

Internet, philanthropy and the mobile: WEF 2

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The discussion in my [group](#) at [WEF](#) here in Dubai on the future of media is good but does go around in familiar circles. So off I wander to see what the other 60 or so groups are talking about. It is a journey that takes me to The Future Of The Internet, Philanthropy and Mobile Futures. A symbolically apt voyage for journalism, I thought.



The Internet group were very concerned about the global governance of the Internet and the need to balance building capacity with keeping the system free of commercial or state control.

They were convinced that the future is mobile but also about an Internet Of Things. Every object from toasters to trains will be internet-enabled.

They wanted the Internet run by technologists and industry not government, a kind of multi-stakeholder governance.

The weren't worried too much about content but they pointed out that even where a government like China tries to control the Internet, the content online created and used by the people acts as a force upon government. The authorities start by controlling but end up listening.

The Mobiles group were happy to accept their role as the prime platform for the world online. They seem convinced of the power of the web-enabled phone to do the job from America to Africa,

Which took me on to the philanthropy group. And here I could see a reason for journalism rather than how it will be delivered.

It is clear that all those philanthropists (and the NGOs and government) going around trying to do good and change minds need a good media.

They talked about using entertainment and news to spread messages. Fair enough. But they also worried about who gets the philanthropists to the Right Thing and who holds them to account. Well surely that is the job of journalism? It can be journalism they create and/or support. It could also be that journalists realise that it is a set of issues for them to address.

So there you go, it's an odd event, but WEF worked for me.

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