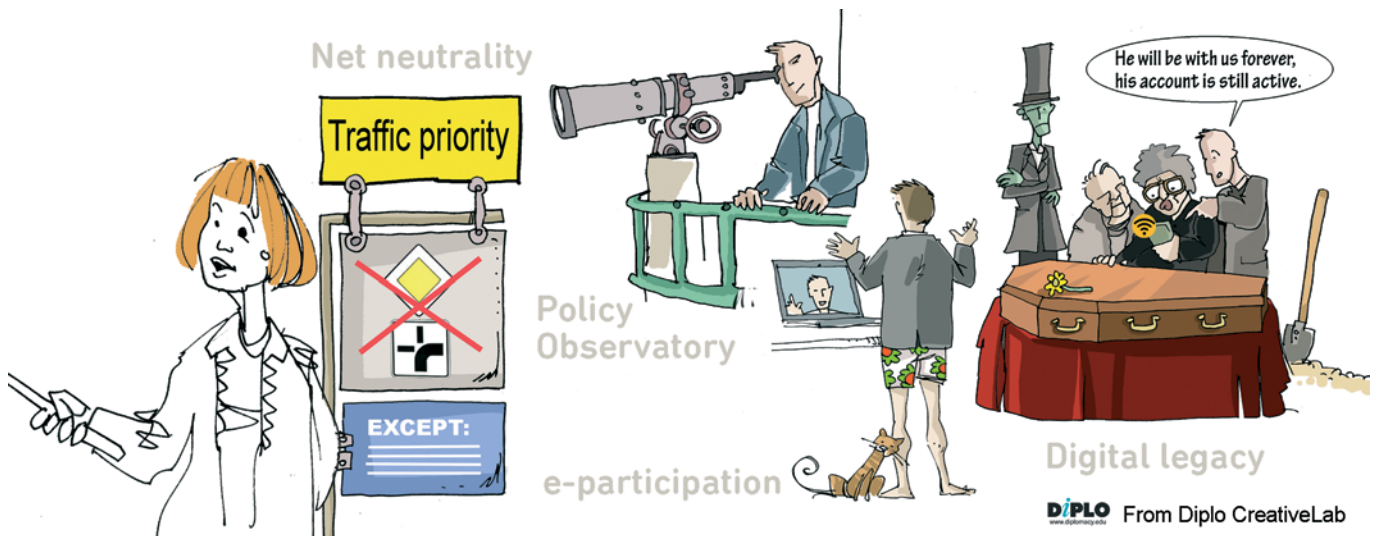
What happens to our online accounts and personal data after we die? Who will manage our digital legacies? The workshop on **Death and the Internet** [🔗](#) (WS 70) looked at the issue of digital legacies... with a touch of humour. In a hypothetical set-up, panellists played the role of an online user who died testate but without a valid power of attorney. His family is suing for the right to access his data, while legal experts apply different laws to the scenario. Although future planning is a topic many avoid, the amount of personal data we leave behind merits an in-depth discussion about privacy, personal data, conflicting policies and regulations, jurisdiction, and the role of policy-makers.

## ONLINE PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES

The process of developing e-participation principles as a substantial part of the IGF meetings started at the IGF in Nairobi, in 2011. Today, the **E-Participation Principles Final Draft** [🔗](#) was released for feedback during the workshop on **Viable application & debate: online participation principles** [🔗](#) (WS 27).

Since 2011, we have also witnessed a rapid integration of e-participation into many IG meetings. However, adequate funding could help further strengthen e-participation, especially at IGF meetings.





## DO NOT MISS TODAY

### Human Rights on the Internet – 11:00-13:00 (Main Hall)

The ability for both State and non-State actors to use the Internet to do a sophisticated array of activities, such as monitor people's activities, restrict access to information and target minority groups, as well as the increasing time that people spend in the online world has heightened awareness of the human rights implications of a continually more sophisticated Internet environment. This roundtable will examine previously identified human rights implications of the Internet, as well as identify any other human rights issues that may also be emerging.

### The NETmundial Statement and the Evolution of the Internet Governance Ecosystem – 14:00-16:00 (Main Hall)

Brazil is where the NETmundial Statement was written; Brazil is where the last IGF is being held before the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society is finalized in the United Nations General Assembly. This session looks back at NETmundial's principles and roadmap and looks forward to an Internet governance ecosystem that implements those items.

### Open Microphone & Taking Stock – 16:30-17:00 (Main Hall)

It may be short, but the 'anything goes' approach of Open Microphone gives people an opportunity to raise ideas and views that may not have had an airing before, and may indicate the direction of next year's IGF discussion.

## THANKING THE IGF DAILY TEAM!

DiploFoundation in collaboration with the Internet Society has added another layer to *GIP Digital Watch*: [integrated reporting](#) from the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The experiment addressed the challenge of navigating through parallel sessions and numerous activities at the IGF. Our appreciation goes to *IGF Daily's* [reporters](#) for their dedication:

**Internet Society IGF ambassadors:** Amanda Soares Kemmer (Brazil), Argyro Karanasiou (Greece), Arsene Tungali (Democratic Republic of Congo), Ashell Forde (Barbados), Evelyn Namara (Uganda), Grace Mutung'u (Kenya), Krishna Kumar Rajamannar (India), Lianna Galstyan (Armenia), Maureen Hernandez (Venezuela), Mwendwa Kivuva (Kenya), Suprita Lnu (India), Michael Oghia (United States), Maria Paola Pérez (Venezuela), Mohit Saraswat (United Arab Emirates)

**Diplo colleagues and friends present at the IGF:** Patrick Curry (UK), Radek Bejda (Czech Republic), Samantha Dickinson (Australia), Virginia Paque (USA), Vladimir Radunovic (Serbia)

**Diplo rapporteurs online:** Arvin Kamberi (Serbia), Barbara Rosen Jacobson (Netherlands), Stephanie Borg Psaila (Malta)

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