



APrIGF 2020 Synthesis Document

Internet Governance for Good: Norms, Standards and Mechanisms

Purpose

1. The Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) Synthesis Document began as a pilot experiment at APrIGF 2015 Macau. Its continuation and evolution of process through to its 6th annual edition this year has established it as a key output of the APrIGF. The Synthesis Document aims to document issues important to all stakeholders concerned with Internet Governance in the Asia Pacific region and discussed at the annual APrIGF. This document has developed into one of the key innovations of the forum and has inspired other national and regional initiatives to develop their own processes.
2. The open and collaborative development of the Synthesis Document also aims to drive active participation in the Internet Governance movement, as well as project voices, views and thoughts in the Asia Pacific region as contributions to relevant local, national and global forums on Internet Governance.

Introduction

3. 2020 is a year that has brought the importance of the Internet into sharp focus. The resilience of Internet infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic is highlighted as a hallmark of strong multistakeholder cooperation by the security and technical community. Similarly our way-of-life, work, education, and social activities have all become dependent on the network of networks as many regions went under lockdown. The increased reliance on the Internet for our daily lives under COVID-19 has also highlighted the urgent need to address growing digital divides, cyber threats, and human rights violations online.
4. Against this backdrop, the APrIGF held its 2020 meeting in a fully virtual setting, leveraging the power of the Internet to enable even more participation from all corners of the world. This year, APrIGF's main theme was *Internet Governance for Good: Norms, Standards and Mechanisms*, under which there were four cross-cutting subthemes: 1) Cybersecurity, Safety and Trust; 2) Digital Inclusion, Gender Equality and Diversity; 3) Human Rights and Ethics; and 4) Innovation and Development.
5. The United Nations Internet Governance Forum globally is also undergoing a transformation with the guidance of the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. The APrIGF community hopes that this 2020 APrIGF Synthesis Document may help shape the evolution of the Internet Governance discourse and collaborative outputs.

Cybersecurity, Safety and Trust

6. Cybersecurity covers protection of both online and Internet infrastructure from innumerable cyberthreats that can cause harm to socio-economic activities, democratic processes and even human life. Disproportionate response to such cyberthreats may lead to human rights abuses and stifle innovation.
7. As the Internet is ubiquitous, every individual is entitled to feel safe in using the Internet to perform legitimate activities and transactions without the fear of loss of money, personal information, reputation or freedom. However, with the tremendous increase in human activities being mediated through digital platforms, surveys¹ are showing a large decline in trust in the Internet.
8. To combat the spread of misinformation and disinformation that leads to the erosion of online trust, there needs to be appropriate accountability and transparency measures. In particular, governments, big industry players, and the media play a major role in building online trust. Building online trust is not an easy process due to the unfamiliarity of digital technology among users. Thus, transparency is very important and every user should know how his or her data is used. The ability to hold technology platforms accountable is critical and will further empower users. Cyber safety and security awareness must be promoted as an effective tool to educate and have people become computer literate so that they can identify such threats online.
9. Furthermore, we can see that Internet and emerging technologies, including IoT and 5G are triggering increased calls for governments to take stronger action, both, defensively and offensively. Along with availability of new and emerging technologies and standards such as 5G and IoT, the risk of Internet fragmentation likewise increases. There are various types of fragmentation. When government policies such as the US's Tik Tok ban and Clean Net initiative constrain or impede the ability to freely connect to the Internet's resources, fragmentation is likely to occur. One type of fragmentation is institutional in nature where there is a fragmentation of approaches to Internet governance and regulation. Another type of fragmentation at the infrastructural layer can lead to "splintering" or breaking up of the single, interoperable Internet into islands of connectivity. In the case of 5G, network slicing may likely fragment the Internet. Thus, care is needed with new, emerging technologies so as not to disrupt the innovation cycle, but still ensure that the Internet remains open, global, and interoperable.
10. Strengthening cybersecurity requires that all stakeholders should understand the full range of current and future threats as well as how to counter them. Therefore it is necessary to identify tools and techniques that enhance the safety of online transactions and improve user privacy. One of the core components of cybersecurity is encryption. It is important to communicate especially to regulators and law enforcement that breaking encryption will result in increased security vulnerabilities for all. Thus, any lawful interception activities should be open and transparent, with independent judicial oversight. Developing economies should be given support to modernise and align their legislation and regulations so they can participate in international

¹ CIGI-Ipsos. 2019. "2019 CIGI-Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and Trust."
www.cigionline.org/internet-survey-2019

work to strengthen cybersecurity. Adopting open standards within critical infrastructure and business is also important for compliance and security.

11. Improvement in digital literacy and greater participation from digital citizens are prerequisites for strengthening the cybersecurity community. In this regard, technical capacity building in Internet basics and Internet governance is paramount. However, the Internet community continues to face challenges when it comes to participating in capacity building. The lack of time, and lack of support from employers or higher management were some of the challenges raised.
12. Cyb norms are critical to influence behaviours online, including expectations about State behaviour in cyberspace. While technical attribution can be helpful to deter future misbehaviours, accusations can also be used for political purposes. Attribution is one element of the cyber diplomacy toolkit that governments can wield albeit with care. There are different types of attribution, such as political, legal, and technical. Each type of attribution has its own challenges and requires different approaches. Maintaining trust and independence of the technical community - where sometimes attribution is discovered - is important. One suggestion was for a network of independent organisations to do attribution rather than individual States, which will release Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) from being the ones dealing with accusations.
13. The basis for a strong Internet community is collaboration. Technology is not, and should not be, the only panacea for building trust. Rather, bottom-up collaboration and cooperation amongst multistakeholder groups form the basic building blocks of trust. Through multistakeholder cooperation, users will be empowered to hold big platforms accountable, and seek greater transparency from governments. The Internet's resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic was also highlighted as a hallmark of strong cooperation in the technical and security community.
14. Some remaining questions for the future:
 - What methodologies and tools are needed to help people use the Internet and digital technology with confidence?
 - Which regulatory approaches can increase trust between users and platforms?
 - What are the roles of all stakeholders in building online trust?
 - What is the role of the media (in building online trust)?
 - How can cyb norms set expectations and foster responsible behaviours online?
 - How can attribution be managed in a way that deter misbehaviour online?
 - How can CERTs be protected from the political implications of accusations derived from technical attributions? Does this need to be regulated by International Law?

Digital Inclusion, Gender Equality and Diversity

15. To help achieve sustainable development as envisaged in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) programme, and repair the damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, democratic access and connectivity to ICTs need to be improved. This should be done within a framework of stronger norms and standards in the legal and economic spheres. Democratic access requires that all persons and communities should be given the opportunity to use the Internet to receive and impart information regardless of their socio-economic status, gender, age, disability, or beliefs. Affordable and reliable access and connectivity to devices must be provided – using a range of different approaches – equally to all sectors of the community, whether rural or urban, to all genders and sexual orientations, to persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples from underserved to unserved communities, marginalized communities, more recently established populations, or new immigrants and refugees.
16. Universal Acceptance (UA) is a fundamental requirement for a truly multilingual and digitally inclusive Internet. Asia Pacific is home to over 3000 languages as well as the next billion people to come online. Inclusion begins with being able to navigate the Internet in your native language. As engagement with UA deepens in terms of hard data research and technical implementation, it is important for the community to be more aware than ever of the initiative, mobilizing local players that can generate action for change. This includes civil society groups, businesses of all sizes, and governments at all levels. Only through increased adoption will we be able to overcome the gap that remains in this area.
17. A public private partnership (PPP) approach can be considered appropriate for promoting and implementing digital inclusion activities, especially where there is a need to build Internet infrastructure and supply devices to be connected to networks. Care must be taken to ensure that affordability for users does not become an issue when governments give way to a PPP. In rural communities, basic training on use of ICTs and Internet services is a priority activity as one of the main deliverables from PPP implementation of digital connectivity. The provision of interactive online services by government institutions, civil society organisations and the private sector is also an essential way to promote active and effective digital inclusion.
18. Norms and standards-making must reflect the diversity of individual experiences, cultures and legitimate developmental needs in all societies, encouraging people to create local content on the Internet in their own languages. Strong international efforts must be made to improve intercultural understanding and overcome misinformation and mistrust, in parallel with work at all levels aiming to close the digital divide at the technical and infrastructural level. Those setting norms and developing technical standards must link and importantly listen to the views and needs of all sectors including grassroots communities represented by their acknowledged leaders.
19. The APrIGF community believes it is important that all stakeholders consult and cooperate to ensure that ‘mainstream’ media apply policies and strategies for responsible fact-based reporting (and to develop such policies including strategies where they do not exist or are ineffective). All stakeholders should support efforts by national governments, civil society bodies and the technical community to counteract misinformation and so-called ‘hate speech’, and work with

social media companies to implement mechanisms that control and prevent such online behaviour.

20. Education programmes must be modernised to teach young people how to use the Internet for good, respecting human rights, and how to create content which reflects and supports the values of diversity and equity, and the need for social cohesion. These programmes must be available to all regardless of gender, with educational content adapted to different age groups and learning ability. Local content must also be considered for creation and promotion to attract users from relevant communities especially the rural or underprivileged communities where there is less use of digital services.
21. Efforts to develop such content need to take full account of the right of marginalised and vulnerable communities, and minority groups, to find on the Internet a safe space where they can create content that meets their needs in their languages.
22. The APrIGF community sees it as important that, in all countries, all sectors and stakeholders should contribute to the development and implementation of national policies for the provision of programmes and resources for education and training for information literacy and digital literacy and for the responsible exercise of these skills within the community. Such policies should be linked with national policies in other relevant areas such as universal access, cybersecurity and data privacy. They should make clear reference to relevant targets and indicators prescribed for national work toward the Sustainable Development Goals.
23. Information literacy and digital literacy should be understood as life skills essential for citizenship, to transact business, undertake research, access education, participate in government processes, to maintain health and protect the environment. The Internet community should collaborate with established information providers, especially library and education services, to ensure the most effective use of resources. Additionally, in communities where there is a national Internet governance initiative, this may have the role of promoting programmes for educational awareness and skills training..
24. All economies should consider which technical, organizational and policy approaches are required for affordable and reliable access for all; which methodologies and tools are required to make the Internet and digital technologies more accessible, inclusive and diverse. National policies should take account of the fact that many digital tools and applications allow individuals to tailor the Internet to their own personal needs, and where cost is a factor aggravating the digital divide, policies may provide resources as of right. Policies may also be designed to encourage and enable communities to develop innovative technical solutions and set up enterprises to meet their own needs.
25. Approaches may vary among countries, and international consultations could be a suitable mechanism to exchange information on examples of best practice which could be generalised.
26. A holistic approach should be taken to developing norms and standards, to transparency in the exchange of information, and to the development of education programmes. Such an approach

should be based on evidence derived from gathering of accurate and up-to-date social, economic and cultural data. Economies should ensure that they have reliable systems in place for the long-term storage and retrieval of digital data. International collaboration can help all economies and especially developing economies to protect their data against the effects of technological obsolescence, natural disasters and climate change. Respective national governments may consider development of digital government frameworks that will assist and encourage respective government institutions to promote interactive e-public services and other e-commerce activities.

27. Essential questions and propositions for further debate:

- In an increasingly fragmented world, preserving social cohesion requires tolerance not uniformity. Education programmes must instill respect for diversity and difference. What norms and standards should nations adopt to underpin equitable opportunity of using the Internet across socio-economic status, gender, age, disability, or beliefs?
- Respect for scientific evidence must underlie holistic and integrated policy formulation at national levels to promote digital inclusion. How do we ensure more evidence based policy formulation at national levels for digital inclusion?
- Leadership from UN agencies is required to promote understanding of the conclusions reached in 15 years of research and debate on issues of Internet Governance. What are the roles of all stakeholders in building a more inclusive and equitable internet?

Human Rights and Ethics

28. Human rights must be at the core when developing online applications and services as well as the design of regulatory approaches and normative frameworks governing the Internet. Ethics should guide the development of ICT infrastructure and applications, especially when they impact the rights and well-being of individuals.

29. Recognising that vulnerable groups such as women, gender and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons and refugees are targeted online, it is important that the interests of individuals and societies are placed at the centre of how the Internet is managed and regulated. This is essential for ensuring that rights are upheld and generate trust and responsible infrastructure management across the network of networks. Evidence of various violations gathered through Internet governance processes should form the basis for reviewing existing frameworks and practices towards enabling legal protections and the development and modernisation of laws and policies, as well as other regulatory approaches.

30. Meaningful access to the Internet is a necessary precondition for individuals to exercise and enjoy their human rights online and offline. In addition to fact checking initiatives, holistic strategies need to be put in place to tackle misinformation, especially premeditated campaigns targeting individuals and communities that are already vulnerable. Digital divides on the basis of gender,

disability, geography and economic conditions infringe the rights of individuals and communities: this requires urgent attention of states for ensuring universal affordable access. In particular, misinformation relating to the COVID-19 pandemic poses a significant risk to the safety and security as well as rights of all individuals.

31. Private sector entities, especially social media platforms, have been increasingly moderating our rights in the online spaces which have significant offline implications. It is imperative that UN guiding principles on business and human rights are applied to this industry requiring them to uphold human rights of all users. Shrinking space for digital rights is palpable especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where multiple initiatives that have sought to put in place technological solutions for management have severely compromised freedom of expression, privacy and the right to health of individuals. Multistakeholder processes at the national level are critical to surface and resolve these challenges, however collaboration has proven to be difficult.
32. Fundamental questions that must be resolved through multistakeholder action are:
 - How can policies, definitions and interpretations under national law focus on protecting digital rights?
 - How can international agreements on fundamental protection for all digital citizens be evolved?
 - What ethical codes, standards and best practices as well as regulatory approaches are needed to translate the concerns around human rights and ethics into implementable actions?
 - How can we ensure that multistakeholder processes are inclusive and that governments engage in open and inclusive engagements with all stakeholders, including civil society and the technical community?
 - How do we ensure privacy of all individuals is protected and concerns relating to security are addressed?
 - What remedies can be evolved to holistically tackle misinformation and disinformation?

Innovation and Development

33. It is an important period of time for humanity, which has been quite challenging because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There can be two different narratives with regards to innovation and development. The first narrative is of increased apprehension at the national levels to secure critical infrastructures. There is a higher perceived risk due to increased geopolitical tensions. In this narrative, we see State and non-State sponsored offensive behaviours that test capabilities, including the health sector, even during normal, non-emergency situations.
34. While some suggest the Internet to have an increasing role in conditioning societies, economies and political systems, there is a different narrative that was explored during the Innovation and

Development track of the APrIGF. In fact, APrIGF occurred virtually and successfully because of the COVID-19 pandemic and thanks to how the Internet enabled participants to be actively involved. In so many parts of the world, businesses and governments have relied on the Internet as never before, as so many people switched their work and studies to be performed from home. The Internet was described as the glue that is holding societies and economies together through this period, like nothing else can. Without the Internet, the impact of the pandemic on our lives would be very much worse. Hence, it is important that digital innovations and transformations arising from the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be utilized and further developed.

35. Technological innovation and the evolution of the Internet and its applications have facilitated the development of the digital economy and substantial advancements in all areas of human development, for example science, agriculture, health and education. This has largely been possible because of the permissionless innovation nature of the Internet. However, Internet-based technologies, applications and online services are now under a lot of pressure and scrutiny to deliver more development oriented and environmentally friendly solutions at scale. For these developments to have a positive impact, they require collaboration among various stakeholders to ensure the public interest is preserved.
36. New and emerging technologies, paired with the current state of geopolitics, increase the risk of Internet fragmentation, which could disrupt access to the Internet in a seamless manner and may lead to a loss in innovation, impeding further development. With these technologies continuously evolving, it is paramount for them to adhere to principles such as environmental protection, privacy and security by design, ethical/human rights issues, openness and collaboration, and adhere to these guidelines from design to growth. This is especially the case with large scale applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning, big data and the Internet of Things.
37. With regard to the Internet's environmental impact, there is an opportunity to activate the Internet governance community to participate positively on issues such as:
 - a) environmental data governance;
 - b) incentives for sharing data by public and private sectors as digital public goods;
 - c) collaborative environmental analytics (citizen science and open datasets);
 - d) AI-algorithm transparency for data integration and analytics for digital public goods;
 - e) dealing with misinformation and fake news about the environment;
 - f) e-waste and product lifecycle;
 - g) early warning systems, disaster recovery and emergency response, especially in the Pacific
38. In terms of increasing active participation within the IG ecosystem from various stakeholders, it has been observed that youths are providing substantive inputs during youth IG fora, however, there are opportunities to increase their level of participation at global/larger fora.

39. Some remaining questions for the future:

- How can we ensure that digital innovations and transformations, such as remote delivery of social services, online education, social change from the COVID-19 pandemic, continue to be utilized and further developed?
- How can the Internet (the Internet sector, but more importantly, the Internet community) have the most positive impact in the environment?
- How can we encourage and/or train youths to actively contribute at global/larger IG fora?
- How can we ensure that the Internet principle of openness, as well as ethical codes respectful of human rights and trusted technical standards, become the core principles for innovation and are referred to in any laws and regulations?
- How can best practices help build bridges and consensus for technological development aligned with human development?
- How can the IG ecosystem ensure open participation and meaningful engagement of all stakeholders as the digital transformation quickly progresses?

Way forward

40. Looking ahead, there are still open questions for the future relating to all themes. Many of these questions touch on interdependencies and solutions cannot be reached within thematic silos. The need to promote efforts that bring together different disciplines and find common, holistic approaches is clear in our discussions.
41. COVID19 has impacted all that we have done this year, and remains a consideration for the foreseeable future, but the Internet remains the crucial tool that allows us to continue to move our society forwards. We need to develop solutions to address the many remaining questions under Cybersecurity, Safety and Trust; explore ideas to further Digital Inclusion, Gender Equality and Diversity; safeguard Human Rights and Ethics; and keep investing in Innovation and Development towards the Sustainable Development Goals. For this, we need multistakeholder, multisectoral, and multidisciplinary cooperation.
42. Taking valuable lessons learned in how the global community innovated during pandemic lockdowns and restrictions makes it all the more important that the APrIGF community contributes to and advances Internet Governance for Good, building towards norms, standards and mechanisms that achieve greater digital cooperation and evolves Internet Governance discourse into actions with measurable impact that advance a truly equitable Internet for all.

Appendix I

The 2020 Synthesis Document is drafted, synthesized and published by the 2020 Drafting Committee <https://www.aprigrf.asia/committees.html#draftingcommittee> with the assistance of the APrIGF Secretariat.

Public input was sought during Public Input period I (10-19 September), APrIGF conference Townhall sessions (29-30 September) and Public Input period II (19-26 October)

Comments were collected on the platform: <https://comment.aprigrf.asia> as well as through the transcripts from the Townhall sessions (<http://igf.asia/townhall1> , <http://igf.asia/townhall2>).

Appendix II

The following sessions were included under the Cybersecurity, Safety and Trust subtheme:

- Not just 0s and 1s : discussing the increasing role of technology in ‘women’s safety’ [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/29b7685fed>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/3j7vHUB>]
- Breaking Encryption: Is it the Panacea for addressing security issue online? [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/1fbada6c65>, Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/35f3zdc>]
- Combating Live Streaming of Online Child Abuse Content [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/e88f4dec2f>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/3kaNxYn>]
- Do cybernorms help or hinder incident response activities? [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/483c0571a4>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/355NczK>]

The following sessions were included under the Innovation and Development subtheme:

- The Single, Global Internet – A Technical Discussion [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/141ce75654>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/35e9Upc>]
- The Internet’s Environmental Impact: an action-oriented dialogue [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/2f5f7539c4>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/2T5GpjR>]
- Learn from Home During COVID-19 [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/e75340601e>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/2FGd50r>]

The following sessions were included under the Human Rights and Ethics subtheme:

- Jack and the Tech Giants: Freedom of Expression and Information in the Tech Era [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/1a292ed512>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/3k9CL4o>]
- Promoting internet and human rights: Challenges in Establishing Multistakeholder Collaborations [<https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/9d7f519016>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/2HbFKuX>]
- The digital rights landscape in Asia Pacific after COVID-19 [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/ba3c359cfe>. Transcript: <https://iqf.asia/3ja7mxE>]

The following sessions were included under the Digital Inclusion, Gender Equality and Diversity subtheme:

- Accessible digital information, training and libraries: Reducing discrimination for persons with disability [<https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/1281c1adf9>. Transcript: <https://igf.asia/31g846c>]
- Access to information: a holistic approach to meaningful digital inclusion [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/b5f46a3acd>. Transcript: <https://igf.asia/31jGm8G>]
- New approaches to technical capacity building: an action-oriented dialogue [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/c324f9fee>. Transcript: <https://igf.asia/2T3CUdV>]
- Bridging the digital gender divide: Learnings from the digital gender gap audit scorecard [Details: <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-view/8d35e696a8>. Transcript: <https://igf.asia/3lVVuB5>]