

We, the citizens of the world wide web of democracies, are connected by optical cables and computers, but most importantly, by the faith in the sanctity of the individual human spirit and freedom. Values we believe to be universal.

When we talk about freedom and democracy we mean the whole package: free and fair elections, rule of law, independent judiciaries, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. And in the modern digitized society, which is actually only about 20 years old, a free Internet is just as much a part of the package.

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The first stable link between multiple computers that could communicate came through the ARPANET in 1969. It happened after some young geeks invented the TCP/IP protocol. One of those young geeks is still a young geek, and he is right here, Vint Cerf, one of the fathers of the Internet. That ARPANET experiment formed the basis of the Internet as we know it. Yet a civilian Internet, one which is open to all of us, actually is barely 25 years old.

Today, however, the exponential growth of the use of information technology and the Internet has changed our societies so much we can no longer imagine life without it. Just imagine you didn't have a mobile phone, a computer, an iPad. This digitized world that we live in today is so radically different from everything before it that we can just as justifiably talk about a revolution as we have talked, for 150 years, about the industrial revolution. The Internet affects our cultures, our economies, the way we think and communicate, the way we govern our states and handle international relations.

As everything we do in our everyday lives is more and more dependent on Internet-based systems, we ourselves become more and more vulnerable to cyber attacks, to espionage and and cyber crime. To deal with all that, the digital age requires a rethink of some of the basic concepts of our society, such as privacy, transparency, public-private relations.

In the 1960s Marshall McLuhan said we lived in the Global Village. Writing in the Television Age as he did, McLuhan meant that events around the world such as the Vietnam War could be

seen by all in our living rooms and thus were brought to our consciousness. Yet the metaphor was incomplete. In our living rooms we could follow what was happening elsewhere, but we ourselves remained anonymous. No one was looking at us. It was a one-way view, passive, and thus it was not yet a village.

Internet technologies have changed this altogether. Today we do live in a Global Village. Governments, Google searches, the apps in your smartphone and your credit card swipes make you an open book, just as if you were living in a small 17th, 18th or 19th Century village. Everything can be known, and in some cases everything is known. I wonder sometimes, given the vast literature that was created in the 20th century about those who left their village to go to cities – every modern society has a whole range of literature about people talking about escaping their villages or their small towns to go to big cities –, if some day we will have the same kind of Bildungsroman written about the Internet age.

Surveillance, the two way television of 1948's 1984, is enabled in every computer or iPad, unless you tape over the camera. Mobile phones are microphones that also can pinpoint your location. Big Data knows and can deduce more about you than Big Brother ever could.

We could describe the resulting state of affairs using Thomas Hobbes's characterization of the anarchy of life in the state of nature as a war of all against all. No one is protected, anyone can access your privacy. Hobbes used this war of all against all as the justification for a ruling sovereign to provide order – something we hear a lot about again –, but in democracies we rely on John Locke's solution to the state of nature where he posited a contract between the government and the people. This contract, in democracies, underpins all of our relations between the citizens and governments.

The problem we face today, ranging from child pornography to government surveillance to corporate use of our online searches is that we have no Lockean contract for the cyber realm. Thus, today, again, we are in the midst of a massive debate on what liberal democracies can, should and should not do with the extremely powerful technologies we possess. So we live in a Hobbesian world. We need our Locke and our Voltaire for the digital age.

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Cyber threats, and the lack of regulation of the global Internet, has been brought up as a reason, or an excuse, to control and regulate cyber space, to limit the free flow of information, and to Westphalianize the Internet. I say Westphalianize, from Westphalia, and not "Balkanization", first because "Balkanization" is a meaningless term, but also it's an insulting term. But more so because what some governments really want is that we accept that each government be allowed to regulate its own Internet along the same principles as the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, the basis of modern sovereignty, where anything you do inside your state is allowed.

This in turn was based on the 1555 Treaty of Augsburg, establishing the principle of Cuius Regio, Eius Religio

– whose realm, his religion. This was an attempt to solve the Thirty years' war, and it led to hundreds of statelets, each with its own approach. Today, it's rather

Cuius Regio, Eius Internet

, or if one wishes to be a pedant,

Cuius Regio, Eius Rete

– whose realm, his net. Who is the ruler determines what is the Internet, in this case. What was once religio is now freedom on the net, as if belief in freedom of expression is a kind of sect.

This cannot be the solution.

Alas, the recent revelations on government surveillance are used as ammunition in an attempt to impose a Westphalian order on the Internet.

Westphalianisation began long ago; the meetings of the ITU in 2012 narrowly avoided the acceptance of this principle, but now it is back with a vengeance. A number of authoritarian and repressive regimes want to replace the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance we have today, led by ICANN, with the innocuously sounding Intergovernmental governance. Do we really want the likes of the authoritarian regimes we see in the world today "governing the Internet"? I don't.

Although we can't take security lightly, security cannot be used as an excuse to limit freedom of expression. Cyber security cannot lie in highly restrictive legislation that plays into the hands of those who have a fundamentally different value system and no regard for human dignity and freedom of speech. Or who want to quash or limit free expression in the name of "domestic security".

Today we see a kind of Huntingtonian clash of civilisations between those countries that want to censor and restrict the Internet and a coalition of democratic nations that stand up for the universal norms of freedom of speech and unhindered spread of ideas. Between those that want an Internet ruled by states and one governed by relevant stakeholders. This is one of the major international political clashes of the digital age.

We do not have to see freedom and security as mutually exclusive: indeed secure online interactions are a precondition for enjoying full Internet freedom. Here in Estonia, we have managed the balance between security and freedom by providing a network of public and private e-services based on a secure online identity. We're proud to be one of the first in the world in Internet freedom according to Freedom House – we were No. 1 for a number of years, but then Iceland squeezed ahead of us. We didn't get worse, they got better. At the same time we have an e-governance system that even the NSA cannot crack, at RSA 2048 encryption, which as far as we know has not been penetrated, at least so far.

We're also a proud member of the Freedom Online Coalition that unites today 23 likeminded countries – and I'd like to welcome here Japan and Moldova again –, all committed to promoting these principles.

The Coalition was born in Europe 3 years ago with the Hague declaration. Then Africans (Kenya and Tunisia) took the lead; now the chairing has moved back to Europe and we are about to hand it over to Mongolia. People from about 60 countries have gathered here today to think along and take the message back home. So it is fair to say that FOC is a truly global initiative that deserves to be heard.

We in Estonia are glad to have done our share in advancing the Coalition principles over the last year. The working group, drafting the recommendations that will be adopted in a few hours, has been working for 4 months, uniting multi-stakeholders from 21 societies. It is important to keep in mind that the Freedom Online Coalition brings together not only governments, but also NGOs, entrepreneurs and think tanks. It is indeed a genuine bottom-up organisation that has a genuine capacity to make a difference in the world.

The document reflects a consensus on some of the core principles that those 23 countries value. The most important is a firm belief in the value of a free Internet.

The recommendations are based on the principle of the universality of human rights; all people, regardless of where they live, are entitled to the same rights and freedoms. As was stated in the birth certificate of the Coalition, the rights that people have offline must also be protected online. Countries have different legal systems, but the Freedom Online Coalition is about international principles that should be universally applicable and domestically implementable by every country.

Whatever the excuse, in reality, limiting access or censoring the contents of the Internet is hardly ever done for the sake of the security of the people. More often, it is done for the sake of the security of authoritarian and undemocratic governments, and more and more so every day.

For example, in 2011 the reaction of the government of Egypt to the mass demonstrations was unprecedented in the history of the Internet. Until then some countries had cut off access to news sites and social networking services during periods of unrest, or they had limited access from abroad. In Egypt the entire Internet and local mobile services were shut down for days, preventing people from accessing any websites or even sending SMSs.

The Freedom Online Coalition opposes all attempts to limit free expression in any, but especially in digital form. At the same time, we must be honest with ourselves and admit that recent developments regarding purported surveillance by the NSA and similar organisations in different countries make the defense of an open Internet more difficult. That, too, is a challenge that Freedom Online Coalition must face, providing additional arguments to keep the Internet free. For, as we have observed, many have used the Snowden revelations as a justification to limit freedom online – I would say, even with a certain degree of Schadenfreude. In reality these two have very little to do with each other, but in the eyes of the public, such distinctions are often unclear.

In the end, we need to find a balance between security, privacy and the free flow of information. In fact, that was exactly what John Locke attempted to do 300 years ago. We must provide services that the citizens can trust; we need transparency and openness to create trust between governments and citizens. And we need to address concepts such as privacy, confidentiality and freedom of speech, especially anonymous speech, all in a new way, because they all have been redefined and indeed, through technology have redefined themselves.

When thinker and Grateful Dead lyricist John Perry Barlow addressed governments in 1996 with his Declaration of the Independence of the Internet that said: "Your legal concepts of property,

expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us," he was right. (I should say he also left out privacy.) He was more right than we bargained for – for now, the legal concepts that underpin liberal democracy truly no longer apply to "us", whoever that may be – to you or the mafia or the government, or kids under the legal age of responsibility. Freedoms and rights are fully meaningful within a context of responsibility and obligations – on- and offline.

The future of a secure and free Internet is not just a question about lifestyle. The Internet is a driver for economic growth and development. Since the 1980s it has blossomed into a global network of networks used by nearly three billion users. Much of the world's commerce and communication pass through it. Internet access has become a key tool for development. It is predicted that the majority of the next billion users will come from developing and less developed countries. The UN post 2015 Development Agenda recognizes the importance of new technologies and e-services and especially of maintaining current architecture of the Internet, with its open standards and decentralized structure.

To respond to new questions and challenges that have arisen with the unprecedented growth and globalization of the network, ICANN last fall gathered the Panel on Global Internet Cooperation and Governance Mechanisms, which I have the honor to chair. The Panel has identified ten principles for Internet governance and respect for human rights is one of them.

And it shares the central goal of the FOC – the Internet should be globally one, not fragmented or Westphalianized. Unfortunately, as Freedom House reports, the world is not moving one way toward more freedom and the universal recognition of human rights. The number of countries designated by Freedom House's 'Freedom in the World' report as free in 2013 stood at 88, representing just 45 % of the world's 195 polities, and slightly more than 2.8 billion people – 40 % of the global population. We can also already gather, from preliminary reports to Freedom House's annual country-by-country report on global political rights and civil liberties, that in 2014 the state of freedom declined for the eighth consecutive year, and this apparently applies as well to online freedom.

But there are positive signs for the year as well, and the Freedom Online Coalition is an instrument to change the trend in the world. Online freedom supports freedom in the physical world. The Freedom Online process should continue; this is just the beginning. The Internet is our future. The sooner the principles catch up with realities and vice versa, the better. So I thank you for your attention and hope you will have an enjoyable time here, and more importantly, will get some good work done.