

Internet Governance BAROMETER (JUNE 2017)

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

Global IG architecture



The UK, France, and Australia called for more regulation on the Internet. The British Prime Minister called for new rules to deprive extremists of their safe spaces online; the Australian Prime Minister called for weakening strong encryption; the UK and France launched a joint campaign to combat terrorist content.

Sustainable development



ICTs and the Internet hold the key to sustainable development, and contribute to every area of development. The annual WSIS Forum tackled many aspects related to the sustainable development goals (SDGs), highlighting projects and initiatives that are working to attain the goals.

Security



In its latest meeting, the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) did not reach consensus on a final report. While other UN GGE reports will remain relevant and applicable, this has raised questions about the future of the group.

Google proposed a new framework that would allow governments to request digital evidence for law enforcement investigations directly from Internet companies.

The Council of the European Union launched an initiative to develop a Cyber Diplomatic Toolbox – a framework for joint diplomatic response of the EU to deter cyber-attacks and respond to cyber-threats.

The personal data of almost 200 million US citizens was leaked and uploaded to an Amazon cloud server, available to anyone with a direct link.

A new EU proposal, related to the respect for private life and the protection of personal data in electronic communications, may oblige service providers to offer end-to-end encryption to users at all times, and may forbid the use of backdoors. Amendments are likely to be proposed.

E-commerce and Internet economy



A New York judge ruled that former Uber drivers are eligible for unemployment benefits.

China adopted guidelines for the sharing economy – a booming sector which is expected to account for around one-tenth of the country's GDP by 2020. The European Parliament issued clearer guidelines on the collaborative economy, with the intention of clarifying open issues.

After months of negotiations, Indonesia and Google reached a tax settlement for 2016.

Digital rights



The Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of the right to freedom of opinion and expression published his annual report, examining the role of states in undermining freedom of expression online and other implications for online rights. The report also includes recommendations for states and private actors.

Ethiopia blocked access to the Internet across the country to counter the risk of national exam papers leaking online. The shutdown was meant to prevent a repeat of the 2016 leak of exam questions.

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Jurisdiction and legal issues



The Court of Appeals in Berlin, Germany, ruled that parents of a 15-year-old girl who was killed by a train in 2012, have no right to access her Facebook account. In 2015, Berlin's regional court ruled in favour of the parents, arguing that the contents of the girl's account could be seen as letters and diaries which 'can be inherited regardless of their content'. The Appeals court overturned that decision, ruling in favour of Facebook, stating that 'a contract existed between the girl and the social media company and that it ended with her death'.

Infrastructure



Chinese scientists reported successful quantum satellite communication tests between two points 1200 km distant from each other. In the coming years, the highly secure nature of quantum communication could become an alternative to current communication channels.

Airlines are expected to have better Internet connections on board their flights, after Viasat launched its new satellite. Viasat-2 will operate above the Americas and Atlantic Ocean.

Six of the top 10 countries leading in IPv6 adoption are European countries, Akamai's First Quarter 2017 State of the Internet report shows. Deployment is also increasing globally, the Internet Society reports.

Net neutrality



In the USA, net neutrality supporters are planning an online protest on 12 July to advocate against the plans of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to roll back net neutrality rules. The 'Internet-wide day of action to save net neutrality' will involve major Internet companies such as Amazon, Mozilla, and Reddit, as well as organisations such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the World Wide Web Foundation, and Public Knowledge.

New technologies (IoT, AI, etc.)



Researchers from OpenAI and DeepMind have been working on an artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm that learns from human feedback, as a way to make AI safer. Since problems associated with the concept of reinforcement learning can be dangerous, the proposed method would rely considerably on human feedback. Meanwhile, a group of UK-based researchers from the Alan Turing Institute have argued that current regulations are not sufficient to address issues such as transparency and accountability; new guidelines are needed.

The drone market is growing steadily. In the EU, public-private partnership SESAR JU, which coordinates research on air traffic management, has published the 'U-space' blueprint to make the use of drones in low-level airspace safe, secure, and environmentally friendly. In the USA, the White House is meeting representatives of the tech industry to discuss ways in which the government can support advancements in drones and other new technologies.