Forum: ECOSOC

Issue: Establishing universal Internet access

Student officer: Hagar Sivan

Position: Deputy Chair

Introduction

The issues of Internet connectivity and freedom online are some of the biggest concerns in the developing and the modern world. As Internet becomes a major source of information and personal expression, it has been concluded by the UN that access to Internet is a human right. Many countries have taken measures in order to offer free Wi-Fi all throughout their nation and private organizations such as Google and Facebook constantly invest in technology that will allow poor regions in the developing world to access the web. Moreover, the UN states that Internet access must be affordable and free, without any forms of governmental censorship. Although this may be a risky move in a century where terror groups use the Internet and its social networks as key recruitment sources, it is a necessary one in order to ensure that freedom of speech and freedom of expression are practiced. The UN believes that rights on the Internet world should be identical to the human rights in the physical world.

Key Terms

Communication Balloon Technology relies on balloons that serve as floating cell towers and can relay a signal from 15 to 18 kilometers above the surface. Big balloon are able to provide Internet signal to an area of 5,000 squared kilometers. This technology is expensive and a single balloon typically costs tens of thousands of dollars. It is a relatively new for of internet supply and is not fully developed yet (Tierney).

Fiber-Optic Internet Connection relies on fiber-optic cables that are is made of thin strands of glass or plastic (known as optical fibers). Each strand is less than a tenth as thick as a human hair and can carry approximately 25,000 telephone calls. Fiber optic technology uses a light beams to pass information and therefore is exceptionally efficient (information travels in the speed of light). Fiber optic cables are placed underground and therefore are not likely to be impacted by weather (How does Fiber Optics).

Internet Access is commonly defined as the access to information and communication facilities of the Internet. Internet access does not necessarily mean WiFi, but can also refer to easily accessible mobile data.

Internet User is an individual that can access the Internet at home, via any device type and connection.

Satellite Internet has two components that transmits and receive data from each other, a satellite dish on Earth and an orbiting geostationary satellite. It is exceptionally sensitive to weather and heavy rains tend to affect it (Ground Control).

Universal Internet Access, also referred to as *broadband universal service*, refers to the effort of countries and non-governmental groups to ensure all citizens have access to the Internet.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a declaration that was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. The document consists of all the basic human rights that should be given to all individuals across the globe without discrimination. It is constantly updated to fit the ever-changing world (Universal).

Countries and Organizations Involved

Cuba
In 2016 the Cuban government opened a hundred new Internet points, however the government prohibits home Internet connections and censors Internet heavily. It was one of the nations to vote against the UN resolution proposed in June 2016 dealing with the issue of "[The] p§romotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development [online]" (UN).

China
In most large cities in China Wi-Fi and cellular Internet are extremely accessible to the public. In most rural areas however, there is no Internet access at all (ChinaHighlights). China is one of the most censored countries in the world. Approximately 10% of websites are blocked in China, and these include most Western social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, etc.) (Internet). It was one of the nations to vote against the UN resolution proposed in June 2016 dealing with the issue of "[The] promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development [online]" (UN).

Estonia

In 2014, Estonia was one of the first nations to create a system of free Wi-Fi hotspots that are available almost everywhere, from parks to restaurants, airports, and even forests. Estonia has truly embraces digital technology and served as a role model for many other nations (Stanford). Estonia's censorship and restrictions online are some of the lightest in the world (Estonia).

Finland

Finland was the first country in the world to declare broadband Internet access as a legal right when it did so in 2009. Although at the time of the passing of the law 95% of Finland's population already had access to the Internet, the law allowed rural parts of the country where geographic challenged limited Internet accessibility to be connected too. By the law, telecommunication companies were required to provide all citizens with Internet connection that runs at speeds of at least 1 megabit per second (Saeed).

Russia

Although Russia has no policies about Internet access, the Moscow metro was the first in the world to offer free Wi-Fi on its trains. In terms of Internet freedom, Russia does have a blacklist of censored sites but as the Russia system is so big the Kremlin does not have the ability to "switch off" the Russian network as a whole (Sinelschikova). It was one of the nations to vote against the UN resolution proposed in June 2016 dealing with the issue of "[The] promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development [online]" (UN).

Google

In 2013 Google has launched "Project Loon" in which it attempts to use thousands of high-altitude balloons in order to deliver Internet service in remote areas. Google's balloons are essentially floating cell towers and can relay a signal from 15 to 18 kilometers above the surface. Big balloon are able to provide Internet signal to an area of 5,000 squared kilometers. However, such balloons are expensive and typically tens of thousands of dollars. This technology is relatively new and is not fully developed yet. Only in 2015 Google managed to have a balloon stay in location for a substantial amount of time, 187 days (Tierney). (For more information about Loon Project: https://x.company/loon/).

Mark Zuckerberg

Mark Zuckerberg, the founder and CEO, has launched the "Connect the World" campaign in late 2015. Zuckerberg believes that "the Internet is more than just a network of machines, it is the key driver of social and economic progress in our time" and that universal Internet access would not only affect freedom, specifically of expression and access to resources, but will also produce new jobs and will help fight poverty. One of the first targets for Zuckerberg's Facebook is to bring Internet access to refugee camps (De Looper). Zuckerberg has invested much of his money into Internet.org, a company with the goal of making Internet affordable and accessible in developing countries. In September 2016, the SpaceX rocket that

carried the first Internet.org satellite exploded during SpaceX's launch control check. The incident was a major setback to Zuckerberg's ambitious universal Internet project (Brandom).

Cyber-Terrorism is the act of attempting to promote terror-full content in order to recruit or inspire an individual to commit an attack.

General Overview

The United Nations believes that Internet access is a fundamental human right that relates directly to freedom of expression. The right for Internet access was made into article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right; "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (Howell). Thus, the UN believes that the Internet is a key aspect in spreading ideas and ideologies across the globe and therefore is a powerful tool that should be in access for every hand. The importance of the Internet can be linked to its role as an outlet where people of all races and economic backgrounds can access information equally, while also expressing their thoughts and opinions. The ability of the internet to reach across continents effortlessly and affordably is revolutionary considering only a century ago such technology would have only been affordable to top class personas (Vincent). Creating universal Internet access is not only technologically challenging, but also requires a great financial investment. Placing foundations that will be able to supply fast internet regardless of weather conditions is extremely expensive as it does not only demands the creation of a fiber optic but also the installation of one. Such cables must be connected directly from the source to the outlet, and therefore trying to cover massive landscapes would be unimaginably expensive. The cheaper methods of Wi-Fi and cellular data include satellite communication and dishes and communication balloons, but these, although cheaper, are not nearly as reliable. There are countless organizations who work on both developing new technologies and making current technologies more affordable (such as Internet.org, Facebook's partner).

The UN does not only believe that access to Internet is important, but it that such access should be untouched, without any form of governmental control, such as censorship or governmental interruption of the network in times of rebellions and protests which is a common action taken in order to tackle resistance movements. Conversely the UN does acknowledge the need for citizen's rights to be protected online just as much as they are protected offline (Boyle). The Internet is a platform for terrorist groups to connect to individuals from across the globe and influence them to take actions of resistance in their homelands. One of the best-known organizations for such actions is ISIS. ISIS does not only use the Internet to recruit foreign fighters and influence individuals to commit attacks in their own land (the Orlando club shooting for example) but it also uses the platform to spread terror and propaganda. One of ISIS's best-known usages of the Internet by ISIS was their publication of journalists beheading videos. As the world is working towards

making Internet more accessible measures should be taken in order to ensure that the Internet is a safe environment for young users and that the Internet is used solely for the purpose of bettering society rather than creating greater and more dangerous divisions and gaps.

As the Internet and the World Wide Web have only became accessible to the public in 1991, and only gained popularity around 1999, the history of the issue does not go more than two decades back (Chapman). Moreover, as Internet only became a crucial part of global communication and information access in the past decade, there is not much content to be explored before the mentioned addition to the UDHR. It is important to note that in June 2016 the UN Human Rights Commission passed a resolution dealing with the issue of "[The] promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development [online]". Numerous countries such as South Africa, Russia, and China objected to this resolution. The United Nations has also declared universal Internet access a part of the Sustainable Development Goals (U.N.).

Related UN resolutions and Previous Approaches to Solving the Issue

- Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights
- UN resolution proposed to the Human Rights Commission in June 2016 regarding the issue of "[The] promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development [online]" (UN).
- UN resolution adopted in 2016 with the topic of "Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development [online]".
- Google's project and involvement (see **Google** in the "Countries and Organizations Involved" section)
- Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gate's project and involvement (see **Mark Zuckerberg** in the "Countries and Organizations Involved" section)

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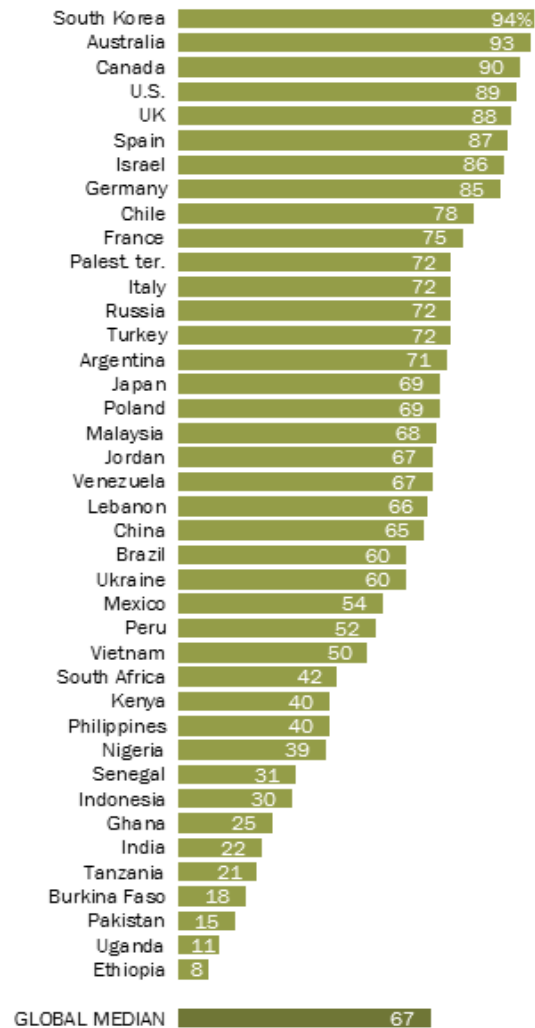
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Appendix

1. This website shows the percentage of population that uses the internet in
    every country. http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-
    country/
2. *Figure 1: percentage of adults using the internet*

Most adults in advanced economies use internet, developing countries less so

Adults who use the internet at least occasionally or report owning a smartphone

Country	%
South Korea	94%
Australia	93
Canada	90
U.S.	89
UK	88
Spain	87
Israel	86
Germany	85
Chile	78
France	75
Palest. ter.	72
Italy	72
Russia	72
Turkey	72
Argentina	71
Japan	69
Poland	69
Malaysia	68
Jordan	67
Venezuela	67
Lebanon	66
China	65
Brazil	60
Ukraine	60
Mexico	54
Peru	52
Vietnam	50
South Africa	42
Kenya	40
Philippines	40
Nigeria	39
Senegal	31
Indonesia	30
Ghana	25
India	22
Tanzania	21
Burkina Faso	18
Pakistan	15
Uganda	11
Ethiopia	8
GLOBAL MEDIAN	67

Note: Percentages based on total sample.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q70 & Q72.

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http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/02/22/internet-access-growing-worldwide-but-remains-higher-in-advanced-economies/

3. Document detailing China's Universal Internet Access services
http://blog.hawaii.edu/aplpj/files/2011/11/APLPJ_04.1_peng.pdf