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How the internet works: The basics [starter activity]

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This starter activity is aimed towards getting the participants to understand the basic concepts and requirements for the internet.

Resources needed for this activity

Sheets of paper with the concepts

Time required

1.5 hours, minimum

Mechanics

Embodying the internet

Depending on the scenario that you want the participants to grasp, there will be some basic concepts required to be either illicited from the group or handed out on separate sheets of paper.

For the scenario, "How do you connect to <insert popular website>?", these are the basic concepts:

- Devices that connect to the internet: computer, laptop, mobile phone
- Router (can also be wifi connection)
- ISPs and / or Telco
- National gateway
- Destination webserver: Google, Facebook
- Servers

For the scenario, "How does Person A send an email to Person B?", the basic concepts are:

- Person A´s device (laptop, computer, mobile phone)
- Person A´s router
- Person A´s ISP / Telco
- Person A´s national gateway
- Person A´s mail server
- Servers
- Person B´s device
- Person B´s router
- Person B´s ISP / Telco
- Person B´s national gateway
- Person B´s mail server

For the scenario, "How do you send someone a chat message?", the basic concepts are:

- Person A´s mobile phone
- Person B´s mobile phone

- Person A´s ISP / Telco
- Person B´s ISP / Telco
- Person A´s national gateway
- Person B´s national gateway
- Person A and B´s chat service (Signal, Telegram, Vibr, WhatsApp)
- Chat service server
- Servers

Assign the different concepts to individual participants by making them stand in the centre of the room. Then ask them to do show the scenario.

Alternatively, you can group the participants according to the scenario, ask them to assign each concept to each member of the team and then role-play how the scenario would work in front of the bigger group. This option requires that there are participants that have some basic understanding of Internet 101.

This exercise can be expanded to illustrate HTTPS and PGP

For HTTPS, you will need an envelope provided by the web service to show the certification needed to encrypt data in transit. This could be used for both the scenario about connecting to websites, and sending emails.

For PGP, you will need envelopes that Person A and Person B would exchange with one another to signify the key exchange.

Interactive input on the how the internet works

This input will include the history of the internet as well as the history of the women´s movements on the internet (To be added).

This could also be a great exercise in data, corporate ownership, points of interception and surveillance.

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Revision #2

Created 18 April 2023 02:22:09 by Kira

Updated 27 June 2023 13:30:54 by Kira