Cyber Governance
What is “Cyber Governance”? I have absolutely no idea!

• If we are talking about “governance” as an imposition framework (legislated and/or regulated constraint imposed on actors) then very little of that exists in today’s Internet

• What mechanisms “govern” today’s Internet?
• How did we get here?
Telco Deregulation

• The 1980’s saw massive changes in the public telecommunications sector
  • The forced breakup of the US Bell system in 1982 started a wave of reforms for the nationalised telco sector
Market Disciplines as Governance

Public Sector-operated services were passed into the private sector
  • The sector was opened up to competition in the belief that competition would force greater efficiencies and lower prices from the sector
  • It was all about competition in telephony creating benefits for consumers
Transformation

• As it turned out it was not about competition in telephony
  • It was about competition in **technology innovation**
• The combination of technology innovation and deregulation placed the entire sector (and its revenues) up for grabs
  • Venture capital entered the market to accelerate this disruption
• These changes required the incumbents to transform themselves at a scale and speed that was beyond the capability of many
• The resultant marketplace was shaped by a continual stream of innovative pressures and disruptions
• This is unsustainable long term
Market Distortions

• Markets can fail in many ways:
  • Emerging monopolies, manipulation and distortions, selective advantage, corruption

• The results of market failures are much the same:
  • Inefficiencies in supply of goods and services
Today’s Internet

• A small clique of enterprises totally dominate the Internet

• What the problem here?
  • Are they too big?
  • Too exploitative of their workers?
  • Extracting monopoly rentals?
  • Ignoring consumer preferences?
But it’s want we want

• These enterprises are highly efficient operators in the new economy of *surveillance capitalism*

• They have the ability to customise a solution to a market of a single consumer and still bring economies of scale to that market

• As consumers we use their services because they are tailored for us!

• But is this what we really want?
Is this what we want?

Samsung SMART TV
TV has never been this Smart
Is this what we want?

Samsung SMART TV
TV has never been this Smart
What we might want

If this situation calls for some public sector response then perhaps the thrust of any such response should focus on the consumer rather than the dynamics of the market
Some Questions

Perhaps an effective regulatory regime should be able to provide clear answers to these questions:

• Who owns my personal profile data?
• Where is it stored?
• What regulatory regime protects it?
• Should I be informed when my profile is sold?
• Do I have an informed valuation of my personal profile?
• Who is at fault if my personal data is leaked?
Where are we?

It's clear we're not in Kansas any more

And whatever the Internet may be, it's not a telephone network for computers
Where are we?

• We are now communicating with a computer-mediated environment rather than with each other
• The network itself is largely incidental to this evolving story, and this is not really about the Internet any more
• It’s about a set of revolutionary social changes on a par with the industrial revolution that have been triggered by abundant computing, storage and comms
Maybe its more than this

• In a world of abundant content what do we choose to view?
• What do we choose to believe?
• Search becomes the arbiter of content selection and assumes a level of ultimate importance in this world
• What’s the outcome of search being dominated by a single entity?
Is it about what we want or is this more about what we think?
Where does all this head?

For our society this market-driven digitisation of our environment has the potential to be incredibly empowering or incredibly threatening. Or both at the same time!