Global Network of Interdisciplinary Internet & Society Research Centers
Events Series

Regional Conference Turkey 2013

ICT, Law, and Innovation:
Recent Developments, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

NoC Working Meetings
May 24, 2013
Summary

Introduction

Members of the newly emerging interdisciplinary Network of Internet and Society Centers (NoC) came together in May 2013 for the first gathering since the network's inaugural event the previous December. Held in Istanbul, Turkey, this first NoC regional event involved a day-long public symposium that focused on "ICT, Law, and Innovation: Recent Developments, Challenges, and Lessons Learned", with a particular emphasis on the Turkish context. The public symposium was followed by a day of working meetings for NoC participants and presentations from representatives of Microsoft Turkey. With the aim of strengthening the network's human layer, the event also kicked off a series of regional and network-wide events under development for 2013-2014.

Session 1: Towards a Shared Internet & Society Curriculum

The first working session focused on joint teaching and learning activities within the NoC, and outlined possible next steps towards the development of a global curriculum on Internet and society issues. Against this backdrop, Urs Gasser and Charles Nesson, both of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society (BCIS), introduced a proposal to scale up incrementally by building upon the experimental online course CopyrightX taught by Terry Fisher (BCIS) in Spring 2013.

The proposal's three main components involve: (a) encouraging other NoC members to participate in the next iteration of CopyrightX in Spring 2014 through "satellite" learning groups and the production of curricular materials; (b) forming a committee to guide this effort, through, for example, brainstorming about both existing and future courses, teaching formats, etc.; and, (c) potentially formalizing a template for NoC courses, on any topic.

The satellite model would rely on discussion group leaders with expertise on copyright law to assemble an in-person group in their home communities. Substantively, the satellites would draw on Fisher's recorded lectures, which form the backbone of the curriculum, as well as a collection of diverse case studies. Each satellite could generate a case study that focuses on their jurisdiction. Additionally, satellite leaders could share reflections about their experience with Terry Fisher and their counterparts at the end of the course.

Meeting participants raised four main questions: (a) the potential for satellites, or other contributors, to add materials beyond case studies to CopyrightX (and other potential courses); (b) how to harness the interdisciplinarity of the NoC in the contributions of satellite participants, and in the effort overall; (c) how to relate one lead course to different cultural environments; and, (d) the ways in which other potential courses, e.g. on freedom of expression, could harvest diverse national perspectives and lend themselves to comparative study.

Participants resolved to form a committee to further develop and implement this proposal.

Session 2: Government Approaches to Internet Content Control

Based on a proposal by Kyung Sin Park of Korea University and following up on a learning call on the subject, the group discussed a potential joint research project on government approaches to Internet content control, taking freedom of expression as a starting point. The aim of such a joint research project would be to look specifically at extra-judicial administrative censorship of the Internet, potentially identifying a set of practices, incentives, or other factors that may lead some countries to adopt such a regime, with others doing the opposite. With South Korea and Turkey among the rare cases of countries that make use of such regimes, these examples might provide a good starting point for discussion.

A globally-based joint research project on government approaches to Internet content control could focus in particular on the roles and standards of intermediaries. The goals of a joint research project could be to (a) map and compare the range of approaches adopted by governments to control content via intermediaries; (b) identify and analyze specific cases, particularly those that have global relevance and offer salient comparisons; (c) potentially identify a set of principles and good practices regarding the regulation of intermediaries that could be presented to policymakers; (d) work towards a restriction of administrative censorship, as opposed to judiciary censorship. In this context, the concern was raised that while it may be acceptable for the judicial branch to regulate Internet content, this may have deeper implications for the willingness of intermediaries to regulate Internet content voluntarily.

Input from NoC participants included reference to the example of an executive decision Internet kill switch, and the suggestion to place a stronger focus on intermediary liability than on governments specifically. Furthermore, Turkey and Germany were mentioned as interesting case studies: whereas Turkey was referred to with regard to its Internet content regulation framework which is currently being revised, Germany was referred to as a complicated, yet interesting case study with potential model character.

Session 3: Proposal for a Joint Research Project on Online Intermediaries

Urs Gasser of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society invited participation from NoC participants on a research project on online intermediaries within different countries. In terms of outline, such a research project would look at the legal, social and economic responsibility of online intermediary action. The goal might be to compile a set of rich case studies with an empirical focus on different legal administrative regimes, and with specific reference to intermediaries' public function.

In determining the scope of the project, aspects to be taken into account might include a focus on (a) the value added; (b) the ideal output; (c) the chosen research method; and, (d) determining the degree of empirical research.

Participants expressed interest to further develop this proposal and join this collaborative research effort.

Session 4: Entrepreneurship Education

Stefan Gross-Selbeck of the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet & Society (HIIG) shared a vision for an online course—specifically, a massive open online course (MOOC)—focused on entrepreneurship, and invited the meeting participants to contribute insights for the final stages of the course's brainstorming and design processes. The course concept has two primary inspirations: the growing attention paid to entrepreneurship within academia, and the recent increase in the development and visibility of MOOCs.

Entrepreneurship is a compelling topic for a MOOC for a couple of reasons. For one, the current EU policy agenda has emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship as a driver of growth and innovation. This accords with the increasing attention the subject has received in academia in recent history: in the 1970s, roughly five postsecondary educational institutions in the U.S. taught about entrepreneurship; now, upwards of 1,300 do so. Also, as of recently, new concepts and "methods" for entrepreneurship from outside the academic world such as *The Lean Startup by Eric Ries*, have become very popular. With regards to the format of an online educational venture, there is value to be gained from experimenting with MOOC as the format becomes increasingly popular. For instance, at a recent competition held in Germany for MOOC concepts where the winners receive a €10k fellowship more then 250 academic institutions applied.

The proposal for this particular course involves producing up to 150 six-minute videos to form the curriculum's core. Each video would address a specific problem that entrepreneurs encounter; the set as a whole would be conceived of and produced with the support of practitioners. To start, Berlin-based entrepreneurs will contribute, yet ideally, international participation could be incorporated down the road.

Key questions concerning the course design include (a) how to incorporate feedback from users, and potential students, during the process of developing the collection of videos?; and, (b) what modes of interaction and assessment should the course seek to build into its design?