

Facebook Joins GNI, Taking Significant Step in Protecting Users' Rights

by [Leslie Harris](#) [1]
May 22, 2013

This morning at the Stockholm Internet Forum, Facebook [announced](#) [2] it is joining the [Global Network Initiative](#) [3], becoming the sixth company to join GNI.

As a founding Board Member of GNI, I am extremely pleased to be in Stockholm to witness Facebook make this important announcement, joining GNI founding companies Google, Microsoft, Yahoo! as well as Evoca and Websense, in stepping up its commitment to protect the human rights of its users.

GNI strives to protect global human rights by working with technology companies, civil society, academics, and investors to help companies responsibly navigate the increasing number of complex laws and government requests to censor content and access personal information. Importantly, GNI members also commit to work together on Internet policy globally, because it is *countries* that must adopt the laws that protect the human rights of Internet users.

In our increasingly networked world, GNI's mission is crucial to ensuring an open and free global Internet thrives in the face of government efforts to diminish rights online. Over the course of the last few years, we've seen attempts by governments—from [Syria](#) [4] to [Libya](#) [5] to [Egypt](#) [6] and even the city of [San Francisco](#) [7]—to block access to the Internet. We've seen increasing government pressure to censor online intermediary platforms.¹ And we've seen attempts by countries to legitimize censorship and surveillance practices at international policy forums, including last December's [World Conference on International Telecommunications](#) [8]. All of this underscores the importance of membership in GNI.

As the world's largest social networking site, Facebook's announcement is particularly notable. Over a billion people around the globe rely on Facebook to connect with one another, express themselves, and access information. Facebook is now an essential tool for people advocating for freedom and democracy all over the world. Ensuring that the human rights of Facebook users are secure is a daunting task. Joining GNI and collaborating with other member companies and with the diverse set of civil society groups, academics, and investors who are GNI members is a significant step that other companies should emulate.

1. ¹ See these posts in CDT's *Shielding the Messengers* series on intermediary liability: [CDT Travels to Thailand to Argue Against Intermediary Liability](#) [9]; [Global Threats to Free Expression](#) [10]; [Internet on Trial in India](#) [11]

~~The copyright © 2013 by the Center for Democracy & Technology. CDT can be freely copied and used as long as you make no substantive changes and clearly give us credit. [Details](#).~~

Source URL:

<https://cdt.org/blogs/leslie-harris/2205facebook-joins-gni-taking-important-step-protecting-its-users-rights>

Links:

[1] <https://cdt.org/personnel/leslie-harris>

[2] <http://www.globalnetworkinitiative.org/news/facebook-joins-global-network-initiative>

[3] <http://www.globalnetworkinitiative.org>



[4] <https://www.cdt.org/blogs/kevin-bankston/0312stark-lesson-syria-un-must-condemn-not-condone-internet-blackouts>

[5] https://www.cdt.org/press_hit/libya-shuts-down-internet-service-ahead-planned-anti-government-protests

[6] https://www.cdt.org/pr_statement/cdt-statement-egypt-shutting-down-internet-access

[7] <https://www.cdt.org/blogs/cynthia-wong/238welcome-san-francisco-next-stop-cairo>

[8] <https://www.cdt.org/blogs/emma-llanso/2012making-sense-wcit-it's-complicated>

[9] <https://www.cdt.org/blogs/kevin-bankston/0504shielding-messengers-cdt-travels-thailand-argue-against-intermediary-liabil>

[10]

<https://www.cdt.org/blogs/erica-newland/0304shielding-messengers-global-threats-free-expression>

[11] <https://www.cdt.org/blogs/erica-newland/2003shielding-messengers-internet-trial-india>