Fellowships Strategy Update
July 2019

Internet Society

We have developed a new vision for the fellowship program area

Problem statement

- An open, secure, and trustworthy Internet is a force for good in the world and people everywhere, but this global Internet infrastructure is, in many ways, under threat

- Today, we face three critical barriers to ensuring the Internet remains open and secure for everyone in the world in the future:
  - There are **not enough people**, particularly young individuals, with the **right skills, interests, and beliefs** to preserve and maintain an Internet that serves as a force for good; market forces alone are unlikely to instill these skills, interests, and beliefs since the plumbing of the Internet is often lower-margin and sometimes perceived as "less glamorous" than competing areas of Internet-related work
  - **Policy and technical expertise are critical** to advance and maintain the Internet, although these worlds are **often too siloed**. Policy realities need to inform technical design, and technical realities and unintended consequences must be factored into policy
  - Well-resourced institutions or efforts are sometimes incentivized to work in ways contrary to the type of Internet we seek for the future. **Organized and strategic efforts are required** to counterbalance these views and efforts

Vision statement

- Through its flagship fellowship programs, the Internet Society will cultivate **Internet decision-makers, technical experts, and influencers** around the **globe** and across **technical** and **policy** areas to **contribute to the development of the future Internet**, ensuring that it remains **open, trustworthy, and secure**

Goals

- To achieve this vision, the Internet Society fellowship program area seeks to accomplish four primary goals:
  - Cultivate the **culture of openness, collaboration, and interoperability with which the Internet was born**, as well as other values central to a global and trustworthy Internet, in decision-makers, technical experts, and influencers across technical and policy areas
  - Develop and support a **diverse pipeline of individuals** to contribute meaningfully to future Internet development and maintenance around the world
  - Create a **bridge** from which technical and policy experts from across the world can collaborate on **interdisciplinary** solutions and foster **collaboration** across areas of expertise and geographies
  - Build and support a robust **community** of individuals—Internet decision-makers, technical experts, influencers, and users—across the world who embody and support the principles of the open and trustworthy Internet

To achieve this vision, we have developed strategies for two new fellowship programs

Mid-Career Fellowship

- **Comprehensive fellowship program** that aims to **develop a community of talented interdisciplinary Internet leaders** that cuts across policy and technical areas

Youth Fellowship

- **Comprehensive fellowship program** that aims to **empower a cadre of talented young people** by providing opportunities for learning/training and bringing their voices into ISOC's work

Policy Fellowship

- Program targeting **government officials** involved in policymaking to attend the IETF and increase their **understanding of the Internet's technical infrastructure**

Travel Stipends

- **Funded travel to Internet conferences and forums** to help address financial barriers to participation and increase diversity of attendees

New flagship fellowship programs
New flagship programs will be supported by a robust **alumni engagement** strategy

Existing programs

Mid-career fellowship goals and design principles

Goals

- **Create a community of talented Internet experts and influencers** that has the expertise, platform, and networks to bring both **policy and technical lenses** to their work

- **Merge the siloed perspectives of policy and technical experts** to develop a new **interdisciplinary culture** of Internet leadership that produces more innovative and holistic solutions to threats to the open Internet

- Cultivate a **culture** among Internet leaders that help maintain the **openness and collaboration** with which the Internet was born

Program Design Principles

- **Curate a cohort of fellows** that represents different perspectives (policy vs. technical) and professional experiences (corporate, government, nonprofit, etc.)

- **Foster cohort collaboration**, allowing fellows to learn from each other and develop an interdisciplinary lens

- Ensure program is **valuable to external stakeholders**, especially those organizations likely to sponsor or nominate a fellow

- **Fit program into busy professional schedules** of mid-career fellows

To develop a community of talented interdisciplinary Internet leaders, ISOC will attract world-class established talent

Mid-Career

- ~8 mid-career individuals **from around the world** who work in the Internet space with **either a technical or policy focus**
- Candidates have **record of achievement in their respective focus fields** and would **benefit from developing an interdisciplinary lens** that combines policy and technical perspectives

Persona	Description (illustrative)	Desired impact in 5-10 years (illustrative)

The Academic Technologist	• Leads an Information Research Group at a leading University's Computer Science Lab
	   • Co-authored several academic papers on systems & networking
		• Advisor at policy think tank to provide technical context to policy writers
		   • Publishes academic papers for technical audiences that incorporates the regulatory perspective and espouses the value of an interdisciplinary lens

The Internet Policy Expert	• Senior policy advisor to national gov't on Internet-related issues • Previously worked at global think tank in the Telecommunications & Internet department	• Collaborates w/ technical experts in cohort to design new Internet regulation policy and trains Internet policymakers to provide technical context for their work • Attends policy conferences and speaks about the values of a free and open Internet

The Private Sector Professional	• Has been at multinational, Internet-related organization for 10+ years, mostly focused on their work with IoT offerings
	   • Serves as senior member of "Internet for all" initiative that aims to make broadband access more affordable and accessible
		• Helps organization position itself to become more attuned to the open and interoperable culture of the Internet
		   • Invites the "Social Impact Expert" to speak to team about importance of supporting digital literacy when connecting previously unconnected populations

The Social Impact Expert	• Leads digital literacy organization that has gained international recognition for its work in developing countries	• Incorporates the principles of the free and open Internet into organization's digital literacy curriculum • Serves as mentor and leader in local ISOC chapter
The Internet Newcomer	• Has served on an automaker's public policy team regarding autonomous vehicle technology for last 5+ years • Helped develop organization's policy positions on network regulation (IoT)	• Helps employer advocate for the open and interoperable culture of the Internet as the automotive industry becomes increasingly invested in IoT and network security

Youth fellowship goals and design principles

Goals

- **Empower a cadre of talented young Internet influencers,** giving them a platform to accelerate their impact

- **Increase the capacity of young leaders** through targeted educational and leadership development programming, providing the foundation for increased impact and influence

- Ensure the **next generation** of Internet influencers embody the **principles of openness and collaboration** with which the Internet was developed

Program Design Principles

- Select fellows from different geographies and backgrounds to **diversify cadre of future talent**

- Engage a **larger number of individuals,** acknowledging that younger people are at different stages in their career development than mid-career fellows

- Organize fellowship around **hands-on learning** and meaningful interaction with external stakeholders

- Given flexibility of youth fellows, engage them in programing **deeply over shorter period of time** (~4-6 months)

To prepare the next generation of Internet leaders and influencers, ISOC will attract world-class young talent

"Persona" is a **hypothetical** example to illustrate the types of individuals who might participate in the fellowship program; they are not meant to be exhaustive

- **~15 individuals** with **demonstrated interest, talent, and potential** across a range of Internet-related topics
- Applicants will likely have a **relevant academic experience and/or 2-3 years of relevant work experience**

Persona	Description (illustrative)	Desired impact in 5-10 years (illustrative)
The Engineering Graduate	- Recently graduated top-of-class with a Bachelor's degree in engineering - Worked on a technical Internet-related engineering project under the guidance of an established professor	- Actively contribute to the IETF by drafting RFCs, leading a working group, etc. - Active leader in the broader the Internet Society community
The Internet Policy Enthusiast	- Recently graduated top-of-class with a Bachelor's degree in public policy - Wrote senior research paper on the economic and social impacts of Internet consolidation	- Work as a government official in a national ICT department, or as a policy lead in an Internet-related think tank
Coder in Private Sector	- Coder who has worked at private sector company for the past 3 years and has an excellent track record - Actively engaged in IETF email chains	- Pursue advanced additional education (e.g., rigorous online course, university degrees, etc.) in Internet technology - Work as a leader in an Internet-related company and promote principles with which the Internet was born
The Social Entrepreneur	- Founded a technology club to improve gender balance amongst web users by providing free digital literacy classes to girls in developing countries	- Work with the local governments to implement national ICT strategy in local communities - Continue mentoring youth in local community about value and use of the open Internet
The Network Connector	- Has helped set up community networks in her home country - Recently started providing digital literacy workshops for her community members so they are able to leverage the new Internet access	- Create an NGO that implements community networks in high-need environments - Mobilize local communities to advocate for open access policies in their local community