Freedom of Association and Internet Infrastructure

draft-tenoever-hrpc-association-02

Gisela Pérez de Acha – Derechos Digitales

Niels ten Oever – Article 19

Research questions

1. How does the internet architecture enable and/or inhibit freedom of association and assembly?

2. Is the Internet an assembly or association? Should it be protected as such?

Methodology

We mapped a number of cases to see the affordances of infrastructure on right to assembly and association.

Side note: we covered typical uses in an effort of doing an ethnography of infrastructure

Assembly & Association

1. Assembly: an intentional and **temporary gathering** of a collective in a private or public.

2. Association: individuals or entities **formally brought together** to collectively act, express, promote, pursue or defend something.

Freedom: both rights protect the possibility to join or leave a group of choice.

IETF is an assembly, even an association [RFC3233]

RFCs would not be possible without freedom of association and assemble, online and offline.

The word "protocol" found its way into the language of computer networking → need for collective agreement among network users.

Cases and examples

A. Free association

–Peer to peer [P2P]

–Mailing lists

B. Forced association

–Reaching out

–DDoS

–Autonomous Systems

Which model is better for freedom of assembly and association?

- Centralized
- Decentralized

Why?

Centralized P2P systems

- Advantage: able to provide quick and reliable resource locating.
- Limitation: scalability is affected by the use of servers.

Decentralized P2P systems

- Advantage: scalability is less of a problem
- Limitation: longer time in resource locating; nodes are autonomous and can join or leave the network as they want → lack of information might in turn make association or assembly more difficult.

Version Control

No version control system has ever been standardized on IETF whereas systems like Subversion and Git are widely used within the community and by working groups

Why?

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Discussion

Is the Internet itself an association or assembly?

What would be the consequences of recognizing it as such?

1. Networks = Associations
2. Interconnected groups and assemblies of people depend on "links" and "relationships".

If the Internet is an association…

Does it mean that every network is an assembly and has absolute freedom to implement its own rules?

Or does the importance of a functioning 'larger' assembly (the Internet) has prevails over the preferences of the smaller ones (individual AS'es)?

➢ The Internet is made of up interconnected ASes, which jointly form an assembly and an association.

- Even things that are private, need to live up to standards because they have public consequences

➢ This assembly and association should be protected.

➢ Rights and obligations that stem from this organizational form, should also be protected and respected.

Conclusions

- The Internet impacts the ability of people to exercise their right to freedom of association and assembly.

- The Internet itself is a form of association and assembly, and should be protected as such.

Comments?

Disagreements?

Research Group adoption?