

# David Gross Leads Panel Discussion at International Online Ethics, Safety Forum Held in Qatar

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Ambassador David A. Gross, chair of Wiley Rein's International Telecommunications Group, was quoted in a *Mercury News* article on his participation in a two-day international conference in Qatar where representatives from government, nonprofits and business discussed "Promoting Online Safety and Cyber Ethics in the Middle East."

The *News* reported that there "was a general consensus among the speakers that the best path for governments going forward is to encourage openness and a free flow of information."

The opening session of the conference featured a discussion between Amb. Gross and Family Online Safety Institute CEO Stephen Balkam. Amb. Gross reminded the audience about the history of Internet regulation in the U.S. and Europe.

"Every parent naturally as a matter of biology as well as intellect wants to protect children," Gross said. "A lot of these issues are variations of an old theme with each country wanting to make its decisions in their own way based on their own culture."

But Amb. Gross said kids are often more tech-savvy than adults. "The extraordinary and maybe unprecedented twist is that technology and Internet-related technology seems to be more intuitive for young people than the adults who are making the rules," said Amb. Gross. As a result, Amb. Gross said the Internet does not lend itself to being heavily regulated and does better with "a more organic multi-stakeholder approach that includes government but also schools,

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parents, non-governmental organizations and corporations coming together to field their way through it."

Amb. Gross added that he does not advocate a one-size-fits all Internet policy: "Ultimately there are going to have to be accommodations and how these things get resolved will fundamentally determine the economic well being of many countries. With technology and clever policy making everyone will be able to live within their own set of rules."