

David Gross Urges Communications Industry to Engage Governments on Net Governance

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Ambassador David A. Gross, chair of Wiley Rein's International Telecommunications Group, was quoted in a *Digital News Asia* article following his "visionary keynote address" at CommunicAsia 2012. The event in Singapore is the region's largest conference and exhibition of communication products and services.

"There are about 2.4 billion Internet users [globally], half of them in Asia," said Amb. Gross. "But yet, the penetration of Internet users here is only about 18% of the population, while the rest of the world is about 50%. Being here in Asia gives you [the industry] tremendous advantages."

Amb. Gross noted that despite Asia's potential, there are a number of developments that could get in the way of growth and innovation, including geo-political issues and technical challenges.

"There is one [thing] that concerns me though, something that could affect the ability for Asian companies to innovate and create new markets, and do the things they want to: governments," said Amb. Gross. "The challenge I faced when I was in government service is that people kept coming to me, asking me to create rules to determine and help certain outcomes for businesses, so that they could predict the future and make money. I think that's a fundamental mistake, although all governments make them, naturally. My view is that what all governments ought to do [instead of intervening] is to facilitate and not predetermine or try to guess what the next big thing is going to be."

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Practice Areas

Telecom, Media & Technology

Amb. Gross is serving as chairman for a group of leading tech and telecom companies that have joined together to raise concerns with the United Nation's International Telecommunications Union (ITU) over a treaty that could bring new regulation to the Internet.

The article reported that Amb. Gross pointed to the December meeting in Dubai where delegations from 193 countries will discuss whether the U.N. should have more say over how the Internet is organized and controlled. "It's important that for the industry to work with governments and to try and make clear to them, in quiet and effective ways, what the industry needs governments to do, to help them achieve their goals," said Amb. Gross. "You [the industry] do this not because you're aiming to get governments to do something special for you, but rather to help you set the stage so that both parties can help make nations and their citizens a better place."