

The Case for Pooled Digital Sovereignty via Open Systems



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Overview



Concepts

The Broken Promises of the Open Internet

Digital Colonialism

Home-grown Closed Alternative

Open Systems

Concepts



- Sovereignty:
The right, and capability of governments to set the rules within their own borders.
- Digital Sovereignty:
The right and capability to of governments to set the rules for digital technology provision and use within their own borders.
- The Borderless Internet:
The general concept and implementation of the Internet is of a single set of interconnected machines: Peer-to-Peer, not just Client\Server.
- Pooled Sovereignty:
Recognising the reality of political and economic power, governments cooperate to avoid domination.

The Broken Promises of the Open Internet



- Internet idealists (e.g. John Perry Barlow) envisaged a borderless cyberspace run by consensus, engineering and what works
- The IETF principles of:
 - Open process
 - Technical competence
 - Volunteer-led
 - Rough consensus/running code
 - Protocol “ownership” but not “control”.
- Modern Reality
 - Client\Server dominating Peer-to-Peer
 - Monopoly Leveraging
 - Proprietary Formats/Protocols (docx, Zoom, Facebook, X/Twitter)
 - The First Hit is Always Free

Digital Colonialism



- The Microsoft Tax: Vendor Lock-In
- Silicon Valley: moving fast and breaking society
- The Great Firewall of China and the Fragmented Internet
- Embrace, Extend, Extinguish, Dominate, Abuse
- Platform Decay (aka enshittification)

Home-grown Closed Alternative



- Betting on (supra) national hyperscalers is risky.
 - Fail to Compete
 - Home-grown Dominance Abuse is Still Abusive
- Further Fragmentation
 - Bought Out
 - Abuse of Customers, Abuse of Society, Abuse of Environment

Open Systems



- Supporting FLOSS Stacks
- Defining and enforcing interoperability
- Enabling Federation (scalable, competitive, cooperative)
- Broader Cooperation, with Japan, Republic of Korea, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, African countries...
- Avoiding neo-colonialism, avoiding winner-takes-all competition, allowing cross-border trade flows with lower risks
- Public Sector can Lead: UK doc formats and MS Office read/write ODF. (Lock-in can still succeed even with open formats.)

Any Questions

