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## Executive Summary

### ***Internet Governance and Tackling Crime***

Most people have given little thought to the issue of "Internet Governance". The international nature of internet activity, its speed and scale, and idealism about "freedom of the internet" all stop people thinking about governance issues.

- Yet it has become a serious international issue, and was central to the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis in 2005.
- And there is evidence that people in the UK consider that being a "victim" online is more likely than being the victim of violent crime.

Are these two separate issues? Yes, they are, but I am convinced that they are inextricably linked and require a joined-up approach. Safety online cannot be dealt merely as a security issue, and internet governance needs to be coherent.

Local police work and crime prevention work take place in a framework of statute, common law and public administration (accountability) that has built up over centuries. Crime prevention requires a strong partnership - it cannot be left to the police alone. National police work takes place within that framework.

The same must apply online - but we do not have the luxury of time. We need a new style of governance linked to a new way of tackling crime and abuse on the internet if we are to both be effective and avoid the problems of international bureaucracy and top-down regulation.

**Views are polarised between those countries that want to "leave things as they are" (in order to make sure that this fast-changing environment of communication and business is not constrained by bureaucracy) and those who want governance through an international structure or UN agency.**

**The Internet Governance Forum has provided a "space for dialogue" and avoided the risks inherent in either extreme. But that agreement is fragile - it must develop quickly or demands for bureaucratic structures will grow.**

**Instead of providing theoretical alternatives the UK is well-placed to pave the way by creating the UK Internet Governance Forum and using that overarching governance to protect confidence in the internet for business and the citizen. Replacing the "governance of the Wild West" with "governance through partnership" will be both modern and flexible.**

## SUMMARY :

1. **The first issue is governance.** Nobody "owns" the issue of **how the Internet should be regulated**, but on the international stage the "British solution" - the IGF - avoids both the danger of piecemeal regulation by vested interests and the bureaucratic option of a new UN Agency.
2. The so-called "freedom of the internet" is already constrained in many ways - by commercial operators, Internet Service Providers and nations (China - free speech, USA - off-shore on-line gambling, UK - child abuse).

**Bluntly, we have three choices :** We can .....

- (a) leave it to companies and countries, the "Wild West option"
  - (b) go for "international ownership" through a bureaucratic "UN Agency" approach, or
  - (c) develop a Third Way solution - a partnership approach - which this paper advocates.
3. **The second issue is crime.** Criminals are bound to exploit the internet and ICT generally, but we need to end the mythology about "e-crime". It is **not** out of proportion to other crime, but speed and the capacity for "multiple strikes" mean that a new approach is needed. Police resources will always be limited - so we need a non-Governmental approach to crime reduction to complement the work of the police and security agencies. There are many initiatives to improve security, but no overall governance.
  4. My proposals are designed to tackle both of these problems, and are being endorsed from a variety of experts within Government, Industry and "Civil Society" (Third Sector). There is general agreement that we need to pull together Governmental and Non-Governmental approaches.
  5. This would not work as a traditional "Government initiative" but given encouragement from Government the proposals can be implemented quite quickly - provided all the players to "sign up" to industry leadership.
  6. **The starting point on Internet Governance** is to demonstrate how the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) can be a better option than a UN Agency by "walking the talk". Using today's discussion as the launch-pad, we should establish the UK IGF, owned jointly by Industry, Government, Parliament and "Civil Society".
  7. **The starting point for tackling crime** is for the same 4-way combination to be involved in the creation and governance of an Industry initiative for a UK Internet and ICT Complaints Centre. This will take in information on abuses and complaints from everywhere - members of the public, public

bodies, industry etc - so that Industry can "design out crime". The target will be the whole range of "crime and disorder" on the internet etc, down to the "e-graffiti" which affects everyone.

8. This approach will complement the proposed police (Met/ACPO) unit and be designed in close collaboration with them so that "intelligence" is passed up quickly. Essentially it will be a "crime reduction partnership" for ICT and the Internet. It will also complement the Fraud Reporting Centre currently being designed by ACPO and the City of London. And it presumes the continued development of specific initiatives such as Information Assurance, led by the Cabinet Office, or a variety of initiatives on information exchange, internet security etc.

On both the "Governance" issue and on "e-Crime" I conclude that .....

- a. There are real problems that are not owned anywhere specific within Government, although several Departments (DTI - now Department for Business - Home Office, Cabinet Office, the Attorney General etc) are increasingly concerned about them and separately engaged with industry.
- b. The issues do not respect national borders, but the UK is uniquely placed to take a new "partnership approach" which can influence the international community approach and enhance Britain's reputation as the best place to do business.
- c. Industry is increasingly willing to sign up to a partnership approach (and through our approach to child abuse has learned the value of partnership as a real alternative to regulation).
- d. A coherent police approach is being developed through the proposed Met/ACPO e-crime unit.
- e. We will be effective by connecting the issues of governance and accountability - a live issue internationally - to crime reduction.

I have prepared a longer paper to set out my proposals in rather greater detail.

These ideas were first discussed with a variety of players on a confidential basis, including the UN's IGF executive co-ordinator, representatives of the Met/ACPO, a variety of Industry players, including some major companies, as well as Nominet, Intellect and the CBI, and also with the then Prime Minister and with the Ministers and Officials most directly involved with the two issues in the relevant Departments. On behalf of the Government the Home Secretary has supported this approach as has the lead Minister, Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP at the Department for Business.

None of this conflicts with the detailed work taking place across Government departments or the initiatives within the Industry, but it provides the effective framework of accountability that is essential in a democratic society.

With the support of all parties, I believe we can indicate our intentions to build up a genuine partnership model with industry buy-in and outline this approach at the IGF in Rio where the UK can show a "team presence" of the partners.

In parallel we need to work on the European and International dimension.

If we work speedily on the development of partnership through the "UK IGF" we can have it in place by the middle of next year and provide evidence from the "working model" for the 2008 Internet Governance Forum. Such a timetable is ambitious, but not impossible - and time is not on our side.

Today's consultation which has been led by the Department for Business with the active support of Nominet provides the opportunity to seek wider agreement. Please can I have your united support in taking this forward - and also your comments and suggestions on how to do so?

***Yours sincerely,***

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alun Michael". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**ALUN MICHAEL MP**