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Making the choice: ITU or ICANN?

by Emily Taylor | 26 Jul 2012 |



According to Saki, "a man is known by the company he keeps". When you cut through the hysteria, hyperbole and doomy predictions about WCIT, you're left with the now-familiar Internet governance binary choice: ICANN or ITU.

Let's leave aside for the moment the unanswerable, and unanswered, question of how a transition from one to the other would be made, whether the "Internet community" would accept any forced change, or whether it would just go off and do its own thing (as usual). Let's focus instead on which is better, ICANN or ITU.

It's clear that if these things were done on merit, neither organisation covers itself in glory. ICANN, the enfant terrible of Internet governance is the once-beautiful child, full of potential, capable of greatness, now transformed into the spotty, grunting adolescent, slouching in doorways and developing unsociable habits. It continues to baffle observers by its capacity to ignore the things it should be doing, and do the things it shouldn't.

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COMMENTS

ICANN and ITU

Submitted by Anonymous on 27 Jul 12.

Characterizing a conflict between ITU-T and ICANN for control of the Internet appears to me a false and damaging view. The ITU-T is a UN organization where governments agree on common communications interfaces. As such the ITU-T provides a forum for different countries to address their different views on the political aspects of common interfaces. It is clear that different countries have very different views on issues related to the freedom of the Internet. These different views are between different countries, they are not views of the ITU.

The strongest action the ITU produces is called a Recommendation. ITU Recommendations are not binding on any country. The ITU has no power to restrict actions individual countries take regarding communications within or via their countries. The ITU is a forum for listening to the concerns of other countries and has been doing so since 1865. As such the ITU-T represents a very desirable way for countries to voice their concerns without the ITU taking any action that will force the Internet or organizations that manage aspects of the Internet into any action.

Simply, in a world where many countries do wish to restrict the Internet, the ITU is a valuable resource to let such countries let of steam.

Ken Krechmer

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