

The struggle for power over the internet - internet governance and control

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The internet does not have any central, hierarchically established coordinator, able to establish rules of the game from top to bottom. The technical design of the internet has always been technologically resistant to all attempts of control. There was even a widespread belief that the exercise of state sovereignty, resting on the principle of territoriality, cannot be really efficient on the internet. However, in spite of changed means of governance, the internet has never been a forum without rules or a sort of virtual "Wild West". The numerous collisions between the interests of users, states, industry and academia in the creation of codes/rules demonstrate that we are faced today with a struggle for control over the internet – a struggle for power and governance over the internet infrastructure, and a struggle for control on the internet – namely, for the implementation of a moral and legal order in terms of contents.

The paper presents the struggle for control over the internet on the example of the distribution of IP addresses and domain names. A certain extent of self-governance of the internet infrastructure, with "webification", lead at first to a regime of internet self-governance, later to a regime of public-private partnership, and finally, governance has evolved to the concept of multi-stakeholderism, embodied by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). IGF not only represents a new approach to the regulation of the internet, but rather a new paradigm of governance of global matters which transcend state and national boundaries as well as forms of intergovernmental cooperation, culminating in the UN and its agencies. IGF is a revolution in the regulation of many common matters on the global level by incorporating many subjects and stakeholders in processes of decision making and thus providing the possibility of a "world democracy" (Lamy), a "hyper-complex model" or post-modern "non-governmental governance". By preserving the centralisation of control over the internet infrastructure, a paradigm of multi-stakeholderism can become just a mask, serving the perpetuation of the violence that the "first" world uses against the rest of the world also in the new (cyber) space. The struggle for control on the internet is illustrated in this paper by an analysis of the mandatory retention of traffic data and strategies (and spots) of internet filtering. Both of the aforementioned practices realize a scenario of internet security by which solutions do not solve problems, but rather create them, destroy that which they are supposed to save, and increase control.

Key words: internet, internet governance, multi-stakeholderism, control over the internet, Internet Governance Forum, internet filtering, data retention

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