# 04.CASE

# INTERCOMMUNITY

## INTERNET SOCIETY

### ABOUT THE INTERNET SOCIETY

Founded 23 years ago by Vint Cerf and Bob Kahn—two 'fathers of the Internet'—the society began as a not-for-profit organisation to support Internet standards development. It continues in that role today as the administrative home for the Internet Engineering Task Force, and is also involved in a range of activities related to Internet technology, public policy, and access and development. With headquarters offices in Reston, Virginia, and Geneva, Switzerland, the Internet Society now has an international membership of more than 140 organisations, 78,000 individual members, and 111 chapters worldwide.

How do you bring together people from around the world who are the heart and soul of the Internet?



## EVENT CONTEXT
The Internet Society, born in 1992 to look after the Internet, meets in many places across the globe but never simultaneously on the Internet, even though the Internet is their subject. In 2015, it was time to open up the Board of Trustees meeting to all the members of the Internet Society by coming together in a completely new way.

## WHO IS ORGANISING THE CHANGE?
When Kathy Brown joined the organisation as its new President and CEO, she knew that in order to advance their mission, 'The Internet is for Everyone', it was imperative for this society to create its very own innovative event. Together with her leadership team, she launched the idea of an event about the Internet on the Internet just a couple of months after joining the organisation.

## WHAT WAS THE CHALLENGE?
How do you bring together people from around the world who are the heart and soul of the Internet and who are dedicated to its open development and its universal accessibility? The Internet Society answered that question with InterCommunity 2015, the organisations' first global meeting of members, held 'on the Internet for the Internet'.

## WHO ARE THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS?
This event will enable the Society's 70,000+ global members, 111 chapters, 140 Organisational members, and experts across the Internet technical community (IETF) to come together using the Internet through a network of interconnected events across the world. This meeting sets a new precedent and showcases how the Internet can facilitate engagement and connections across distance and time.
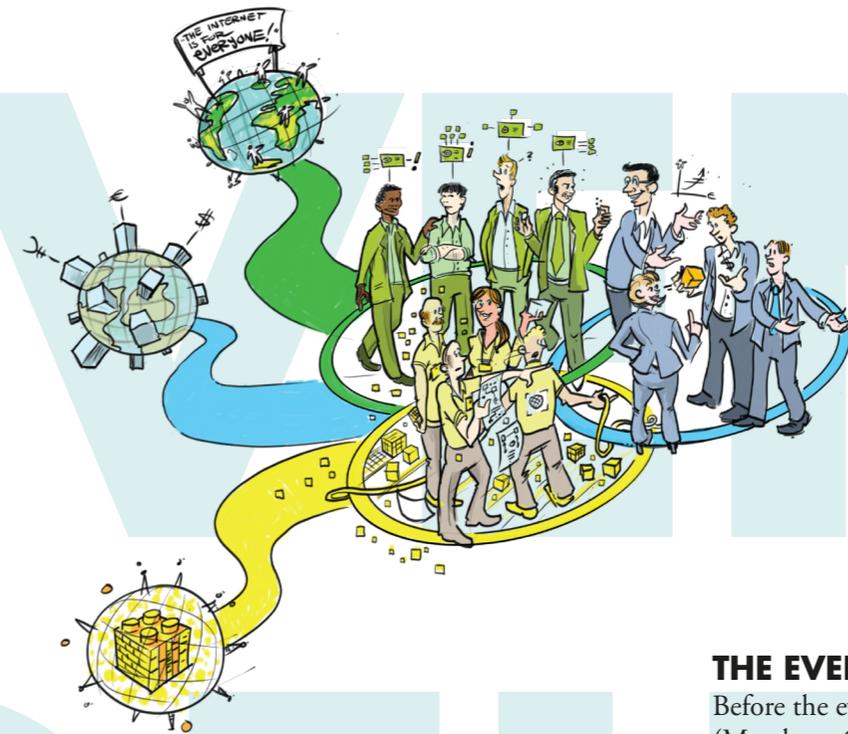
## THE EVENT DELTA
Before the event, the three core communities (Members, Organisational members, and the Internet technical community) had only limited interconnectivity and awareness of each other's activities. The Board of Trustees consists of representatives of each of these communities. After the event participants will have seen the Board of Trustees interact and open communication among the three communities in a way that had not been seen before.
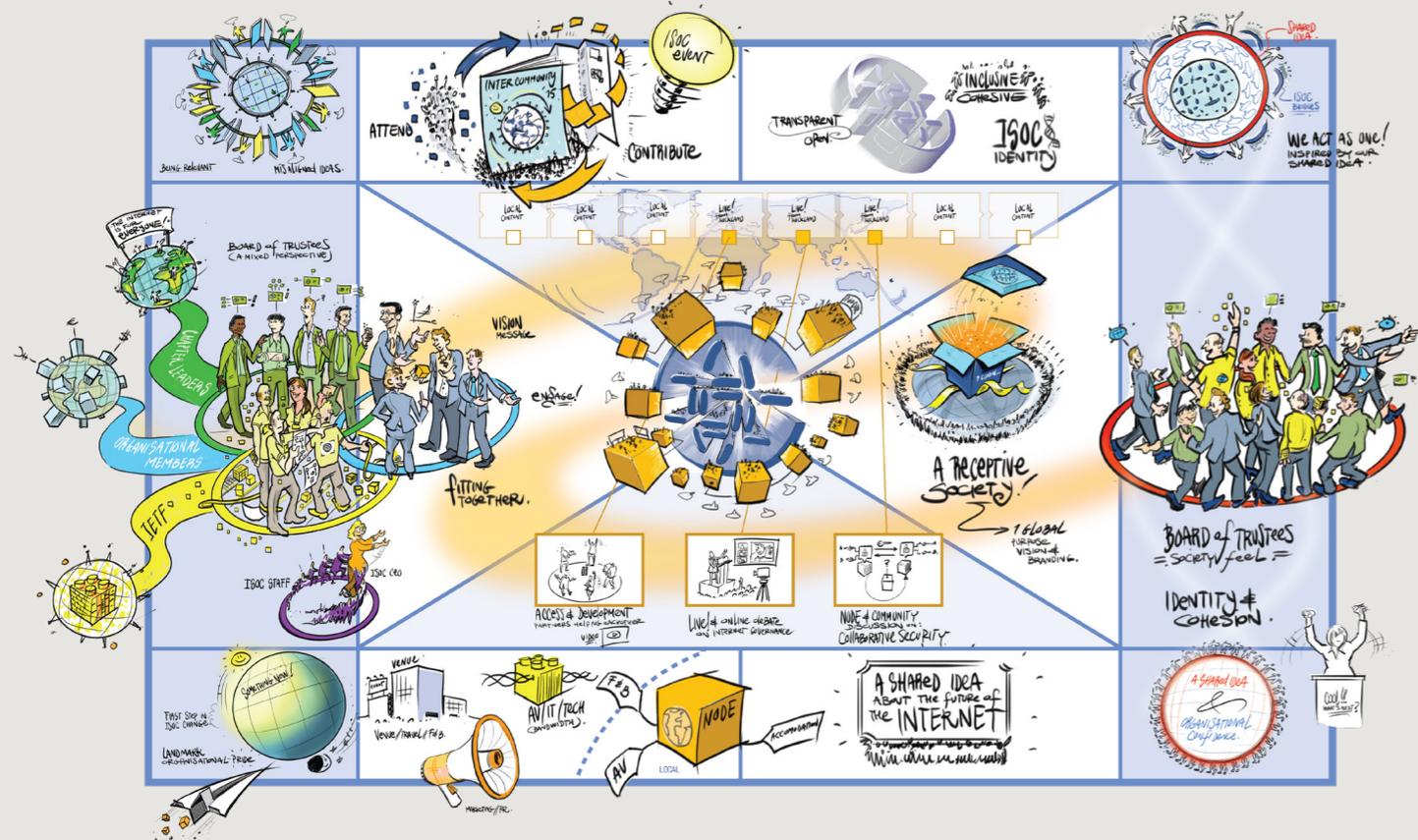
## EVENT NARRATIVE

The Internet Society takes on many of the most important and challenging issues facing the Internet—and it does so on a global level.

The Internet Society Board of Trustees, at its 119th meeting, decided to hold the first-ever virtual Global Community Forum for the Internet Society's world wide membership to be called 'InterCommunity 2015'. Held in conjunction with the Board's Annual General Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, the event 'followed the sun', featuring concurrent, real-time forums around the world connected through the Internet to create one, hybrid global meeting. It ran from 20:00 UTC on 7 July 2015 to 09:00 UTC on 8 July 2015.

InterCommunity 2015 was designed to showcase the power of the Internet to transcend boundaries and to unify the Internet Society around the globe through an exchange of knowledge and ideas. This meeting enabled the Society's 70,000+ global members, 111 Chapters, 140 Organisation members and experts across the Internet technical community to come together virtually through a network of interconnected events across the world.

The InterCommunity 2015 was hosted from SkyCity in Auckland, co-located with the InternetNZ NetHui conference. Forums were set up across Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, and Europe that were interconnected as part of this global meeting. The Internet Society Board of Trustees, President and CEO Kathy Brown, and limited support staff were present in Auckland, while the Executive team and staff were positioned at regional events closest to their base cities.

Fifteen regional node events were hosted across multiple time zones. Internet Society Members could access preliminary event details on the InterCommunity page in Connect, and non-members were encouraged to join the Internet Society to take part.

Enabling the communities of the Internet Society to connect using live meetings and the Internet during this first InterCommunity event allowed the Internet Society Board of Trustees, at its Annual General Meeting, to engage and involve Chapters, Members, and other community partners.

This first step in creating a new global hybrid event was a first for the Internet Society and allowed the core communities to discuss and debate essential topics. These included Access and Development, live online debates on Internet Governance, as well as node and community discussions on Collaborative Security.

By attending and contributing, participants took part in a global conversation looking to reinforce the shared idea about the future of the Internet.

Discussions highlighted diverse perspectives and were transparent, open, and inclusive to create a cohesive and receptive society with a clear purpose, vision, and brand. It is not just the best idea, but the shared idea that will create organisational confidence, identity, and cohesion in this first step in Internet Society change. InterCommunity 2015 became an organisational landmark using the Internet to connect the Internet Society.
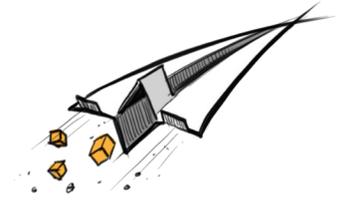
## THE DESIGN PROCESS

Over a span of 6 months, by using the Event Canvas methodology, a wide cross-section of staff was involved in the creation of this brand-new global event. The event took place across the globe on 7 and 8 July, 2015, starting in Auckland, NZ and following the sunrise across the world to connect the Internet Society across all time zones in 24 hours.

Using the Event Canvas framework, we synthesised inputs from dozens of people and from there were able to identify to six core Stakeholder groups, mapping out needs, goals, and metrics for each of them. One result was the emergence of three key areas of discussion for the meeting: Internet governance, improving security and trust on the Internet, and ensuring Internet access for everyone in the world.

Given the ambitious scope, technical logistics, relatively short, six-month planning window, and other factors, projections for the first-of-its-kind event were modest, but in the end it far exceeded expectations. Stakeholders, even those on the technical side, were surprised and flabbergasted to experience what an Internet event could be. InterCommunity 2015 set a new benchmark in this space.

InterCommunity allowed individual viewers who were not physically present at one of the 15 regional nodes to engage through a chat tool within the event's interface, and to participate in polling and surveys using a social quesrion-and-answer app as well as social media. Attendees at regional nodes could interact with each other and, in most cases, with other nodes, as well as with the Auckland host site. The Internet Society used small touches and details to build community identity, from kicking off the program by showing individuals from around the world holding identical photo frames branded with the InterCommunity logo, to ending each of the two global sessions by having participants at the host and remote locations simultaneously launch paper airplanes.

## THE BRAIDING POINT

The ability to 'do work' as an organisation and to challenge to take on one central new task was at the core why it was important to create this event. The challenge gave the full organisation a reason and a litmus test to work cohesively.

Right after launching this big idea live at a regional Chapter Leader Workshop in Budapest, President and CEO Kathy Brown was made aware of the Event Design methodology using the visual Event Canvas to align Stakeholders and design an event from scratch by a team. Seeing an example of the Nuclear Security Summit on an Event Canvas caught her attention to encourage the team to adopt and try this new Event Design methodology.

Within weeks, the Internet Society staff team applied the Event Design Methodology. They diligently long-listed the Stakeholders, focusing the conversation on alignment of the needs and defining their measures of success of those that need to be delighted. Multiple teams worked side-by-side in a set of 6-hour design sprints to empathise with the key 6 Stakeholders. These laid the foundation to frame the design of the event on the event canvas.

Ideas generated by the teams who joined the event design sessions from Washington, DC, Geneva, Amsterdam and Montevideo were aggregated using online collaboration tools and ranked for feasibility and importance.

Prototypes of the event were created and presented back to the decision makers to select the one that would work best for this first edition. The event narrative was created and then sketched into the Event Canvas to tell the story of the event. The Event Canvas formed a compass for the team to now get approval, market the event, and execute it with a common understanding of this first InterCommunity event.

It goes without saying that many were nervous, after months of planning, debating, creating content, testing, and worrying about the event. Though it was venturing into the unknown, the event was well prepared and when the event was 'on' you could feel the excitement and engagement in 'realtime'.

The sense of achievement, pride, and energy of delivering on it collectively, collaboratively, and successfully was a key performance indicator for the organisation and the community as a whole. InterCommunity was a landmark event for the Internet and set a new benchmark in the space.

## NEXT?

With this first milestone set, the organisation is now gearing up for the sequel to this inaugural InterCommunity. In hindsight, the first edition was a proof-of-concept that such connected events truly are possible, and it will be used as a steppingstone to prepare for the 25th Anniversary of the Internet Society, which is currently being designed by the staff team using the Event Canvas methodology, just like they did for the first edition.