Internet Governance Forum - IGF2018
Paris Messages

During the Internet Governance Forum 2017, a number of key messages (the so-called "Geneva Messages") were elaborated to highlight the outcomes of the Summit and to pave the way for the following IGFs. They were based on the conclusions of each of the main sessions and of the two high-level thematic sessions.

Following the spirit of the Geneva Messages, **the following Paris Messages are presented as non-binding principles.** They synthesize the key outcomes of the two high level thematic sessions ("The new challenges of the Internet governance" and "Strengthening the Internet governance and the IGF"), the 8 main sessions and the 71 workshops planned for IGF 2018. **The IGF 2018 Paris Messages were elaborated through a bottom-up approach with the participation of more than a hundred volunteer students, the French civil society and the French technical community,** represented by AFNIC, the French Digital Council (CNNum), Renaissance Numérique and Internet Society France (ISOC France).

WHEREAS: Digital is a set of sciences and technologies, its actors and practices have radically changed how our democracies, societies and economies work. **Digital transformation represents a vector of progress for humanity and must remain at the service of humankind**. Consequently, digital transformations must serve the People, protect their fundamental human rights, ensure social progress, support freedom, equality, solidarity and ensure the preservation of the environment. **Internet is a common good for every citizen around the world**. Therefore, the principles of a neutral, open and non-centralized Internet must guide digital transformation.

IGF 2018 Themes

Emerging technologies

Media & content

Cybersecurity, trust & privacy

Evolution of Internet governance

Development, innovation & economic issues

Human rights, gender & youth

Technical & operational topics

Digital inclusion & accessibility

IGF 2018 THEMES

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Messages

Digital technologies and research are key to drive innovation, unlock economic growth and empower citizens.

Emerging technologies have a growing impact on everyday life, resulting in rising concerns. There is a unique opportunity to regulate while technologies are still brimming and a necessity for a clear ethical-based framework with the objective of fostering trust in innovation. Such a framework could only be established through the active cooperation of all stakeholders.

Although Artificial Intelligence (AI) could foster major advancements with regard to accessibility, it raises questions on the inclusion of ethical principles in algorithms. Its implementation should be limited, supervised, human-centered and sometimes banned in the most sensitive areas, such as diplomacy. The French privacy regulator (CNIL), in its report « How can humans keep the upper hand? », takes the first steps towards adequate regulation, particularly by promoting transparency and accountability. The creation by the OECD of an observatory for public policies based on AI should be monitored carefully.

The use of blockchain technology to create a new form of auditable public ledger has enabled evolutions in the business and legal fields. Nonetheless, it is raising concerns about its environmental and economic costs - especially regarding high energy consumption issues - as well as the potential clash between a system-based on imperishable data and the recent E.U. General Data Protection Regulation.

MEDIA & CONTENT

Messages

This year, the Internet community touched upon the information disorders issues, which took a significant part in the debate on media and content. **Specific focuses were given to potential risks of election meddling and political aggression around the world**.

Regulation is important but cannot be the only solution. It is necessary to control the spread of misinformation without interfering with the freedom of speech and free flow of ideas.

Getting to a tangible, workable, agreed upon definition of "fake news" is difficult but necessary to regulate the issue. More importantly, information disorders represent much more than "fake news".

Information disorders issues are also considered as an economic issue. The "clicks economy", for instance, encourages the dissemination of this type of content.

The importance of local action and community work was emphasized as a solution to this issue, particularly in the implementation of both regulation and self-regulation of media and content.

Various panels pointed out the lack of feedback and evaluation for self-regulation methods, and stressed the importance of research to measure the effectiveness of such tools.

The need for education has been at the heart of these proposals. The necessity of digital literacy and digital citizenship education for citizens, judicial authorities and policy makers was made clear by the participants.

Users should be empowered to face cyber crimes, in particular hate speech.

Facing information disorders is also a technical issue. It is important to coordinate efforts on algorithmic development to detect biases and prevent them. To that end, platforms' transparency and fairness should be encouraged.

Preserving independent media remains a huge issue in the community, with a new dimension concerning information disorders issues. It was pointed out the necessity to allow their economic viability and diversity, in particular in the global South.

Overall, all debates promoted an active multi-stakeholder collaboration in this field.

CYBERSECURITY, TRUST & PRIVACY

Messages

Seizing digital opportunities. As our societies become more and more digitized, the lack of trust and security in cyberspace can have detrimental effects on the opportunities brought forward by the digital revolution. It is the shared responsibility of a wide range of stakeholders, in their respective roles, to provide a safe and secure environment online, while respecting human rights, including the right to privacy.

Finding the right balance between privacy and security. To create the Internet of Trust, there was a global recognition that the right balance needs to be found between security and privacy issues. We also need to be aware of the potential unintended consequences of actions taken to improve cybersecurity.

Protecting individuals online. Everyone should see their rights, including their right to privacy, respected online and offline. Each person should have the right to control the use of their personal data and this data should be protected. All forms of cybercrime need to be fought, including terrorist and criminal misuses of the Internet.

Tackling online hate speech. As hate speech counters democratic dialog in the digital age, the rise of clearer rules regarding online hate speech is expected, but will not work without the empowerment of users that have to be involved in order to provide alternatives to hate speech for non illegal - but hurtful purposes. Reinforcing a democratic dialog led by educated users in the cyberspace is essential to ensure the Internet of Trust.

Increasing the general level of digital security. Overall security and global resilience are only as strong as their weakest link. There is a need to promote high standards for cybersecurity, develop global best practices, including on the security of connected devices and the protection of critical infrastructures.

Ensuring the stability of cyberspace. Although international law is applicable to cyberspace, there is a need for developing greater clarity and common understanding on how it applies. States should play an active role in promoting a safe, stable and open cyberspace and preventing hack-back operations by non-State actors. The issue of State accountability in cyberspace needs to be addressed.

Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach, developing trust and cooperation, raising awareness and educating. Cybersecurity is a shared responsibility that requires active contribution from all stakeholders. Building trust among stakeholders requires increased transparency, exchange of information and concrete cooperation initiatives. There is an urgent need for greater digital literacy. People should be provided with the necessary knowledge and tools to fully benefit from the Internet.

Regulating, when necessary, but smartly. Although regulatory approaches might be necessary, all actors need to be consulted and included; innovation should be fostered and not bridled.

EVOLUTION OF INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Messages

The multi-stakeholder approach is vital to take into account the massive impact that Internet has on everyone. This multi-stakeholder approach, as illustrated by the IGF, must be nurtured by newcomers and include new players. Those who are impacted by or have impact on the Internet are not, for the vast majority of them, participating to the IGF. This has to be taken into account. Means to facilitate the participation, as well as a better outreach of the IGF work, are needed. Emerging and developing countries' stakeholders are too few, as well as, SMEs globally.

While global participation is of paramount importance, the respective roles of each stakeholder, and the equal footing treatment, is equally important. This means that no player, in the multi-stakeholder approach, should take unilateral decisions impacting all the others. This applies to all stakeholders, as, nowadays, not only governments have sufficient power to take unilateral decisions over the Internet.

The Internet governance, through this multi-stakeholder approach, must take into account the need to operationalize the results of broad consensuses reached among all stakeholders. In other words, regulations and laws are good tools if they arise from a multi-stakeholder discussion and reflect consensuses reached. Commonly defined solutions can be put into effect by good regulations.

Participants are confident that the local approach of multi-stakeholderism is the most concrete and result-oriented one. This has been validated by the progress observed locally through national and regional initiatives. If some concerns or problems need global response, different ways of solving problems, equally efficient, can only be designed at a local level.

DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION & ECONOMIC ISSUES

Messages

Internet and the digitization of the economy have brought both immense opportunities and great challenges to our societies. Facing those challenges while reaping the benefits of this revolution will require an ethical and human-centric approach: human beings should always come before the machine.

Internet users should be entitled to specific digital rights. Likewise, it is critical to acknowledge that those who make and develop ICTs (governments, companies, developers) should be held to specific responsibilities. As a prerequisite to empowering people through ICTs, access to a fair and functional internet should be universally guaranteed. Internet access is - and will be - the first and foremost condition for human development tomorrow.

Technology will change the valued skills on the job market. Digital transformations must be undertaken with respect for the rights and freedoms of workers and in accordance with social principles. In the digital age, effective employment protection and the right to freedom of association must be guaranteed. Employees should also have a right to disconnect. In the coming decades, employees should be supported throughout the digital revolution in the job market. As automation will increasingly replace jobs, workers should be given the opportunity to readapt, be trained and accompanied from one job to another. The youth should be of particular attention in this digital training process, as it will benefit the most from it. They should have the right to a digital education enabling their self-determination.

There was a broad consensus on the fact that new challenges arise for competition policy and for competition authorities in the digital economy. Indeed, in the age of online platforms, competition issues are rendered more complex, especially regarding their characteristics (e. g. rapidity, multi-sided markets, network effects, economies of scale, asymmetry of information for users and potential abuse of dominant position). Finally, digital markets are characterised by high rates of investment and innovation, which lead to a rapid technological progress in the sector and to increased disruptive innovation.

Economic actors of the digital transformation (e.g. employers and developers) should recognize the need for an ethics-driven approach regarding data, artificial intelligence and algorithms. Principles of transparency, accountability and non-discrimination should guide the implementation of such policies. Nonetheless, regulators and governments should bear in mind that excessive regulation may stifle innovation and development. Achieving the right balance will be essential to build trust and fairness in our digital societies.

Regulation should adapt to these new objectives and should serve both people and businesses. Therefore, it is crucial that new digital regulation be created, discussed and implemented by all stakeholders: civil society, public and private sectors worldwide.

HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER & YOUTH

Messages

Human rights should be the same online and offline. Indeed, all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. These principles must be respected, protected and fulfilled in the online environment. Local solutions are fundamental to realize them. We must remain attentive to geographical, social-economic and cultural particularities of each region. Digital transformation should operate in conformity with human values and in particular fairness, so as to enhance individuals' physical and mental health. Furthermore, some digital fundamental rights are of paramount importance in the Internet environment, ranging from the principle of non-discrimination -- because existing inequalities may be exacerbated, especially through AI--, freedom of expression and information, to the right of privacy. Civil society, governments and the private sector should all be involved in the protection of human rights.

Promoting gender equality and women participation. Women and girls account for half of the world's population. The digital revolution should be a tool for empowerment and emancipation, promote equal social, economic and professional opportunities for women and men from all nations through a bottom-up and multi-stakeholder approach. Structural barriers do affect women in terms of technology and Internet. If these inequalities are not rapidly addressed, an increase in connectivity will only widen existing gender gaps. Therefore, it is essential that policy-makers consider investments in free Wi-Fi access, extensive price reductions for IT devices and further research on the content relevance for specific target groups. Finally, reducing gender imbalances includes not only providing access to the Internet, but also training and education, allowing for equal participation in decision-making processes. We need inclusive policies to take humanity to a standardized level of digital literacy and to achieve an interconnected future.

Protecting vulnerable groups (children, refugees, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ community). Internet is a vital tool for social integration and should be inclusive. Particular attention must be paid to children, people with disabilities, the elderly, indigenous people, refugees and rural communities. For children, Internet does not only represent new opportunities, it also exposes them to numerous dangers, including cyberbullying, violent radicalization, pornography, and pedophilia. Therefore, education and prevention must be core elements of the future. Last but not least, we need a better participation of young people in the IGF.

The IGF, as a multi-stakeholder and inclusive process, was broadly supported for the importance of human rights as a direct link to gender, youth and equality. Despite some progress made in the past years, it appears necessary for many participants to take concrete actions in order to uphold human rights in the digital realm, gender equality and protection of vulnerable persons.

TECHNICAL & OPERATIONAL TOPICS

Messages

As a result of its evolution in the past 30 years, the future Internet should be able to adapt and support technological trends and upcoming innovations that will redefine its architecture.

All these technological changes imply the evolution of its governance models and multi stakeholder approach, especially in order to welcome multilingualism and a unique identification of technical resources.

The adoption and implementation of the IPv6 protocol naturally involve all stakeholders from the international community. Therefore the coconstruction approach is appropriate to detect the striking points and come up with solutions emanating from the community in order to foster the transition to IPv6, i.e. a common, key objective.

The support of new services based on emerging technologies such as IOT or blockchains induces an increase of infrastructure capacity and the reinforcement of encryption mechanism of standards evolution to ensure better security, interoperability and accountability.

Enforcing net neutrality is crucial to preserve an environment open to innovation both on networks and online. It is a core issue and a challenge for the future.

During the debates a consensus was reached on the fact that those principles require a close assessment of operators' behavior. In this perspective, the creation of measurement services by stakeholders could help to provide transparency and preserve net neutrality.

Beyond the way net neutrality is enforced today, the preservation of an open internet requires to extend the scope of a free choice principle to platforms and devices. However it should not be too restrictive nor precise to fully include innovation capacities.

DIGITAL INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

Messages

Accessibility and inclusion are two major issues in the development of the Internet. If we do not address them, we could exclude billions of humans from this progress, probably those who need it most.

This goal is inseparable from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG7, SDG8, SGD9 and SDG17.

Almost half of the world's population is still excluded from Internet access for technical, economic or political reasons.

If the major operators cannot or do not wish to guarantee this accessibility to all, the States will have to mobilize local communities and rely on them. These communities can help assess the quality of Internet access through crowdsourcing. They will also be able to deploy local and frugal solutions.

This ambition must be done in the respect of net neutrality, which, in the long term, guarantees this free access for all. It must remain at the service of active citizenship, human rights and capacity development.

In addition, nearly a billion people suffer from a disease or disability that prevents them from benefiting from the Internet. **Accessibility is therefore a priority issue. This effort concerns all digital communities and requires shared standards, such as those prepared by the W3 Consortium. It also requires an unprecedented effort from universities to train and educate developers. And we may need institutions to ensure the follow-up**.

At the same time, the rapid increase in interactive response technologies used to combat disabilities creates numerous security and privacy challenges that can no longer be ignored.

Finally, promising first results allow us to hope that the use of artificial intelligence will offer many opportunities to improve digital accessibility.