

The 5th Finnish Internet Forum Helsinki, 26 May, 2014

The 5th Finnish Internet Forum took place on 26 May, 2014 in Helsinki. In the aftermath of the Snowden revelations, it focused on new challenges for the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance, cybersecurity and privacy in the digital era. There were about 90 participants in the auditorium of the House of Municipalities. The webcast was followed by a few dozen, but its recordings were accessed by 140 during the next couple of weeks.

The Forum was opened by Mr Matti Anttonen, Under-Secretary of State for Economic Relations, Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He noted the increasing importance of the Internet for economic growth and innovations, and emphasized that a stable, secure, open and universal Internet is an absolute necessity for an export-dependent national economy like Finland. Finnish exports consist more and more of digital services, and this trade should be free of mercantilist-type barriers.

Warning that the openness and freedom of the Internet are not a foregone conclusion and that some countries try to close their “information space”, Mr Anttonen stated that the Internet is too important for its stability and openness to be put in danger for the sake of politically motivated experiments. Finland is a member of the Freedom Online Coalition, and firmly committed to the multistakeholder model of Internet governance.

The first panel entitled “Quo vadis, Internet” asked whether the multistakeholder model is able to meet the ever increasing challenges. The session started with a brief introduction by Mr Yrjö Länsipuro (ISOC Finland) who recapitulated the various milestone events during past twelve months, when revelations about massive digital surveillance brought the principles of Internet Governance on the high-level global political agenda and led to new initiatives like Netmundial.

The panel consisted of Mr Jari Arkko (IETF), Ms Liesyl Franz (Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues, U.S. Department of State), Mr Juuso Moisander (MFA, Finland), Mr Janis Karklins (IGF), who participated by Skype, and Mr Jonne Soininen (ICANN Board). Moderator was Mr Tero Mustala (Nokia). The discussion focused on the capabilities of the multi-stakeholder model to cope and respond to the current challenges in the areas of IANA oversight transition, NetMundial outcomes and way forward, as well as IGF improvements.

Moving on to domestic issues, the Forum received an update of the preparations for the Information Society Code, a package of revised and harmonized communications legislation to enter into force at the beginning of 2015, by Mr Olli-Pekka Rantala, Director of Communications Market Unit, Ministry of Transport and Communications. It was followed by a panel discussion on the protection of privacy and confidentiality in transborder services. The panelists were Mr Matias Castrén, Head of Broadband Subscription Services, Elisa; Mr Herkko Hietanen, Partner, Turre Legal; Mr Jarkko Saarimäki, Head of Security Regulation, FICORA; and Mr Mikko Niva, Privacy Director, Nokia. Panelists were looking into ways and means to increase users’ confidence in electronic communications and discussing the future

challenges of privacy and confidential communications. They stressed the importance of maintaining cyber security and data protection on a high quality level. Some panelists preferred harmonization on the level of European Union to national regulation.

The last panel focused on cyber security from various Finnish perspectives. As a developed information society, Finland depends on reliable functioning of information and communication networks. Cybersecurity is also seen as an opportunity for the exports of services and attracting investments. It is also related to national security, as well as to basic rights and privacy. Discussing how to reconcile the various aspects of cybersecurity were Ms Catharina Candolin, Section Chief of the Cyber Defence Section, Finnish Defence Forces; Ms Kirsi Miettinen, Head of Internet Services Unit, Ministry of Transport and Communications; Mr Erkki Mustonen, Senior Information Security Consultant, F-Secure Corporation; Dr Kari Paakkunainen, Assistant Professor, University of Helsinki; Mr Tapani Tarvainen, Vice-President, Electronic Frontier Finland; and Mr Oras Tynkkynen, Member of Parliament. The discussion was moderated by Mr Niklas Vainio, doctoral student, University of Turku.

Privacy in the digital age was the last theme of the day. Instead of a panel, there was an introduction by Dr Jyrki J.J. Kasvi, Research and Development Director of the Finnish Information Society Development Centre (TIEKE), followed by an open discussion using innovative Finnish meeting technology: a “flying” wireless microphone inside a padded orange cube, called “Catch Box”, that was thrown to – and mostly caught by - the person taking the floor next.

There were more questions than answers, when the orange box was flying around. What does privacy mean in the digital era, when we leave footprints everywhere? What it means to individuals, to businesses and to the government? Are the walls around privacy seen as barriers to be broken by business innovation? Could privacy become a premium product and a selling point in the internet economy...

As in previous years, the 5th Finnish Internet Forum was organized by a multistakeholder group including Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Association of Finnish Municipalities, ISOC Finland, Electronic Frontier Finland, Nokia, Tivia and Ficix. Video and audio production for the webcast was funded by the Internet Society.