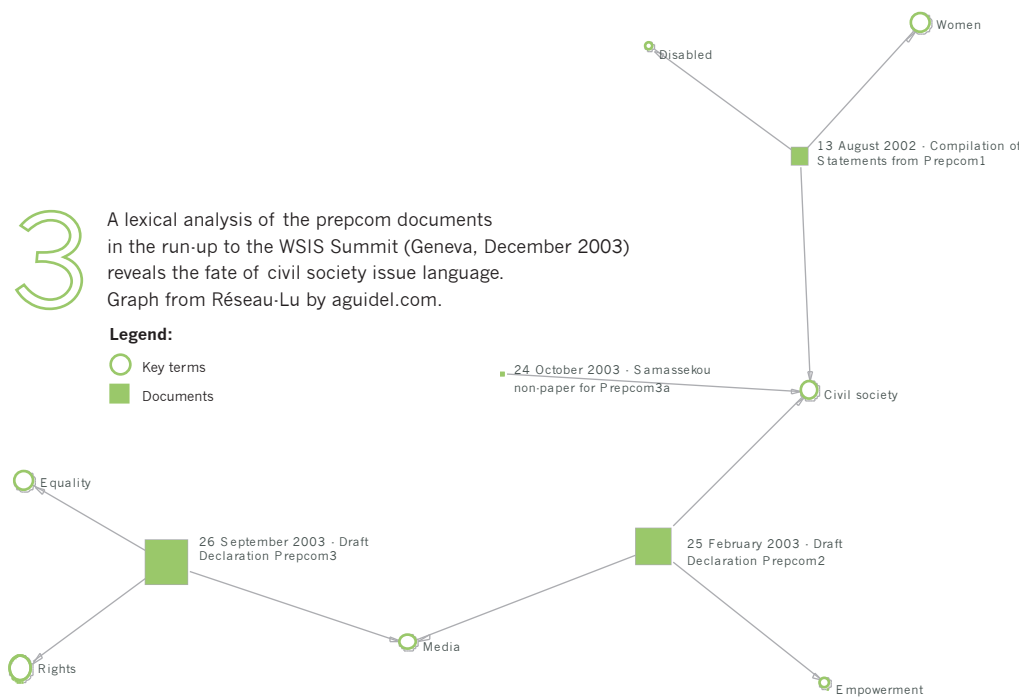


Issue couplings for WSIS:

Inserting development, gender and rights into ICT

1 **WSIS network disclosed by civil society**, 30 October 2003.
Two iterations of co-link analysis of WSIS-related outlinks on apc.org, crisinfo.org, geneva03.net, worldsummit2003.de and wsis-cs.org. Data by issuecrawler.net and graph from Réseau-Lu by aguidel.com.



ICT at WSIS is a hybrid issue?

The book about the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that the Association of Progressive Communications (APC) recently published, suggests that ICT as an issue is particularly susceptible to “hybridization,” that is, couplings with other issues. In the run-up to the World Summit, the articulation of ICT as an object of policy-making (and contestation) is in many cases done by “splicing” ICT with other issues: ICT and development, ICT and privacy, ICT and gender, ICT and security, ICT and human rights, etc.

WSIS according to civil society: A platform for inserting rights and gender into the ICT agenda?

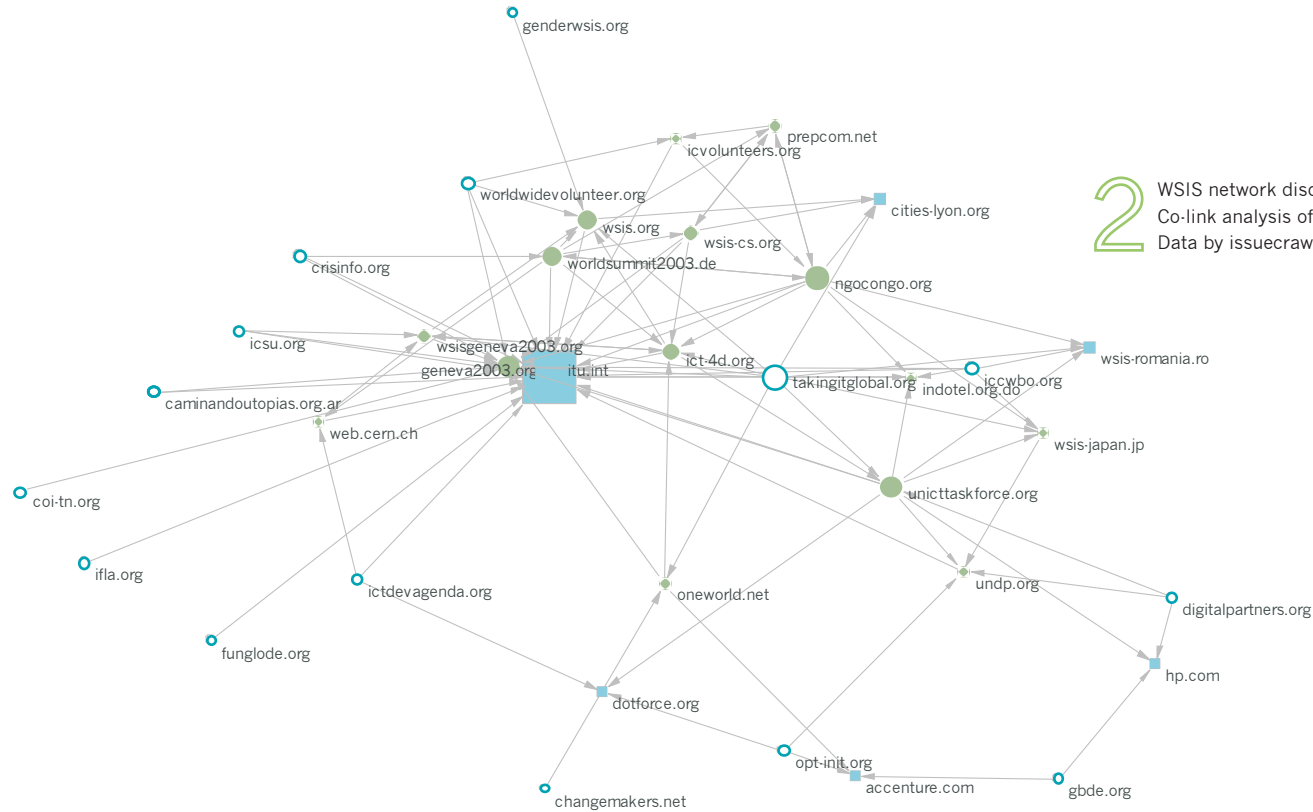
The WSIS network as it is disclosed by civil society organisations does show the prominence of hybrid issues. We find the issues of gender/ICT and rights/ICT at the heart of the network. Single-issue organisations — that is, organisations working primarily on ICT *itself* — appear more in the margins of the network: icann.org, isoc.org, linux.org, gnu.org.

Engendering issue-drift: Civil society attempts to move the agenda from development/ICT to rights and gender?

The WSIS network as it is disclosed by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and its affiliates, equally shows us the prominence of hybrid issues in the summit’s space. Here ICT appears as coupled with development. Moreover, juxtaposing the civil society and the ITU networks, we gain a sense of the kind of re-definition of the summit’s issues that the civil society network is trying to accomplish. One can say that the respective ITU and civil society networks are contesting the kind of hybridization of ICT which the summit is to accomplish. But it is probably more pertinent to say that the civil society network is attempting to open up the issue of ICT/development to rights and gender — to hybridize ICT even more. The question is, did they succeed?

Did civil society succeed in coupling ICT with rights and gender issues?

In order to give an answer to that question, we take a series of summit-related documents, and look for the presence of “rights” and “gender” in them. Gender was present in the compilation of statements from the first prepcom, and rights in the declaration presented to the third prepcom. But in a more recent document, an unofficial declaration compiled by the president of the summit, both terms have disappeared. Instead of the uptake of the issues of civil society, the WSIS process has resulted in the editing out of these issues, at least as of October 2003. In the last document, only the term “civil society” is present, but not its issues. This could be read as implying that rather than involving civil society to participate in setting the agenda, the WSIS process involves civil society as an implicated actor, with no specific issues of its own.



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WSIS according to civil society		
WSIS edition	05	Thanks to the Social Science Research Council's Information Technology and International Cooperation Program.
Product of the APC/Govcom.org workshop, <i>Issue Network Interventions: The Problem of Information Formats</i> . Cartagena, Colombia, October 2003. Cartographers: Pi Villanueva Reyes, Natasha Primo, Anriette Esterhuysen and Noortje Marres.		
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