

Some active citizens, including members of the supervisory board of Praxis, proposed to launch a meaningful, balanced debate on the basic rights of Internet users. Praxis supports the principles of open society and good governance and gladly contributes to public debate regarding such principles.

We look forward to receiving feedback and proposals from all those interested.

The theses were drafted in order to foster discussion in society about the basic rights of Internet users that governments and citizens should follow in creating new laws, entering into foreign agreements, developing new e-services and using the Internet. It is not a legally binding document and does not try to resolve any legal issues related to the protection of intellectual property online.

Our starting points have been the relevant provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, and we have also examined existing international manifests and declarations on Internet rights. The first version of theses was drafted by Linnar Viik, Daniel Vaarik, Sten Tamkivi and Marten Kokk.

Individuals, organizations, companies and government departments are invited to take part in the discussion. We look forward to receiving your comments and contributions by Independence Day, 24 February 2012.

Theses

1. Everyone has the right to access and use the Internet. This may only be restricted on the court orders insofar as this is necessary for the protection of the rights of other people in democratic society. Widespread availability of the Internet enhances the positive effects of the free movement of information, and Internet service providers are not weighed down with obligations that make their services more expensive or less readily available.
2. Everyone has the right to freely create, search, receive and share information on the Internet provided that this is not at variance with the laws in democratic society for the protection of other people's rights and freedoms, with moral norms or with the need to defend other people's dignity.
3. Everyone has the right to share in the rich cultural experience offered by the Internet, to enjoy the art created online and to learn about scientific achievements through electronic media. Authors have the right to the protection of their work on the Internet in accordance with the guidelines they provide, and their rights shall be upheld in a way that is in line with the principles of the Internet as a whole and which does not hinder the free movement of information. Copying information found on the Internet for personal use and using such information for non-profit purposes is permitted.
4. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and speech on the Internet. The expression of opinions cannot be restricted, except in cases provided for in law so as to prevent incitement to hatred. Everyone has the right to make their views known through virtual protests and demonstrations.

5. Everyone has the right to the protection of personal details stored on the Internet, and those processing them are obliged to explain to users how and why they use such information. Everyone has the right to verify their identity before the state and to authorize transactions in their own name by way of a digital signature.

6. Everyone has the right to dignity and security on the Internet, without fear of cyber-bullying or identity theft. Children have a special right to online security, without falling prey to sexual or other abuse. The state is obliged to take steps, at the national level and as part of international cooperation, to guarantee security, ensuring that these measures do not unreasonably infringe upon the freedoms of all Internet users.

7. Everyone has the right to obtain state and local government services electronically, regardless of whether they are citizens of or visitors to the country and irrespective of their location, and to participate in the decision-making through electronic channels. E-democracy must be promoted, i.e. people's involvement in legislative drafting through electronic channels must be made as simple and accessible as possible.

8. Everyone has the right to secure, cross-border e-trade, to enter into agreements and to transfer money over the Internet.

9. Everyone has the right to have the privacy of their personal and family lives and correspondence respected on the Internet. No third party has the right to intervene in this in any other way than on the orders of a court and in accordance with the law.

10. Everyone has the right to obtain confirmation that the public Internet services they use operate in line with these principles, and everyone must facilitate the honouring of these rights and freedoms in what they do.

11. Amendment of regulations which affect the Internet must take place through open, multilateral cooperation in which governments, companies, non-governmental organisations and Internet users are equal partners.