

The Importance of Voluntary Technical Standards

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Tags: Array

Supporting Documents

Technical standards are the language that computers, phones, software, and network equipment use to talk to each other, seamlessly and regardless of where the devices or software were developed. Standards allow any technology developer, web site creator, or equipment manufacturer anywhere in the world to have their creations instantly available to and interoperable with the rest of the global Internet.

Five of the world's leading Internet organizations – the IETF, the W3C, the IEEE, the Internet Society, and the Internet Architecture Board – have recently declared their commitment to voluntary standards as part of their affirmation of [OpenStand](#) [2], a modern global standards paradigm.

But later this year, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) will convene a meeting of the world's governments to decide whether and how the ITU's telecom treaty should regulate the Internet. In advance of that meeting, several countries have proposed that the technical standards that the ITU produces become mandatory for Internet technology companies and network operators to build into their products.

These proposals would fundamentally upend the way that the Internet has always worked. Making ITU standards mandatory would critically jeopardize the Internet's openness and capability for sustaining the free exchange of ideas, would threaten the future growth and stability of the network, and would sap the Internet's economic vitality. Internet users, civil society organizations, and all other interested parties should urge their governments to oppose these proposals.

- [The ITU and Internet Governance](#)
- [Technical Standards](#)
- [International](#)

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