

Tunis Call for a People's Internet

World Social Forum. Tunis, 2015

We, participants of the Workshop “Organising an Internet Social Forum – A Call to Occupy the Internet”, held in Tunis as part of the World Social Forum, declare our commitment to a common goal of building a people’s Internet from below and beyond borders: an Internet that works in the public interest and solidarity, where control is in the hands of people; an Internet based on human dignity, equality, social justice, freedom and people's communication rights.

We join our voices to the Call to hold a global Internet Social Forum as a space to debate the Internet we want and how to build it, before the knowledge and access-to-information revolution is irretrievably captured by corporate interests and security agencies that will deepen the nexus of corruption between politics and money.

The Internet today has become an integral and essential part of our daily lives; more and more of our activities are organized through and around the virtual spaces, the networks, online services and the technology it comprises. It has restructured the very way in which we live, work, play and organize our societies. In many aspects, this is so even for people who at present have no direct Internet access.

At the same time, we are alarmed to see how both our private and public spaces are being co-opted and controlled for private gain; how private corporations are carving the public Internet into walled spaces; how our personal data is being manipulated and proprietised; how a global surveillance society is emerging, with little or no privacy; how information on the Internet is being arbitrarily censored, and people's right to communicate curtailed; and, how the Internet is being militarised. Meanwhile, decision-making on public policy matters relating to the Internet remains dangerously removed from the mechanisms of democratic governance.

We hereby launch a call to all those who share these goals to participate in drafting a People’s Internet Manifesto over the coming months, with the goal of seeking consensus on the basic principles that must underpin an Internet oriented to social equity, human solidarity and justice.

The Internet is an indispensable tool and workspace for building social struggles and interconnections among movements. We call on social movements and organizations gathered here in Tunis to take on this issue as an essential part of their action agendas, including, among others, the following goals:

- We demand decisive action to curb the indiscriminate mass surveillance being implemented by corporations, security agencies and governments.
- We defend decentralization --to the greatest extent possible-- of the Internet's technical, data and economic structures; and access to a net-neutral Internet, as a right, which would include support for community-owned networks and public infrastructure. We also defend the freedom of people-to-people communication.
- We are committed to harnessing the Internet revolution to build global solidarity among people's movements, and enable them to share their experiences globally and learn from one another.
- A people's Internet must be driven first and foremost by the people. An Internet driven by big business, hand-in-hand with big government does not represent the public interest. We will defend the right of grassroots organizations and social movements, alongside other civil society actors, to have a seat at any global negotiations on the governance of the Internet.