GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERNET GOVERNANCE
PROPOSAL OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION: THE VALUES OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

The network has become a part of every nation's wealth and one of its most crucial infrastructures. The Internet participates in the goals of competitiveness and employment as mentioned in the Lisbon Strategy[1]. As a result, Internet governance-related issues are strategic matters for all stakeholders in the Information Society.

We will therefore have to ensure that the fundamental principles and functions of the Internet are preserved[2]. These principles have enabled the Internet to develop in our societies as an essential component of the economy, education, culture and dissemination of knowledge.

Our general approach to Internet governance should be:

- ***Dynamic***, in order to sustain the development of the Internet and further the spread of network innovations within our societies

- ***Inclusive***, in order to develop a "culture of governance" among all the stakeholders involved in the developments of the Internet

- ***Concerted***, especially with our European partners, in order to develop a common view on Internet governance during international meetings

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[1] Cf. *Presidency conclusions on the Lisbon strategy 2000-2003*, October 2003:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/index_en.html
[2] See the RFC of E.Kroll used to define the Internet in June 24, 1993: http://mist.npl.washington.edu/internet.txt

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> ***The Internet is:***
> 1. *a network of networks based on the TCP/IP protocols,*
> 2. *a community of people who use and develop those networks,*
> 3. *a collection of resources that can be reached from those networks.*

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1.   INTERNET ARCHITECTURE: CURRENT STATE AND PERSPECTIVES

As urban architecture does, Internet architecture will carry a political message – as such, we will have to ensure that all the stakeholders involved with its development are brought together[3]. This dialogue will be necessary in order to incorporate the principles and values in which we believe into the technologies. The principles are stated in the following section.

- *The principles of openness and interoperability* of technological resources and contents are a crucial aspect of this architecture as well. Far from being a technical question alone, interoperability is becoming a prerequisite for network development in our societies. Consequently, we would like international open standards to be enforced in all "layers" of Internet architecture to guarantee the interoperability of networks[4] in terms of infrastructures and services as well as contents. Free and Open Source Software, which are core components of Internet applications, are therefore of crucial importance.

- *The network neutrality principle* (or "end to end" principle[5]) is one of the main elements of Internet architecture. By promoting the adoption of technologies coming from the "edges" of the network, this principle has been the driving force behind technological innovations. This same principle has encouraged the diversification of information available online by lowering the thresholds for the dissemination of knowledge. This principle has also promoted the development of a decentralized network. As a result, a substantial number of service-related innovations has emerged on the Internet at a sustained pace[6]. We wish to promote research efforts in these areas that will enable the network to continue to evolve to the benefit of all Internet users.

- *Innovation support especially for Internet protocols and technologies*. Current forms of Internet governance are directly related to architectural specificities of the Internet and especially of the Domain Name System (DNS). Governance mechanisms are also evolving as technological innovations are emerging in the field of addressing services[7] and search

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[3] Cf. *Codes and Other Laws of Cyberspace* by Lawrence Lessig (1999)

[4] These objectives have been mentioned as priorities by the European Commission (cf. eEurope 2005 plan) regarding services to citizens:
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/all_about/egovernment/text_en.htm#eEurope%202005%20Targets

[5] See the analysis of this principle by Marjory Blumenthal in "*Rethinking the design of the Internet : the end-to-end arguments vs. the brave new world*"(*cf. Evolvability of the Internet Infrastructure http://www.icir.org/floyd/evolution.html*)

[6] The *Web*, as well as "*peer to peer*" file sharing systems, are innovations directly coming from the "end to end" principle

[7] *Cf. Role of the Domain Name System (DNS)* by John C. Klensin
http://www.ietf.org/internet-drafts/draft-klensin-dns-role-05.txt

engines[8]. Similarly, the rise in the number of mobile Internet uses, the diversification of connected terminals (especially with the growing amount of implementation of the IPv6 protocol) and "*peer to peer*" systems development, will also have a major impact on the Internet architecture and on its governance.

In the future, Internet governance mechanisms will evolve. We will have to promote the development of knowledge of these critical technologies in Europe so as to allow for the progress of Internet uses in our societies. These goals should be achieved through appropriate research efforts and specific joint research programmes, with a particular emphasis on European synergies to be enjoyed from such efforts.[9]

2. INNOVATION AND NETWORK ECONOMICS

Within a few years the Internet has become one of the leading forces behind economic growth in our societies. Through its role of leverage in all fields of economic activity, Internet has gained its central role in the economy of developed countries. We therefore have to preserve the economic and technological conditions that ensure fair competition among all the sectors of the Internet. Specifically, it is by promoting *interoperability among fundamental resources such as protocols, formats and standards of the Internet* that we will be able to promote the harmonious development of the key elements of network economics[10]. Innovative developments on the Internet should continue to be implemented with the active participation of the private sector (both industry and services), as well as with the assistance of the public stakeholders.

The Internet is a powerful engine of innovation, but the conditions for the emergence of such innovations are not simply a result of the action of the "natural" forces of a network *per se*. For the network to be a growth factor, we should ensure that infrastructures are fully accessible, especially for developing countries.

Regulators will have to take specific action to prevent competition distortions in key sectors of the Information Society, especially when distortions could compromise Internet user access both domestically and internationally.

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[8] *Cf. The Anatomy of a Large-Scale Hypertextual Web Search Engine* by Sergey Brin and Lawrence Page
http://www-db.stanford.edu/~backrub/google.html
[9] Cf. Presidency conclusions of the European Council of Lisbon (March 23 and 24, 2000):
http://www.europarl.eu.int/summits/lis1_fr.htm
[10] The latest developments of music distribution over the Internet have showed that interoperability was becoming one of the burning stakes for this industry. Cf. "*Information Rules*" by Hal Varian (Harvard BSP, 1998)

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As the Internet becomes a major platform for the dissemination of ideas and intellectual creations, the governance of intellectual property laws concerning networks is becoming a crucial element for the economic equilibrium of the Information Society. Measures have to be taken in order to better inform Internet users about the importance of intellectual property rights and laws for intellectual creations. Those measures will have to enable harmonious development of creativity to be achieved in the Information Society.

3. SECURITY AND TRUST ON THE INTERNET

In our countries, significant parts of economic activities (and public services as well) are now relying on the Internet, ***thus network stability has become one of the most crucial stakes in Internet governance***. Risks of an attack on the critical infrastructures of the Internet, which in the past seemed only theoretical, are now a main concern for network architects[11]. Moreover, this stability is also a decisive element for the entire community of Internet users, comprising both citizens and organizations. To achieve stability, effective international judicial cooperation should be implemented in order to prevent criminal acts on one hand (for instance those related to racism, terrorism or pedophilia), and to lower the risks of attacks on the structure and functions of the network on the other. However, the preservation of Internet stability will not be able to rely solely on technical and legal measures. In order to fight criminal acts coming from the network itself efficiently, training and educational measures will need to be added to this framework.

It is by means of an international networked strategy that risks related to networks[12] will be competently managed. In a more general way, it is the knowledge of network functions and technologies that will allow governments to manage political network-related risks efficiently.

Trust will continue to be a key element for the development of the Internet and the Information Society. In order to fight the rise in "systemic diseases" such as viruses or Spam, we will have to promote three-pronged coordination efforts combining technological measures, legal actions and education of Internet users. The lack of a sufficient response could result in Internet users questioning its reliance on a long-term basis, thereby lowering the number of network

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[11] Cf. *ICANN Security and Stability Activities* par Steve Crocker
http://gtisc.gatech.edu/ati2004/ppt/Steve%20Crocker%20-%20Internet%20Security%20and%20Stability%2004.01.23.ppt
[12] Cf. « *Disconnect the dots* » interviews by Manuel Castells published in *Washington Post* on September 17, 2001
http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A41015-2001Sep16

users[13]. This situation could lead to a significant decrease in e-commerce and network services activities. ***In order to become the "architects" of trust and security, we will have to combine technical, legal and human measures. We will also have to be able to create a global culture of trust and security on the Internet.***

Another key element of users' trust in the Internet lies in the way personal information is collected and processed by governments as well as by firms (especially regarding the development of e-commerce). Here again, we will be particularly attuned to development of services and technologies, which will preserve the values of transparency and control of personal information by the citizens.

4. INTERNATIONAL INTERNET REGULATION

As the Internet is becoming a part of virtually all activities within our societies, ***the principles of sovereignty, law and freedom** are becoming crucial for Internet public policies*. In order to do so, it is necessary to establish a framework for multilateral discussion on Internet governance issues. This cooperation should include every aspect of the Internet, including both Internet use and technological questions. Such Internet governance-related issues should not be limited to concerns about domain names or their management. ***We strongly wish that all actors involved in the development of networks could take part in this legitimate framework of discussion and regulation.*** It therefore seems necessary to clarify the role and the objectives of intergovernmental and international organizations (such as the OECD), and the different agencies of the U.N. (such as Unesco, ITU, WIPO), as well as organizations in charge of Internet regulation (such as W3C, IETF, IAB and ICANN). France and Europe are willing to participate fully in the discussions on these strategic issues and want to be a leading driving force alongside our international partners.

The principles of freedom of speech, individual respect and cultural diversity should also be core values of Internet governance. All cultures and languages should indeed be able to have their place for expression on the Internet and more broadly in the Information Society. The issues related to multilinguism should also have their place in the core definition of Internet governance. In order to achieve a true internationalization of the World Wide Web, technologies have to be developed in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Internet.

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[13] cf. *Spam: How it is hurting email and degrading life on the Internet* study of the *Pew Internet & American Life Project* http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/102/report_display.asp

5. CONCLUSIONS

The acknowledgement of technological, economical and social specificities of the network will be the key for the development of savoir-faire, which will, in turn, promote in the Internet the values we consider essential in our societies. There is no technological determinism in that area and the development of the Internet in our societies will be directly linked to the technological choices we implement. The development of the Information Society should be pursued in parallel with an active debate on both national and international levels. We would like to bring all citizens into the discussion on these issues. The *World Summit on the Information Society* will be a milestone in the debate on social issues related to the introduction of technologies in our societies.

Because these technologies create new links and enable easier access to information for the citizens, they have to be shaped by a democratic vision of society. Our action in terms of Internet governance and more broadly regarding the Information Society, should contribute to foster democratic bonds and to strengthen the democratic forces at work in our societies.