

## Media Change and Innovation @ the United Nations



On 17 May 2011, the Media Change and Innovation Division hosted a workshop at the International Labor Organization, a United Nations body located in Geneva. Entitled, «[Institutional Choice in Global Communications Governance](#),» it was held in the context of the [WSIS Forum](#), an annual four-day conference convened to take stock of progress made in implementing the agreements reached during the 2002-2005 [World Summit on the Information Society](#) negotiations.

The workshop was organized and moderated by the division's International Fellow, Dr. William J. Drake, and featured a panel of expert speakers that included the division's Chair, Prof. Michael Latzer. Other speakers included representatives of global civil society, the Internet technical community, and the governments of Switzerland, Brazil, and Egypt. About sixty people attended the event in person, while others from around the world participated remotely via the Internet.

The purpose of the workshop was to promote dialogue between policy analysts and practitioners about the design and selection of global governance arrangements for information and communication technology (ICT). The contemporary global communications order has been marked by a significant increase in the number and variety of these arrangements, which vary greatly in terms of the collective action problems they address and the institutional attributes they possess. This proliferation raises a number of challenging problems like, how do we evaluate the relative political feasibility and functional effectiveness of alternatives approaches in relation to specific global policy challenges? What are their

respective strengths and weaknesses? How well do such mechanisms cohere into an effective global governance architecture? The workshop explored these and related questions in relation to current policy challenges concerning the global Internet in particular.

William Drake opened the workshop by briefly mapping the historical evolution and contemporary landscape of ICT global governance. Michael Latzer outlined an approach to the evaluation of alternative modes of governance that was based on the division's research on regulatory choice in communications markets. Drake then posed a series of questions to the panelists about the relative merits of current and proposed arrangements based on multilateral, plurilateral, and unilateral government authority, as well as on industry self-governance, public/private co-regulation, and multistakeholderism (e.g. involving governments, business, and civil society).



Responding to these questions were the six panelists: Michael Latzer (Chair, IPMZ-Media Change & Innovation Division, Switzerland); Anriette Esterhuysen (Executive Director, Association for Progressive Communications,

Republic of South Africa); Alvaro Galvani (Head, Division of Information Society, Ministry of External Relations, Government of Brazil); Markus Kummer (Vice President of Public Policy, The Internet Society); Nermine El Saadany (Director of International Relations Division, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of Egypt); and Thomas Schneider (Deputy Head of International Relations Service, Federal Office of Communications, Government of Switzerland).

The panel's deliberations were followed a lively and interactive open debate involving the audience in Geneva and remote participants abroad. The debate surrounded some of the key concrete cases of contemporary global governance challenges e.g., Internet Governance, privacy, cyber security and child protection online. The panelists agreed that an assessment of the suitability of alternative approaches to specific challenges needs to take account of the potential impact of governance failure. *(BD, fs: May 2011)*



#### **About the WSIS-Forum**

The WSIS Forum is a follow-up event to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005. Organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNDP it provides structured opportunities to engage in multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations on WSIS implementation. Representatives of various UN agencies, regional commissions, the private sector, governments and civil society report their efforts towards WSIS implementation and share their future plans to achieve the targets set in the WSIS Outcome documents.

#### **The World Summit on the Information Society**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was a unique two-phase United Nations summit that was initiated to create an evolving multi-stakeholder platform aimed at addressing the issues raised by information and communication technologies (ICTs) through a structured and inclusive approach at the national, regional and international levels. WSIS goal is to achieve a common vision, desire and commitment to build a people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information.

## Related Publications:

Drake, William J. (forthcoming): Conceptualizing Global Internet Governance: Institutional Dimensions. In: Brown, Ian (ed.): Research Handbook on Governance of the Internet. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Drake William J. / Wilson Ernest M. (eds.) (2008): Governing Global Electronic Networks: International Perspectives on Policy and Power. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Drake William J. (ed.) (2005): Reforming Internet Governance: Perspectives from the UN Working Group on Internet Governance. New York: United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force.

Drake, William J. (2007): Encouraging Implementation of the WSIS Principles on Internet Governance Procedures. In: Wolfgang Kleinwächter, ed. The Power of Ideas: Internet Governance in a Global Multistakeholder Environment. Berlin: Marketing für Deutschland GmbH, pp. 271-280.

Drake William J. (2005): Collective Learning in the World Summit on the Information Society. In: Daniel Stauffacher and Wolfgang Kleinwächter, eds., The World Summit on the Information Society: Moving from the Past into the Future. New York: United Nations Information and Communication Technology Taskforce, 2005, pp. 135-146.

Just, Natascha / Latzer, Michael / Saurwein, Florian (2007): Communications Governance: Entscheidungshilfe für die Wahl des Regulierungsarrangements am Beispiel Spam. In: Donges, Patrick (Hg.): Von der Medienpolitik zur Media Governance? Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 103-126.

Just, Natascha / Latzer, Michael (2004): Self- and Co-Regulation as Indicators of a Transformed Statehood in the Mediamatics Sector. In: Puntischer Riekmann, Sonja / Mokre, Monika / Latzer, Michael (eds.): The State of Europe. Transformation of Statehood from a European Perspective. Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 266-286.

Latzer, Michael / Saurwein, Florian (2008): Vertrauen in die Industrie – Vertrauen in die Nutzer: Selbstregulierung und Selbsthilfe bei digitalen Medieninhalten in der EU. In: Schulz, Wolfgang / Held, Thorsten (Hg.): Mehr Vertrauen in Inhalte – Das Potential von Ko- und Selbstregulierung in den digitalen Medien. Berlin: Vistas, 93-142.

Latzer, Michael / Price, Monroe E. / Saurwein, Florian / Verhulst, Stefaan G. (2007): Comparative Analysis of International Co- and Self-Regulation in Communications Markets. Research report commissioned by Ofcom - UK Office of Communications. Vienna: ITA.

Latzer, Michael (2007): Regulatory Choice in Communications Governance. In: Communications – The European Journal of Communication Research, 32(3), 399-405.

Latzer, Michael / Just, Natascha / Saurwein, Florian / Slominski, Peter (2006): Institutional Variety in Communications Regulation. Classification scheme and empirical evidence from Austria. In: Telecommunications Policy, 30(3-4), 152-170.

Saurwein, Florian / Latzer, Michael (2010): Regulatory Choice in Communications: The Case of Content-Rating Schemes in the Audiovisual Industry. In: Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 54(3), 463-484.