NEWS
FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

This is the Newseum in Washington, DC – a museum which is dedicated to free expression, the First Amendment and the news, and which occupies a prime site on Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and the Capitol. But like the newspapers it exhibits, it has run into financial difficulties and the building's owner, the Freedom Forum, is reviewing its future.

INTERNET
FEARS FOR THE INTERNET'S FUTURE

The Internet Society (ISOC), the global non-profit dedicated to the open development of the internet, has released 'Paths to our digital future,' its 2017 global internet report, which examines the internet over the next 5 to 7 years and identifies the factors that will shape its future. It warns that the digital future is a "fragile mix of promise and uncertainty".

There is still a strong, commonly held belief in the potential of the internet to continue to bring positive change to people's lives, it says. Respondents – particularly young people in developing countries – point to growth in new technologies and applications as evidence that the internet continues to fuel innovation, and to the benefits that connectivity can deliver for education, health, economic prosperity and social change.

"However, these hopes and beliefs are countered by wide-ranging fears that there are significant forces at work that may undermine the promise of the internet for future generations. For example, many believe that internet freedom will continue to decline around the world due to widespread surveillance, internet shutdowns and content regulation. There is also the view that the media landscape will become more difficult to navigate and that separating fact from fiction will become ever harder."

Among ISOC's recommendations are that human values must drive technical development and use, and human rights must apply online as well as offline. Users' interests must be put first concerning their own data, while action is needed now to close digital divides and to "make the internet economy work for everyone". Notably, ISOC says: "Competition policies across the world should be adapted to reflect the complexity of the modern internet economy, including taking digital presence, data collection and citizen use into account when assessing a company's market power." See the report at future.internetsociety.org

■ A seemingly obscure dispute has arisen at the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), a body that creates web standards, concerning its publishing of encrypted media extensions (EME) as a recommendation. EME keeps security interactions within the control of the browser when playing encrypted video. However, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has withdrawn from W3C as it says EME aims to apply rigid usage controls that favour large content providers and "will restrict user capabilities that created and sustain the web". See bit.ly/2yl1k6S

CONSUMER PROTECTION
OFCOM GETS TOUGH

Ofcom, the UK regulator, has issued a raft of new regulations to protect consumers, although the measures won't come into force until October 2018. Among the measures will be a ban on providers charging for caller display facilities, which can help people to screen nuisance calls; requiring providers to have effective procedures for identifying vulnerable customers; offering disabled users access to priority fault repair; and strengthening complaints-handling rules, with faster access to dispute resolution services. It will also require mobile and broadband providers to have fair debt-collection and disconnection practices, and will extend billing accuracy rules that apply to voice services to broadband.

■ The voices of consumers are being missed as service providers, industry bodies and the government set the agenda for the UK's communications infrastructure market after Brexit, a report by the Carnegie Trust notes. See bit.ly/2xoLk6g

MEXICO
OECD PRAISES REFORMS

Mexico's 2013 telecoms reform has brought benefits, spurring competition that has increased access and brought down mobile internet costs from among the highest in advanced economies to among the lowest, according to the OECD Telecommunication and Broadcasting Review of Mexico 2017. The review credits the legal and regulatory reform with helping create an environment for price reductions of up to 75% in mobile broadband packages, better quality services and the addition of 50 million mobile broadband subscriptions. Progress has been slower in broadcasting, where limited competition and restrictions on foreign investment are factors behind a 5% rise in pay TV prices over 2013–16.

WHOLESALE NETWORKS
GSMA FINDS FEW BENEFITS

The GSMA has brought out a report, 'Wholesale open access networks', which examines the performance of the wholesale open access network (WOAN) model (also known as single wholesale network, SWN) in five markets: Kenya, Mexico, Russia, Rwanda and South Africa. The report, which follows up on a 2014 study that assessed the potential economic case for implementing the wholesale network model, found that, in the countries examined, there was only one network rolled out, with all other markets plagued by slow progression, and delayed and/or cancelled launches. See bit.ly/2xWWZpK

EVENTS

9-12 October, Brussels
IIC Communications Policy and Regulation Week

9-10 November, Rome
IIC Italy Chapter event

14-15 November, Ottawa
IIC Canada Chapter Annual Conference

5-6 December, Washington DC
IIC Telecommunications and Media Forum (TMF)

18-21 December, Geneva
Internet Governance Forum

CYBERSECURITY
EU OVERHAULS CYBERSECURITY MEASURES

The European Commission is proposing wide-ranging measures to build strong cybersecurity in the EU, after president Jean-Claude Juncker highlighted weaknesses in online security in his state of the union address in September. "Europe is still not well equipped when it comes to cyber-attacks," he said.

Among the measures are investing more in the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA), doubling its budget and charging it with being 'the' European cybersecurity agency. Two new areas where the agency will play an important role are cybersecurity crisis management and certification and standardisation of ICT products and services. It will also be given a permanent mandate which would allow for more strategic and longer term planning.

ENISA will also have as a main aim helping member states to implement the Directive on the Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS), which is the EU's first legislation on cybersecurity. It comes into force in May 2018 and among its aims is creating a network of computer security incident response teams (CSIRTs) in member states and obliging them to report major events.

The Commission is also proposing a European cybersecurity certification framework, which is expected to deliver 'numerous' certification schemes, and a European cybersecurity research and competence centre to reinforce work on tools to combat threats. And a new directive to combat fraud in non-cash means of payment is also proposed.
■ The Commission is proposing a set of rules to govern the free flow of non-personal data in the EU. It says removing data localisation restrictions could double the data economy to 4% of GDP in 2020. See: bit.ly/2xuEGLg

SOUTH AFRICA
WORLD BANK URGES SERVICES REFORM

South African consumers are paying more for broadband services of lower speeds than other emerging economies, a report from the World Bank notes. The report, 'Innovation for productivity and inclusiveness', in the bank's economic update series, says "urgent reforms are needed to increase investments in mobile and fixed broadband infrastructure, strengthen competition, and improve the quality and reduce the price of ICT services". The constraint does not seem to be lack of private capital but outmoded regulatory approaches and lack of competition, with a particular failing that 4G has not been licensed. Ensuring the regulator's independence and confirming its field of action should help expedite stalled actions; a more liberal approach to spectrum management and price competition would also help. bit.ly/2f9tmdk

GERMANY
CROSS-BORDER RULES FOR M2M

Germany's cross-sector regulator, Bundesnetzagentur, has published rules for the marketing of mobile numbers across borders which will further facilitate the global scale of machine-to-machine (M2M) applications. "We're encouraging a future market. Connected cars and smart home applications can now be even better marketed worldwide. The same goes for other applications using mobile networks to interconnect devices," said Jochen Homann, Bundesnetzagentur president. The new rules allow mobile numbers with Germany's country code to be used for M2M applications in other countries and devices with foreign numbers to be marketed in Germany. Cross-border marketing of International Mobile Subscriber Identities (IMSIs) was introduced in 2016.

IN BRIEF

NEUTRALITY REPORT
BEREC, the body of European regulators, has published a study on net neutrality that looks at regulatory approaches in three non-European benchmark countries – Chile, India and the US.

SWISS REVISION
Switzerland is revising its telecoms act to give greater weight to consumer concerns, promote competition and deregulation, and simplify admin. See bit.ly/2xjszB1

NEW ZEALAND BILL
New Zealand has introduced a bill to update the country's telecoms act with a focus on increasing regulatory oversight and improving service quality. See bit.ly/2fsES7s

BROADBAND NET
The European Network of Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs), a European Commission initiative, will launch a 'network and support facility' in Brussels on 20 November 2017. See bit.ly/2t8B6nA

ACCESS REPORT
The UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development has released its annual data on the state of broadband access around the world, finding growing digital inequality. See bit.ly/2yBDSTc

MONEY MATTERS
The Brookings Financial and Digital Inclusion Project (FDIP) report for 2017 evaluates use of affordable financial services by underserved people across 26 geographically, politically and economically diverse countries. brook.gs/2gYVAM4