TOWARDS A GLOBAL NETWORK OF INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERNET & SOCIETY RESEARCH CENTERS (NOC)

ROADMAP 2014

Background

A growing number of academic research institutions are focused on exploring a wide range of important issues concerning the future of the Internet and related technologies. Representing diverse disciplines, methodologies, and viewpoints, in recent decades these institutions have sought to analyze and understand the growing impact of digital technologies on society and share those findings in such ways that serve the public interest. In the process, they grapple with a complex set of topics and issues of national, regional, and global importance, including policy, regulation and governance, human behavior and social impact, new markets and business models, intellectual property, privacy, and security, and many other issues.

Acknowledging a lack of internationally coordinated research and engagement activities in the areas mentioned above, a group of academic centers launched the Network of Internet and Society Research Centers (in the following referred to as 'NoC' or 'the Network') in 2012, a collaborative initiative among academic institutions with a focus on interdisciplinary research on the development, social impact, policy implications, and legal issues concerning the Internet. This collective aims to increase interoperability between participating centers in order to stimulate the creation of new cross-national, cross-disciplinary conversation, debate, teaching, learning, and engagement regarding the most pressing questions around new technologies, social change, and related policy and regulatory developments. The activities of the Network since its inauguration in 2012 are documented here: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/research/network_of_centers

Roadmap 2014

The 2014 Roadmap outlines proposed next steps regarding the next phase of collaboration among the participants in the Network. It builds upon the first Symposium on "Internet-Driven Developments: Structural Changes and Tipping Points" that took place at Harvard University from December 6-8, 2012 and has been further developed in the subsequent regional Network conversations and meetings that took place in 2013. These include meetings hosted by ICT Law Institute at Bilgi University, Istanbul, by the Center for Technology & Society at FGV School of Law, Rio de Janeiro, and by the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society (HIIG), Berlin. The Network's activities in 2014 will scale accordingly with the no-longer nascent Network, ramping up to include hard research outputs and significant contributions in key policy debates.

I.   NoC Mission and Values

All activities of the Network shall adhere to the NoC Mission and Values. The Network seeks to promote internationally coordinated, interdisciplinary research on the development, social impact, policy implications, and legal issues concerning the Internet and aims to increase interoperability between participating centers in order to collectively confront transnational issues on a global level. In doing so, the Network strives to be as inclusive as possible while preserving its effectiveness as well as the quality of its output. The Network continues to follow a set of Guiding Principles (Annex I).

II.   NoC Learning Calls

Learning calls around specific content-related issues shall continue to be a central part of the Network's efforts in facilitating increased regional and global co-operation of researchers. These calls are led by an individual researcher or a small team of collaborators and treat a specific set of thematic issues. Learning calls can take place in context of other related Network activities such as events or in preparation of shared research activities.

For 2014, a series of learning calls on "Online Intermediaries" has been initiated, at which researchers from the Network share insights from ongoing country case studies and use cases. Engaging a diverse group of participants inside and with connections to the Network, these learning calls each highlight a country-specific case of intermediary liability with the goal of identifying thematic synergies, possible further collaboration, and shared data-gathering and conversation as independent researchers navigate this international research project.

III.   NoC Events

Network activities will continue to include a range of events such as conferences and – formal and informal – meetings. Continuing with the very successful model explored in 2013, the hosts of Network events are asked to consider an adaptable three-part approach in terms of format.

Part 1: Thematic lead by the host institution – regional or thematic focus
The hosting institution takes the lead over the substantive part of the event, with the goal of demonstrating research activities in a particular region or within a thematic focus. This not only allows the hosting institution to present its own work to a wide audience, but also provides Network partners with unique insights into the work of a specific Center or within a specific geographic region. The output of this aspect of the meeting could ideally flow into the Network's research mapping activities and could potentially contribute to its efforts towards finding a joint vocabulary, undertaking joint teaching

efforts and working towards a shared curriculum among the Network participants.

Part 2: Network contribution – focus on questions of relevance to mapping the field of global Internet and society research
The second part of the event should build on findings from Part 1, yet have a more specific Network focus. It could be organized either as a formal aspect of the program or more informally, as the focus of a dinner, working breakfast meeting or the like. The Network's involvement in this second Part of the respective event would be stronger, yet with a clear focus on facilitating open and substantial discussions amongst Network participants.

Part 3: Network lead – organizational issues relevant to the Network of Centers
Part 3 of any Network event should focus on organizational aspects regarding the NoC, such as discussing practical aspects of mapping efforts, organizing joint teaching efforts or the like. As such, it would be the part where direct Network involvement is strongest.

A range of Network participants have already kindly proposed to host events in 2014, or offered to gear planned events towards the network. Within its possibilities and as appropriate, the Steering Committee will strive to support further events as they are initiated and planned by Network participants and contribute to the NoC.

1. **Event series on multi-stakeholder governance**
    A range of events in 2014 will focus on multistakeholder governance. While one such meeting may take place in the context of the planned Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance in Sao Paolo, Brazil, in April 2014, another might be hosted by Bilgi University in Istanbul, Turkey, and take place in May 2014.

2. **Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany via CIS India (Nishant Shah)**
    Nishant Shah, currently based at Leuphana University, has kindly offered to organize and host a Network event in Lüneburg during his stay there.

3. **Keio University, Tokyo, Japan**
    An event hosted by Keio is likely to follow a regional approach, possibly in cooperation with another Asian University.

4. **Africa**
    Also in the spirit of capacity building and diversity, we envision an Africa event for 2014

in order to increase the involvement of Internet and society researchers and experts from this highly relevant, yet under-represented continent in the future activities of the NoC. As we map the space and identify possible collaborators on the African region, we hope to cement our ties there and formalize the connection by holding a Network event. Current interests include Kenya and Mozambique.

In order to facilitate this option, the Network participants are encouraged to submit ideas and suggestions (including possible contacts) to the Network Manager for such an event.

5. **NEXA Center, Torino, Italy**
   The NEXA Center for Internet & Society at Politecnico di Torino is planning to host an event in the fall of 2014. This might be the event in which the Humboldt Institute for Internet & Society will formally hand over the reins of NoC coordination to the Nexa Center for Internet & Society, with Juan Carlos de Martin as new coordinator.

An important and foreseeable issue of the Network will be how to involve actors in the field of Internet and society from developing countries and/or institutions with extremely constrained resources. Network participants are encouraged to consider ways in which they can work together to provide, as appropriate, financial support or other support to their peers, for instance in the form of travel stipends to NoC-wide events or other meetings. This could be a valuable and truly practical contribution of the Network to capacity building in the Internet and society space, particularly with regard to fostering the cultural and geographical diversity of the network.

IV. **Joint Research Activities**
   1. **Joint Research Project on Online Intermediaries**
      The NoC first research project is a policy-oriented, comparative study on the liability and responsibility of online intermediaries. NoC participants are invited to (A) contribute to a shared repository of relevant research from various disciplines, including methodologies and approaches, data, and expertise on the function of intermediaries; (B) engage in an initial analysis of recent policy debates and proposals related to the governance of online intermediaries around the globe, including attitudes towards liability; and (C) collaborate on a shared methodology for assessing the impact of such governance regimes on the open Internet.

      ● As of January 2014, NoC participants have committed to contribute three mini case studies: Vietnam, Turkey, and Spain, and three larger country studies: Brazil, the U.S, and India. The Berkman Center will contribute the U.S. case

study. Ronaldo Lemos, along with his colleagues at the Rio Institute for Technology & Society, will contribute a Brazilian-focused case study. Chinmayi Arun, along with her colleagues at the Centre for Communication Governance at National Law University, Delhi, will contribute the case study focused on India.

- To share resources and practices, the NoC will hold several learning calls over the course of 2014.

2. **Exploring a Joint Research Project on Multistakeholder Internet Governance**
The Network explores a concerted research and planning effort around multistakeholder models for Internet governance in light of recent related events on the global landscape. On the heels of the announcement from Brazilian President Dilma Roussef and ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) of a high-level commission charged with investigating different modes of Internet governance as well as a large conference to take place in São Paulo, Brazil, in April to explore different findings, the NoC plans to contribute to the academic debate with literature reviews, briefing documents, expert opinions, workshops, and conferences.

3. **Towards a Shared Curriculum and Potential Teaching Effort**
One envisioned NoC activity focuses on the creation of a shared Internet and society curriculum and associated teaching events. A possible starting point is the creation of a shared "playlist" of key readings and materials from different disciplines and countries. A first such effort has emerged around Terry Fisher's Copyright X course taught at Harvard Law School.

4. **Publication in the field of Internet & Society**
In the course of furthering interdisciplinary research in the Internet & society field, Network participants have raised the issue of a perceived lack of publication outlets. In 2014, Network participants have agreed to collaborate around mapping the field of Internet & society publications, with the aim of identifying areas where the Network can facilitate information exchange and, if appropriate, give organizational support in close co-operation with center liaisons at the working level. A mailing list (publications@networkofcenters.org) was set up to facilitate exchange around this subject.

V. **Researcher Exchanges**
The Mapping of researcher exchange opportunities has been identified as a major future contribution of the NoC to the academic Internet and society landscape. Exchange of

researchers at all levels shall be facilitated through a concerted effort to map opportunities for fellowships, internships, summer schools, etc. that are available at different Network centers.

1. **Information gathering**
   Step one will be to map the field of opportunities for researcher exchange, which will involve extensive gathering of information. In order to facilitate this process, the Steering Committee members shall be asked to kindly name a staff liaison to support the NoC's efforts in their respective centers.

2. **Establishment of a research exchange database**
   Based on the above, the Network will aim to set up a database mapping the field of centers and opportunities for researcher exchange in Internet and society. A working group shall be set up to facilitate this process.

3. **Fostering exchange amongst young researchers**
   In 2013, a mailing list for young scholars was set up. 2014 shall see active and enthusiastic regular and informal exchange amongst young researchers at participating centers.

VI. **NoC Online Presence**
The online presence of the NoC shall focus on providing actual working support for the Network's participants. Where possible, existing tools should be used. Only where deemed helpful and feasible, the Network shall pursue the development of new tools on its website.

1. **Goals**
   The need for an online presence of the NoC has been discussed particularly with regard to providing general information about the Network, the announcement of events and other opportunities, and the mapping of fellowships and research activities of individual network participants.

   - **Providing General information**
     The information on the site proposed by the Berkman Center after the December 2012 Symposium provides a wonderful overview and links to the initial participating centers.

   - **Mapping of research activities and of opportunities for researcher exchange**
     The mapping of research activities within the global Internet and society field shall be presented online if possible.

- Participants of the Berkman Symposium have stressed the wish for a tool that could better map the field of Internet and society research world-wide.
    - Research mapping efforts will be undertaken in close co-operation with staff liaisons at individual centers.
    - An appropriate form for distributing initial mapping input shall be found. A mailing list (network@networkofcenters.org) was set up.
  - **Aggregating individual centers' content**
    Members of the steering committee expressed the wish for the webpage to not only host content of the Network at large but also to aggregate content from individual centers' websites in the form of blogs and twitter feeds. In this way, the NoC website will maintain a vital and active presence in cyberspace.

2. **NoC Website**
   Establishing an NoC website will become a top priority for 2014, with an aggressive timeline of having a workable web presence by Spring 2014. Berkman developers will take the lead in transitioning content from the Berkman landing page to a real webpage. This will naturally be a work-in-progress as the year unfolds, and NoC steering committee members are encouraged to think broadly in terms of keeping the webpage fresh and active.

VII. **NoC Communication**
   The Network is dedicated to openness and flexibility. Initial reactions and first inquiries give rise to the hope that the NoC will continue to draw much attention by current and potential Network participants. In order to adequately respond to future suggestions and inquiries regarding Network activities, open communication – including periodic updates, for instance via mailing lists, in form of a bi-monthly newsletter or periodic open calls/Google Hangouts with the Steering Committee – is key.

ANNEX I

GLOBAL NETWORK OF INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERNET & SOCIETY RESEARCH CENTERS (NOC)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Mission
The global Network of Internet and Society Centers is a collaborative initiative among academic institutions with focus on interdisciplinary research on the development, social impact, policy

implications, and legal issues concerning the Internet. It aims to increase interoperability between participating centers in order to collectively confront transnational issues on a global level.

2. Core Values
The Network participants are committed to the principles of openness, collaboration, and diversity. The Network operates independent from governments, political parties and economic interests and does not take formal positions on policy issues.

3. Governance
The Network is peer-based, collaborative, and entrepreneurial, with all participants invited to contribute to and engage in proposed activities and discussions. It is currently guided by a Steering Committee, which consists of director-level liaisons of the initial participating centers. Decision-making is based on "rough consensus" and occurs in close consultation with all Network participants. Participants will assess the model periodically to determine how adjustments should be made. The administrative lead will alternate among the centers to underscore and embody the value of collaboration and diversity. Differences in material resources shall be taken into account.

4. Activities
Through facilitation, periodic consultation, and collaboration, the Network seeks to create meaningful synergies among the research activities of the participating centers, which remain exclusively in charge with determining their respective research agendas. The Network's envisioned activities include learning calls, meetings, conferences, researcher exchanges, collaborative project work, co-teaching, and related academic activities.

5. Membership
The Network is incubated from the bottom-up and will expand over time, building upon existing and future collaborations with the initial participating centers and collectively evolving its structure and practices.

6. Funding
The participating centers of the network can individually and collectively engage in fundraising efforts on issues relevant to the Network. The activities are governed by the respective rules applicable to each participating center (e.g. University's fundraising and conflict of interest policies). The Steering Committee is responsible that any funding directed towards the activities of the network will respect and bolster the values of the Network.