Internet Society

Path to 2025

We are the Internet Society.

We believe in a world where the Internet means opportunity. We care about its future.

The *Path to 2025* outlines our five-year strategy to advance the Internet Society's enduring vision: The Internet is for everyone. We developed this strategy in 2019 through a comprehensive, inclusive process that involved the Board of Trustees, Internet Society leadership, staff, and our global community.

The Internet Is at a Critical Juncture

The Internet has changed our society for the better. It's accelerated the spread of ideas and innovation, making a positive impact on all aspects of our lives.

Yet it is under threat.

Conceived of more than half a century ago, no one could have anticipated its exponential growth or the revolutionary changes it would bring to our world. No one could foresee that the Internet would fuel economic growth, create millions of jobs, and enable human progress through its adoption around the globe. It now gives rise to opportunity to those who can connect—and even, indirectly, to those who can't. Everyone should have access to this transformative resource. Yet nearly half the world's population is unconnected, missing out on opportunity.

The Internet's underpinnings have helped it thrive—and they continue to be its strength. Developed by trailblazers through an open and collaborative process, it is a resilient and flexible technology by design. But just as no one could foresee how the Internet would radically transform our lives, no one could foresee how these foundations would someday be under attack.

The Internet empowers people to join and organize together with tools that put them in charge of their own future. But many see this promise as a dangerous, threatening, and destabilizing influence on society. Today, various interests want to own the Internet and control people's experiences on it. They are gaining ground.

The Internet is a global medium. It relies on everyone everywhere to maintain worldwide connectivity and trust. But ideas that threaten this bedrock are making their way into legislation on nearly every continent. No matter the motivation or intent, they have the potential to create a negative domino effect, with legislators scrambling to outdo each other with ill-considered plans.

The very foundation of the Internet is open and collaborative. But corporate consolidation and control is rising. The Internet is at risk of splintering into shards, with user experiences controlled and directed for the benefit of the platform owners, who also clamor for regulation. This regulation smothers competition and innovation.

These threats could change the future of the Internet as we know it, stifling the human promise, opportunity, and potential it makes possible. We must act.

The next five years—the path to 2025—are critical.

Our Mission

The Internet Society supports and promotes the development of the Internet as a global technical infrastructure, a resource to enrich people's lives, and a force for good in society. Our work aligns with our goals for the Internet to be open, globally connected, secure, and trustworthy. We seek collaboration with all who share these goals.

Together, we focus on:

- Building and supporting the communities that make the Internet work;

- Advancing the development and application of Internet infrastructure, technologies, and open standards; and

- Advocating for policy that is consistent with our view of the Internet.

Our Commitment to the Internet

Everyone should have access to the Internet. Yet nearly half of the world's population still does not have Internet connectivity. These unconnected communities and individuals — who live in rural, remote, and urban communities — are on every continent. Each day without Internet connectivity is a day of lost opportunity.

To help **grow the Internet**, we work to close the digital divide. We bring together the people and technology needed to give everyone the access they want.

In just a few decades, the Internet has become a critical resource offering those with access virtually infinite opportunities to innovate and work together for the collective good. This did not happen by accident. The Internet owes its strength, resilience, and success to its open architecture. It was built to be built upon.

To **make the Internet stronger**, we advocate for a secure, trusted, and more resilient Internet. We defend the Internet from those who could make it less secure, less resilient, and less open.

To support our mission, to achieve the open, globally connected, secure and trustworthy Internet we believe in, and to make the Internet bigger and stronger by 2025, we center our efforts around three pillars: Build, Promote, and Defend.

Build the Internet

Extend the Internet to communities who do not have it and need it most.

By 2025, we will have built and extended connectivity to 50 communities.

- By "extend" we mean: We have directly built and brought connectivity to 50 communities [or countries] through our projects by training, funding, and developing local partners to sustain, scale, and enable local connectivity, network growth, and to facilitate and increase local traffic exchange.

- By communities who "do not have it" we mean: The geographic area in question either is not connected at all, has limited local capacity, or poor connectivity (in reliability, throughput, or both) that limits access and use. Acceptable locally exchanged connectivity is available with 99% up-time at line speeds of 100Mbs (in the aggregate).

- By "need it most" we mean: The geographical area (rural, remote, or urban) contains people who desire the connectivity, will see significant socioeconomic change from connectivity, where a local champion exists or can be cultivated, and where the population trends indicate that the population will be sufficient to support the service at commercially viable prices for the next 20 years.

Promote the Internet

Promote the Internet model of networking as the preferred model.

By 2025, the Internet model of networking will be dominant.

- By "Internet model of networking" we mean networks that:

    - Use open Internet protocols for interoperability and data exchange

    - Permit an indeterminate number of networks to interconnect through a standards-defined routing infrastructure

    - Allow applications to operate globally without the need for special provisions or permissions in the network

    - Enable new operators to join the network without relationships with all parties in the system

- By "dominant model" we mean: The fundamental characteristics of the Internet (as above) are perceived as positive and generally accepted by changemakers, decision-makers, operators, and mainstream media.

Convince leading governments of the world to adopt policies that favor the Internet model and improve Internet connectivity.

By 2025, leading governments of the world will have adopted policies that "favor" the Internet model and improved Internet connectivity.

- By "Internet model" we mean: (see above)

- By "Internet connectivity" we mean: (see Build)

Promote the deployment of technologies and protocols that secure the interconnection of independent networks.

By 2025, security technologies promoted by the Internet Society will have provided resiliency, stability, availability, confidentiality, and integrity for networks that want to interconnect.

- By "promote deployment" we mean: Convene relevant stakeholders to accelerate the acceptance and implementation of practices or approaches that further the technologies above. In some cases, this may mean funding or incubating technologies, and measuring their efficacy.

Defend the Internet

Shape the policies of leading governments in favor of the growth of independent networks, which are free to interconnect.

By 2025, leading governments of the world have adopted policies that favor the growth of independent networks, which are free to interconnect.

- By "independent networks" we mean: Networks where applications are independent of the network, and that interconnect according to the Internet model.

Counter attempts by leading governments to undermine encryption.

By 2025, we will have countered attempts by at least three leading governments to undermine encryption.

- By "leading governments" we mean: Countries that are poised to set policies in this field and demonstrate thought leadership among their peers on related topics. Countries where the Internet Society has or can develop a local community of interest.

Defend against shutdowns by increasing cross-border connectivity and resiliency.

By 2025, we will have defended against shutdowns in six countries by increasing cross-border connectivity and resiliency.

Together with Our Global Community

The Internet's resilience is a reflection of the people who developed it—and the people who work to strengthen it and keep it growing.

The Internet Society community is made up of people everywhere who care about the Internet. Working together, we apply our diverse experiences, knowledge, and passion so humankind can benefit from the Internet. No matter what a person's background is, there are opportunities to get involved.

Board of Trustees

Elected or selected stakeholder/ community representatives who value our mission, steering us in the right direction. Internet Society's Board of Trustees provides strategic direction, oversight, inspiration, support, and advice in pursuit of Internet Society's mission.

Chapters

Legally independent entities which form local communities and take on a variety of programs and activities like educational events, community programs, public policy programs, networking events, and others consistent with our mission.

Special Interest Groups and Standing Groups

Groups of Internet Society members who collaborate on topics and themes for which they share a common interest and/or expertise in view of advancing the Internet Society's mission.

Organization Members

Organizations that share an interest and belief in the Internet Society's mission and pay annual membership dues.

Donors

Active supporters of our cause who provide financial contributions.

Partners

Organizations that partner with the Internet Society out of shared interests in support of our mission.

Staff

Employees who apply their expertise, knowledge, and experience for an Internet for everyone.

Followers

Influencers who spread awareness about the importance of what we do.

Individual Members

Individuals who share the Internet Society's commitment to our mission.

Building a Healthy, Resilient, and Sustainable Organization

To ensure the Internet Society is able to deliver on its mission and this 2025 strategy in a sustainable way, we will also focus on:

- Strengthening public support

- Cultivating an accountable and effective Board of Trustees

- Strengthening the Internet Society's reputation and influence

- Growing and mobilizing Internet Champions

- Creating meaningful opportunities for our community and supporters to take action and contribute to our mission and impact

- Developing staff expertise and deepening our commitment to living our core values

Championing the Internet

Collaboration

We work as one team.

Inclusion

We embrace our individual differences as our collective power.

Respect

We are open, humble, and assume the best.

People

We put people first.

Passion

We keep passion at our core.

The world relies on the Internet to learn, grow, and prosper. Its far-reaching impact is a direct result of the optimism, forethought, and perseverance used to create, and later expand it. We need these same qualities now to protect it.

In the next half century, humankind will mark the Internet's centennial. The path to 2025 shows the steps we must take now to make sure it's a celebration.

Join us in building, promoting, and defending the Internet.