

# The future of the Internet is at risk say global web experts

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Credit: Wikipedia

Global web experts, including Professor Dame Wendy Hall from the University of Southampton, have warned that the future of the Internet is at a crossroads and we must act quickly to safeguard its future.

That is a central message of the Global Commission on Internet Governance's One Internet final report and recommendations, released today at the OECD Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy in Cancún, Mexico. Chaired by former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, the Commission's report contains a wide range of concrete recommendations that will contribute to improved Internet governance and help to secure a positive digital future.

Taken together these recommendations will secure the openness, transparency, security, and inclusivity of the Internet. The Commission is calling on policy makers to implement these recommendations and ensure the Internet remains the world's most important infrastructure.

Professor Hall, who is Executive Director of the University's Web Science Institute, said: "The action outlined by the report must be taken soon so that we can create an environment of broad, unprecedented progress where everyone can benefit from the power of the Internet.

"The choice of not making a choice is, in itself, a choice – one that could lead to harsh consequences. We risk a world where the Internet is closed, insecure, and untrustworthy – a world of digital haves and have-nots. The action outlined by the report must be taken soon – if so, we will build a world of broad, unprecedented progress where everyone can benefit from the power of the Internet."

The Commission's report contains recommendations that address a range of issues. It recommends, among other things, that:

- Governments should only intercept communications and collect

and analyse data over the Internet for legitimate, open and legal purposes, which does not include gaining domestic political advantage, industrial espionage, or repression.

- States should coordinate and provide mutual assistance to limit damage and deter cyber-attacks, and never shelter those linked to the commission of cybercrimes.
- To support innovation, new technologies must remain compatible and based on open standards, openly developed. Innovators should ensure that their creations conform to these principles of openness to ensure that the technology remains a platform for future innovation.
- Refugees should be provided with access to the Internet by host governments or as part of an aid package from international donors.

Professor Hall added: "The Internet is the most important infrastructure in the world. It is the world's most powerful engine for social and economic growth. To realise its full potential, the Internet of the future must be open, secure, trustworthy, and accessible to all.

"The Commission has built a roadmap towards ensuring the future of the Internet. If the roadmap is adopted, the Internet will continue to be civilisation's most important infrastructure. If the roadmap is ignored, the Internet's power to build a better world will erode. The time to choose is now."

The Commission is a two-year initiative of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and Chatham House, two independent think tanks who convened 29 commissioners and 45 research advisers – a diverse group of academics, cyber-security and human rights experts, leaders in the worlds of business and government, and technical experts to articulate and advance a strategic vision for Internet governance.

Provided by University of Southampton

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