

DECLARATION

THE INTERNET, PHILANTHROPY, AND PROGRESS: PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE WORK

The rapid growth of the Internet creates challenges and opportunities in every area of contemporary life, from health and education to economic development, political engagement, civic life, and more. This change is enormous in scale and touches virtually every area of concern to philanthropy.

The Internet is not inherently good or bad. It can be used to foster enlightenment and learning, and promote justice. It can make information of all types available and commerce more efficient; open government to new voices and views; and connect people in ways that create understanding and encourage common cause. It can also be used to incite, manipulate, and humiliate; to facilitate new security threats and reinforce existing ones; exert control; stifle legitimate discourse and weaken society; concentrate power in the hands of a few; and leave many people and communities on the sidelines.

Along with the time-honored ways people communicate and engage with each other, people now connect in a networked public sphere: a digital commons where debate unfolds and communities are created. In this space, the flow of information, influence, and ideas is fundamentally different from that with non-digital counterparts, sometimes in surprising ways. This new public sphere can include and amplify more voices and opinions; or it can reinforce existing abuses of power.

Philanthropy has a unique role to play in helping to shape a better world. Foundations often come together for greater impact to tackle complex issues such as poverty, climate change, human rights, public health, and urbanization. The ubiquitous nature and power of the Internet demands that we come together again to help ensure that it is used for the common good.

Working together, we commit to influencing policy, markets, norms, and the design and use of the Internet and information technologies to make the world a better place. As leaders in the field of philanthropy, we aim to:

- > Work to make the Internet an open, secure, and equitable space for free expression, economic opportunity, knowledge exchange, and civic engagement that everyone can access and afford.
- > Support the opportunities created by the networked public sphere: new modes of civic and social participation, lowered barriers to engagement, and innovative ways to organize for positive change and social justice; and guard against potential harm: censorship, self-segregation, the spread of misinformation, and polarization.
- > Transform learning and ensure that young people have the skills they need to succeed in a connected, complex world: digital literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, curiosity, empathy, understanding, persistence, and more.
- > Cultivate leaders in business, government, and civil society to understand and fulfill the promise of the Internet, and support cross-sector alliances to ensure technology and data are used to advance the public good.
- > Contribute to the design of Internet and information technology policies, practices, and products that enhance data security and protection of individual privacy.
- > Ensure that philanthropy leads in digital security and data ethics in its own practices.

As leaders in philanthropy, we will work to ensure that the Internet continues to be built, used, and governed in ways that create opportunity for all.

These principles will guide how we use the Internet every day in our work and with our partners.

We invite others to join us.