Input on Proposals and Positions for the 2020 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly

About the Marconi Society

Drawing its inspiration from Guglielmo Marconi's world-changing innovations, the Marconi Society is committed to advancing information and communications technology for the public good. Our mission is to **celebrate, inspire, and connect innovators building tomorrow's technologies in service of a digitally inclusive world**.

The Marconi Society was established in 1974 by Gioia Marconi Braga (1916–1996), the daughter of Guglielmo Marconi, to honor his legacy. For the first phase of its existence, The Society focused primarily on awarding leaders in the ICT field with the prestigious Marconi Prize, dubbed the "Nobel Prize for Communications."

The Marconi Society continues to award the Marconi Prize annually to ICT innovators who share Marconi's "monumental audacity" and whose work has made a lasting contribution to humankind. In addition, the Marconi Society has steadily grown its programming to reflect the critical role of the network and connectivity as a basic human right. Today, the Marconi Society is dedicated to increasing access to Information and Communications Technology, and to closing the well-documented gap between the technological "haves" and "have-nots." As it does so, the Society is able to identify, support and draw on the brightest minds in the field.

Although we are living in an unparalleled time of communication technology and connectivity, people's **access** to it varies widely based on their income, race and ethnicity, and location. All too often, this disparity in access contributes to disparities in life outcomes.

At the Marconi Society, we don't think that's right. We believe that **everyone**, **everywhere** should benefit equitably from lifesaving and life-changing communications technologies. That's why our noble and critical aim is to promote connectivity as a force for positive change in the world by recognizing and nurturing the ICT leaders and technologies of today and tomorrow.

Comments

The field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has long struggled to reflect the diversity of our communities and those that rely on the technologies and innovations put forth. Today, more than ever, we find ICT underpinning our economic viability, public health and safety, and providing a social and psychological safety net during quarantine in response to the current pandemic.

All of this, however, is not new. Current events have done little more than to pull back the curtain on a long-time struggle to reconcile market-driven decision and business operations with social responsibility.

Given that access to todays' network technologies is essential for economic well-being, we are convinced that all people have the right to such access.

Following from this, we at the Marconi Society believe that in order for the NTIA and the ITU to advance their interest to ensure "a multistakeholder approach with respect to internet policy issues" that a voice is needed at the table that represents end users in communities throughout the United States. Organizations like the Marconi Society, The National Digital Inclusion Alliance, The Internet Society, and the People-Centered Internet provide valuable insight and perspective to how policy impacts individuals at a local level. This perspective is imperative to informing internet policy that works for all.

We would like to see the NTIA and ITU generally recognize, include, and engage with advocacy/adoption groups as stakeholders so that conversations around policy are informed by a voice representing the people.

Second, as our global societies increasingly rely on information and communication technologies (ICT) both during the current pandemic and more generally, demand for more bandwidth, faster speeds, and greater reliability from our networks will also increase.

In order to both address our acute needs now during this inflection point and plan for and innovate around solutions to our ever-increasing needs in the future, **better insight and transparency around network analytics is desperately needed.** We need a comprehensive reliable and independent means of reporting on and evaluating the performance of network availability, service quality, and the sources of network congestion. Only when we have a neutral and publicly available source of data describing (and visualizing) our network infrastructure will we be able to (as a country) prepare for and innovate solutions around tomorrow's challenges.

Of course, we are also aware that doing so could lay bare business practices, priorities and profit-driven decision making – all of which can put undue pressure on businesses. Therefore, it must fall to the leadership of organizations like the NTIA and ITU in collaboration with other community stakeholders to guide and maintain expectations of all parties involved in such a way that a collaborative approach to the problem can be made possible.

The Marconi Society would like the NTIA and the ITU to advocate for the transparency of network intelligence and to identify strategies by which the communication of network and service metrics can be standardized, collected, interpreted and shared with the public.

Finally, we believe that telecommunications can best serve the world if there is a multi-national approach to advancing universal access, inter- operability and global standards. Following this, The Marconi Society strongly recommends that the United States preserves ongoing participation in and support of the ITU and its important work.