

# Internet Governance BAROMETER (JULY-AUGUST 2017)

IG Barometer indicates the presence of specific IG issues in the public policy debate in comparison to the previous month

## Global IG architecture



During a speech following the G20 summit, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull urged Internet companies to act more quickly against online extremism and to solve the 'problem' of encrypted content.[\[1\]](#) Britain's Home Secretary Amber Rudd has reiterated a call for Internet companies to take 'real action' in the fight against extremist content.[\[2\]](#)

## Sustainable development



The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), held on 10–19 July in New York,[\[1\]](#) discussed, among others, the role of digital technologies in achieving sustainable development. An analysis of four years of HLPF reports,[\[2\]](#) conducted by DiploFoundation, shows that data is becoming an increasingly central element in discussions around sustainable development.

## Security



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is said to be planning to close the Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues within the State Department,[\[1\]](#) a move that is criticised by US experts as weakening the USA's leadership position in global negotiations on cyberspace. At the same time, Ambassador Christopher Painter, who had served as coordinator for cyber issues since 2011, left the position at the end of July.[\[2\]](#) President Trump issued a decision elevating the US Cyber Command to the status of Unified Combatant Command, thus making it a stand-alone operational arm of the US army.[\[3\]](#)

## E-commerce and Internet economy



The Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), Maciej Szpunar, has issued another non-binding opinion[\[1\]](#) in which he classifies Uber as a transportation company. The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in South Africa ruled that Uber drivers are subject to Uber's control, and, as such, are employees.[\[2\]](#) Finance ministers of France and Germany have submitted a joint proposal to the European Commission about taxing the sharing economy,[\[3\]](#) while South Korea has announced the reduction of tax-deduction benefits for investments in automation.[\[4\]](#) In France, a court has ruled that Google is not liable for tax.[\[5\]](#)

## Digital rights



The Supreme Court of India has ruled that the right to privacy is a fundamental right,[\[1\]](#) in a judgment that comes in the context of the Indian government seeking to roll out a biometric database (Aadhaar) linking personal details with iris scans and fingerprints. China has established new regulations for the 'auditing' of online content, to ensure that they 'adhere to 'core socialist values', as part of a new campaign to control social discourse online.[\[2\]](#) Continuing the strong debate about the right to be forgotten, France has referred the CNIL (the French data protection authority) vs Google (Alphabet) case to the CJEU to decide, whether Google has to remove web search results globally.[\[3\]](#)

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## Jurisdiction and legal issues



An Internet Court has been opened in China to deal only with Internet-related cases; it conducts its proceedings via digital tools.[↗](#)

In a dispute that started in 2012 as part of a cybersquatting case, the US Supreme Court is now asked to invalidate the Google trademark.[↗](#) The petition argued that 'there is no single word other than google that conveys the action of searching the Internet using any search engine'.[↗](#)

## Infrastructure



ICANN's new Empowered Community exercised its power for the first time by approving a change to ICANN's fundamental bylaws.[↗](#) An Independent Review Panel has recommended that the ICANN Board re-evaluates Amazon's application for .amazon.[↗](#) IPv6 became a full Internet Standard, with the publication of RFC 8200,[↗](#) by the IETF.

Russia passed an amendment banning VPNs and proxy services that allow users to access banned websites.[↗](#) In China, telecommunications companies have been ordered to block access to private VPNs by February 2018.[↗](#) Somalia has undergone an Internet outage caused by damage to an undersea fibre-optic cable.[↗](#) Google will roll out free wi-fi hotspots across hundreds of venues in Indonesia.[↗](#) In the USA, the FCC announced that it would begin an auction in 2018 to provide nearly \$2 billion over 10 years to expand high-speed Internet access in rural areas.[↗](#)

## Net neutrality



In the USA, debates continue around the FCC's plans to roll back the 2015 net neutrality rules. On 12 July, major Internet companies took part in a massive online 'day of action' in support of the US net neutrality rules.[↗](#) David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have raised concerns over the FCC's plans, 'which may significantly roll back protections for net neutrality and unduly interfere with freedom of expression online in the United States'.[↗](#) In India, the Telecom Regulatory Authority announced an open house discussion on its Consultation Paper on Net Neutrality.[↗](#)

## New technologies (IoT, AI, etc.)



The State Council in China has released an AI development plan, intended to contribute to making China the world leader in AI by 2030.[↗](#) Taiwan is planning a \$527 million investment in the development of AI.[↗](#)

IEEE has announced the launch of a project for the creation of a standard for a personal data AI agent.[↗](#) Amazon has launched a new service that uses AI to help identify and protect sensitive data stored in Amazon Web Services.[↗](#) Representatives of over 100 companies working in the field of AI and robotics have sent an open letter to the UN expressing concerns over developments in the field of autonomous weapons.[↗](#) Four US senators have proposed a bill that, if adopted, will impose certain cybersecurity requirements for technology companies that sell IoT devices to the US federal government.[↗](#)

The UK government has announced plans to introduce new rules that would require drones to be registered, and users to sit safety awareness tests.[↗](#)