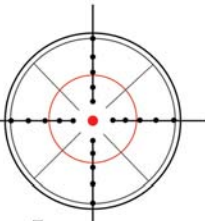


The Internet in the Crosshairs



Governments and Politics Challenge the Future of the Internet

by **Nancy K. Herther**

Anthropology/Sociology Librarian

University of Minnesota Libraries, Twin Cities Campus



Supplemental Content to the article “The Internet in the Crosshairs: Governments and Politics Challenge the Future of the Internet,” appearing in the March/April 2013 issue of *Online Searcher* (Vol. 37, No. 2), pp. 47–48, 59.

Who Governs the Internet Now?

No single organization controls the internet today, but instead a loosely organized federation of nongovernmental international agencies forms a “shared power” system to provide oversight and ensure ongoing function: The federation encompasses the following agencies:

Internet Architecture Board (IAB)

www.iab.org

“Chartered both as a committee of IETF [Internet Engineering Task Force] and as an advisory body of ISOC [Internet Society]. Its responsibilities include architectural oversight of IETF activities, Internet Standards Process oversight and appeal, and the appointment of the RFC [Request for Comments] Editor. The IAB is also responsible for the management of the IETF protocol parameter registries.”

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA)

www.iana.org

“Responsible for the global coordination of the DNS [Domain Name System] Root, IP addressing, and other Internet protocol resources.” A department of ICANN, “IANA allocates and maintains unique codes and numbering systems that are used in the technical standards (“protocols”) that drive the Internet.”

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

www.icann.org

“A global community supporting the vision of ‘one world, one Internet,’” ICANN’s role is to define the policies for domain names and IP (internet protocol) address number systems to ensure the internet’s system of unique identifiers remains both stable and secure.

Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF)

www.ietf.org

IETF’s mission is to “make the Internet work better by producing high quality, relevant technical documents that influence the way people design, use, and manage the Internet ... The IETF is completely open to newcomers. There is no formal membership, no membership fee, and nothing to sign. By participating, you do automatically accept the IETF’s rules, including the rules about intellectual property (patents, copyrights and trademarks).

Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

www.intgovforum.org

Established by the U.N. in 2006, the IGF brings “together all stakeholders in the Internet governance debate, whether they represent governments, the private sector or civil society, including the technical and academic community, on an equal basis and through an open and inclusive process.”

Internet Society (ISOC)

<https://internetsociety.org>

With a mission to “promote the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world,” this open membership group lobbies governments to support the ongoing development and structure of the internet, to ensure open technical standards and promotes freedom of expression.

Nancy K. Herther is the anthropology/sociology librarian at University of Minnesota Libraries, Twin Cities Campus. She can be reached at herther@umn.edu.