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[International Internet Governance](#)

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Memorial Day is a time for saying goodbye and, in one sense, saying goodbye around this time of year to a group of people has become automatic for many of us. I am referring to the many graduating seniors from high schools and colleges around the nation. Those institutions say goodbye to one class of students in order to welcome a new class of students.

Last week at the G-8 summit, French President Nicolas Sarkozy proposed saying goodbye to what has primarily been private governance of the Internet, which is to say that little, if any, governance exists, and proposed welcoming an international governance regime with government at the helm. As one would imagine, the isle is divided on whether government should control a private enterprise and, if so, to what extent should government intervene. Generally, countries have taken differing stances in their approach to such issues as Internet privacy and taxation.

Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google, said on a panel discussion that “you want to tread lightly on regulating brand new, innovative industries.” He added, “clearly you need some level of regulation for the evil stuff. But I would be careful about over-regulating the Internet,” and that “I cannot imagine any delegate in this conference that would want Internet growth to be significantly slowed by a government that slows it down because of some stupid rule that they put in place.”

Harmonizing privacy laws is one area of regulation that would be beneficial. Although the United States and European Union created the Safe Harbor Framework to assist U.S. companies to comply with the European Union Privacy Directive, companies doing business globally face a significant expense in ensuring their privacy policies comply with the laws of numerous countries. Governments also need to equip intellectual property owners with the tools necessary to combat online piracy of intellectual property rights. The U.S. IP Protect Act is one such measure that would provide intellectual property owners with such a tool.

The G-8 summit is unlikely to result in any significant changes to Internet governance. But as the use of networks that are accessible by the Internet continue to grow and more businesses and individuals take advantage of cloud computing services, how the Internet is governed will also continue to grow in importance.



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