

# Facebook becomes observer at Web freedom group

May 3 2012

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The announcement Thursday noted that Facebook is the first company to gain observer status with GNI, whose corporate members include Microsoft, Yahoo! and [Google](#).

"Observer status is an opportunity for companies who are actively considering joining GNI to examine the initiative's programs as well as its principles on free expression and privacy," said GNI executive director Susan Morgan.

"We created observer status after listening to companies who wanted to learn more about how GNI's participants work together in support of free expression and privacy rights before committing to membership, and we welcome Facebook's involvement. Given Facebook's influence in the industry and its importance to a growing global user base, we look forward to collaborating with them on the issues they are facing around the world."

Facebook vice president for global public policy Marne Levine said the California company wants to work with GNI and its members "to promote a free and open Internet."

"Building a better understanding of the value of the [open Internet](#), and its direct impact on job creation, education, and good governance, is critical, and precisely where the work of GNI can be useful," Levine said.

As an observer, Facebook will participate in policy and learning sessions but has not formally committed to the GNI principles and guidelines, or submit to an independent assessment.

"This is an important step for Facebook, and we welcome the opportunity to work with them towards the goal of becoming full GNI members," said GNI board member Arvind Ganesan, of Human Rights Watch.

The observer status lasts for one non-renewable 12-month term. GNI also launched a Facebook page at [facebook.com/GlobalNetworkInitiative](#)"  
target="\_blank">[www.facebook.com/GlobalNetworkInitiative](#).

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Citation: Facebook becomes observer at Web freedom group (2012, May 3) retrieved 21 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-05-facebook-web-freedom-group.html>

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