

Players in Internet Governance

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Players in Internet Governance

“Internet governance” is a complex concept, oscillating between the technical administration of the network of networks and its “government” with all its political connotations. According to the working group on Internet governance, set up as part of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), by “Internet governance” must be understood, the drawing up and application by states, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of principles, standards, rules, procedures for decision making and its own, shared programmes for modelling the development and use of the Internet.

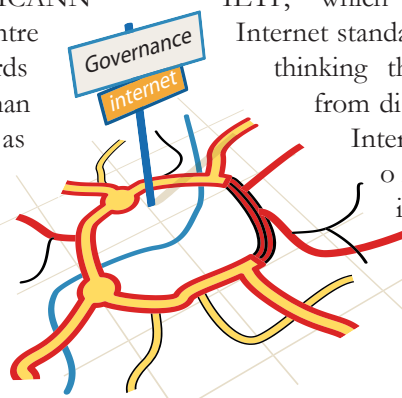
This complexity is increased by the multiplicity of players involved with governance and their often very different natures, depending on whether they come from the technical world, the private sector, the authorities or civil society.

This paper provides some graphic views of the main players and how they interact, focusing on three “universes”:

1 that of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), an American body, in charge of managing the essential, technical resources, mainly addresses and domain names. It operates IANA, the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, under the control of the US Department of Commerce. ICANN is at the centre of the key stakes for administrative control of the “root”, such as the creation or deletion of first level extensions (such as *.com*). Through its decisions and relations with the various business players, ICANN has a strong effect on the structure of the domain names market;


2 that of the “IGF” or “Internet Governance Forum”, which emerged from the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society. Here we find some of the same players as in the ICANN universe, but here the centre of gravity tilts towards much broader subjects than technical resources, such as the fight against cyber-crime, the protection of children, the protection of personal data and the reduction of the digital divide between North and South;

3 and lastly of ISOC (the Internet Society). This universe combines both the management of state of the art technical problems through the IETF, which draws up Internet standards, and the thinking that emerges from discussions of Internet users organized in chapters throughout the world.



The “cards” presented in this paper facilitate emphasizing:

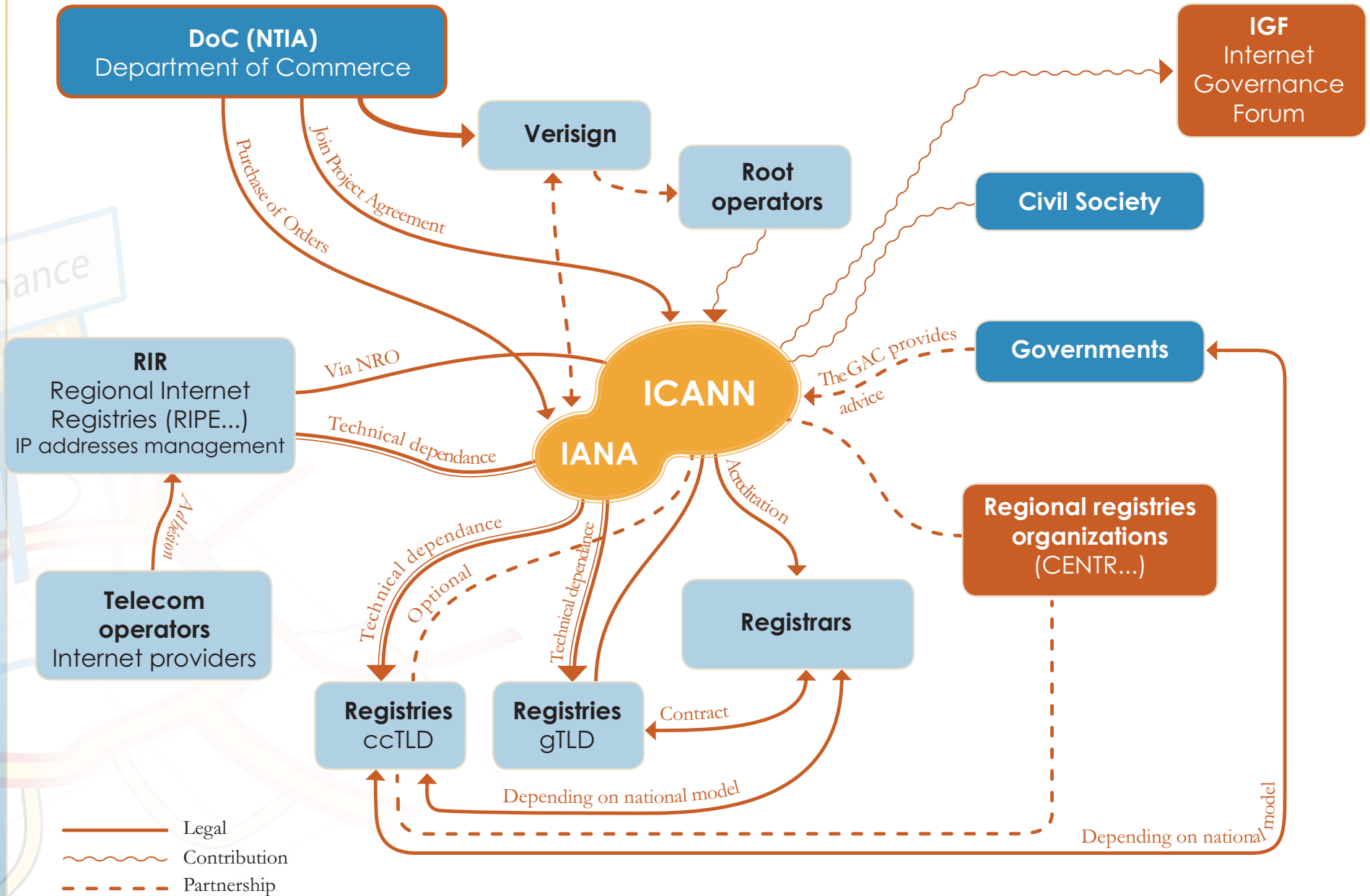
- ▶ the large number of enclosures, which might prove problematic for the participation of small bodies;
- ▶ the considerable openness of these organizations to participation by all, even if their ability to influence varies;
- ▶ the global nature of Internet governance, based upon the interdependence of all the players;
- ▶ the laboratory nature of the development of international relations, with the emergence of the private sector and civil society alongside governments, and not shunted to the side;
- ▶ the key positions held by the US Department of Commerce and Verisign Corporation.

 To know the meaning of a word, an acronym or the detailed role played by a body and the link to its website, you can search our glossary:

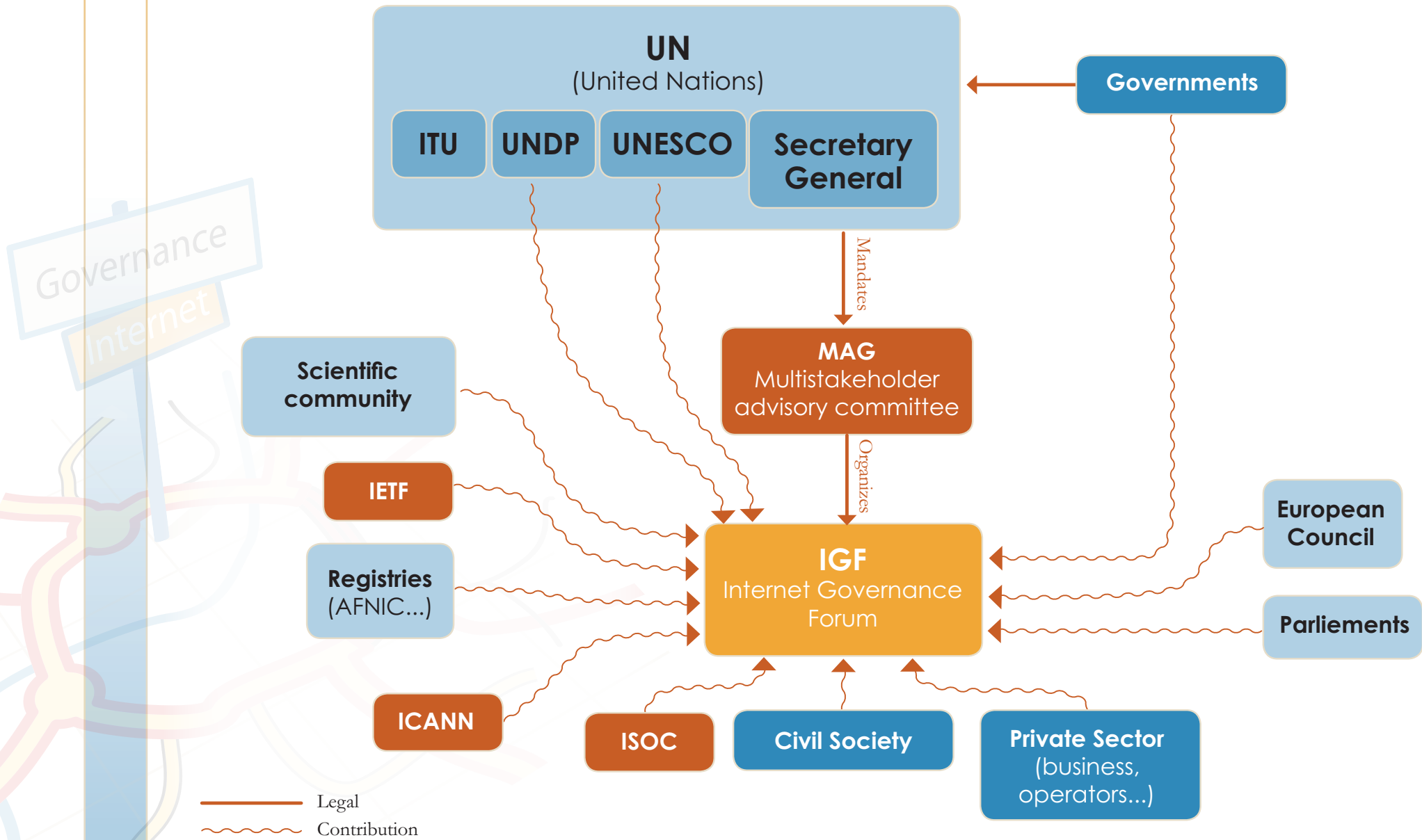
<http://www.afnic.fr/doc/lexique>

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ICANN universe



IGF universe



ISOC universe

