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Taking care of the Internet

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A vision for the future governance of the Internet and principles to guide public and private actions in cyberspace was today set out by European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes in a speech to the Internet Governance Forum in Nairobi, Kenya. Ms Kroes spelled out her "Compact" for the Internet: "an Internet of Civic responsibility, One Internet that is Multi-stakeholder, Pro-democracy, Architecturally sound, inspiring Confidence and Transparently governed". She set out measures she will be taking to improve user confidence and trust. She also commented on how Internet governance should take proper account of legitimate public policy issues without being "hi-jacked" – because private vested interests should never trump the public interest. While mentioning the possible need for some international agreement, she stressed her wariness of regulation and her strong preference for the light touch: "the space which the Internet creates for freedom, self-expression and innovation is not one which public authorities should seek to crowd out". But equally, public authorities may need to take a greater role in Internet governance matters, while acting in an internationally coherent way. "If the Internet is to fulfil its glorious potential, public authorities must support and protect it, but not kill it", she said.
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