



IGF DAILY

REPORTING DAILY FROM THE 12th INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY 0

Although the 12th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) meeting – the annual gathering for digital policy practitioners, which this year is taking place in Geneva – officially kick-starts today, Day 0 was packed with discussions. From cybersecurity and digital rights, to discussions on Microsoft's Digital Geneva Convention, we recap what was said.

Cybersecurity: Overcoming silos, respecting human rights

There has been virtually no IGF without a debate on cybersecurity. It comes as no surprise: cyber-attacks are one of the biggest concerns for governments, the industry, and end-users. We all want to use the Internet safely and securely, we want authorities to keep criminals off the Internet, and we want our rights to be respected while stakeholders endeavour to keep us safe.

One concern is that conversations on security and human rights tend to happen in silos. This is something that needs to change. There also needs to be a better understanding about the needs and interests of stakeholders. For example, security is a legitimate concern for governments, and should be understood as such, as long as the principles of proportionality, accountability, and transparency are respected. [↗](#)

There is a growing understanding that security and human rights are complementary and need to be mutually reinforcing. This understanding, however, is constantly being challenged in areas

such as migration and terrorism. Cybersecurity is sometimes used as an excuse to create exceptions to the protection of human rights, and to weaken encryption and introduce backdoors to technology products.

Developing cyber-norms: A bumpy ride?

Over the past year, some initiatives did not achieve the hoped-for results. The fifth UN Group of Governmental Experts (on Developments in the field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security – or the so-called UN GGE) ended without reaching consensus on a final report. The Global Conference on Cyberspace failed to produce a final consensus-based declaration. [↗](#) Experts believe that in light of these developments, discussing treaties on cybersecurity (such as Microsoft's proposal for a Digital Geneva Convention) could be premature. [↗](#)

When it comes to the protection of the public core of the Internet, threats come not only from potentially harming states' behaviour, but also from individuals' choices and even errors in the technical configuration of systems. The Call to Protect the Public Core of the Internet, issued by the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace, is viewed as a positive step in identifying the risks and how they could be tackled. While it has the potential to shape future discussions on cyber norms, experts believe it needs to address the issue of inclusion. [↗](#)

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One of the Art@IGF's exhibition stations being set up ahead of the opening today. [More on page 4.](#) [↗](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD



While the IGF is unfolding in Geneva, two digital policy issues have been gaining their fair share of attention. In the USA, the Federal Communications Commission has voted to repeal the net neutrality rules (in place since 2015), sparking concerns around the world. [↗](#)

At the 11th Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which took place earlier this month in Buenos Aires, governments did not agree to a change in the existing e-commerce mandate. [↗](#)

For more updates, visit the *GIP Digital Watch* observatory. [↗](#)

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The framework for discussions on cybernorms is shaped by often contradictory motivations of states. On the one hand, they want operational flexibility and the freedom to act when they deem necessary; on the other hand, they want other states to be constrained in their use of cyber-tools. This contradiction could remain the underlying challenge in the debate on cybersecurity and international law.[↗](#)

The IGF could play a role in strengthening cooperation, by facilitating discussions at annual meetings, and through its intersessional activities that are carried out between one IGF and the next. The IGF could also create broader awareness of the different initiatives and processes in these fields. It could inform such processes, such as by linking its Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity with the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise.[↗](#)

Capacity development: Of summer schools and observatories

Schools on Internet governance (SIGs) are becoming popular. Some schools are regional, such as the European Summer School on Internet Governance and the Asia Pacific School on Internet Governance. Others have a national focus, like those in Armenia and Brazil.

What do the schools do? Schools help fellows familiarise themselves with the Internet governance ecosystem, while empowering them to be the drivers of change at national level.[↗](#) Given the differences and similarities between the schools, one idea was to introduce standardisation in their curricula.[↗](#) Other suggestions relate to academic aspects, funding and sustainability, and creation of a Dynamic Coalition on Schools of Internet Governance.[↗](#)

Beyond SIGs, Internet governance observatories are also an important capacity development tool, as they facilitate access to information related to digital policy and enable more informed policy-making. The Global Internet Policy Observatory (GIPO), initiated in 2012 by the European Commission, is one such tool.[↗](#) The Geneva Internet Platform's *Digital Watch* observatory, set up in partnership with the Internet Society, is another.

Human rights intersecting with other areas

In 2012, the UN Human Rights Council declared that the same rights which people have offline must also be protected online.[↗](#) Since then, this has been a recurrent message, including at the IGF.

Human rights intersect with many other areas. Take the registration of domain names, for example. Although it might be seen as a purely technical issue, it carries privacy implications such as those concerning the personal data of registrants.[↗](#)



REPORTING FROM THE IGF: WHAT TO EXPECT

This year's IGF is packed with sessions (over 200) – including main and high-level sessions – dozens of workshops running in parallel, Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) and Best Practice Forums (BPFs) presenting their work, and Open Forums and sessions dedicated to newcomers. The complex schedule allows participants to focus on the topics they are interested in. But it is also challenging: Parallel sessions make it difficult to follow and absorb the vast amount of information and data shared.

This week, the *GIP Digital Watch* observatory is providing just-in-time reporting to help IGF participants and the broader Internet governance community address these challenges. The initiative is supported by the IGF Secretariat, ICANN, the Internet Society, and DiploFoundation.

Reports from IGF sessions are available within hours of the end of each session on our dedicated page – dig.watch/igf2017 – together with analysis, data mining, and visualisations that summarise the main themes. In addition, our IGF Daily newsletter (the one you are reading is the first issue) will be available online and at the Palais des Nations every day this week. We will publish a final report, presenting a thematic analysis of the discussions, next week.

Internet intermediaries have an important role to play. They need to be transparent as to how they handle personal data. They also have responsibilities relating to governmental requests for personal data or content control policies that may affect freedom of expression.[↗](#)

Gender issues and equal opportunities

Gender issues are attracting more and more attention. Many initiatives focus on fostering the participation of women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) communities in Internet governance processes.

What about education and jobs? More needs to be done to ensure that these communities have equal opportunities in the technology field.[↗](#)

The protection of children online is another recurrent issue. Yesterday's discussions tackled two aspects: privacy and security implications linked to online services' terms and conditions, and a new initiative in the global fight against child sexual abuse material.

Children and youth often do not realise what they are signing up to when using online services such as social media. Given the implications, they need to understand the terms and conditions of such services.

What can be done to help them make more informed choices? Potential solutions proposed included the use of short videos, animations, cartoons, and games to explain the terms, and employing machine learning tools to automatically simplify and present them in a user-friendly way.[↗](#)

Law enforcement and other actors have increased their efforts in the fight against child sexual abuse material. A new project by ECPAT International and INTERPOL is the European Commission-funded project 'International Child Sexual Exploitation Database (ICSE) Connectivity and Awareness Raising Enhancements – I-CARE'. The project analyses CSAM data internationally registered in the ICSE database at INTERPOL, and will develop a set of global indicators to support this identification.[↗](#)

WHAT'S NEW AT THIS YEAR'S INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM?

At a quick glance, IGF meetings don't seem to differ much from one year to another. But if you look closely at this year's programme, you will notice quite a few differences.

Main sessions complemented by high-level sessions

Main sessions have been part of IGF meetings since the beginning of the IGF process, in 2006. They are organised by members of the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), with input from the broader IGF community. This year, the main sessions will include important timely discussion topics: multistakeholder cooperation in addressing Internet disruptions, encryption, and data flows; cybersecurity for sustainable development and peace; gender inclusion and the future of the Internet; and digital transformation and its socio-economic and labour impacts.

Main sessions this year are complemented by high-level thematic sessions. Proposed and developed by Switzerland, as the IGF host country, these sessions will bring together high-level representatives of various entities in the Internet governance ecosystem, for discussions on two themes: 'Shaping our future digital global governance' and 'Impact of digitalization on politics, public trust and democracy'.

The key outcomes of the main session and high-level sessions will be summarised in **messages**, to be published on the IGF website.

Presenting intersessional work

When it comes to the IGF intersessional work, there are a few novelties as well. One new BPF, on local content, is presenting its outcome document this week, joining two other BPFs that are continuing their work from previous years (BFFs on cybersecurity, and gender and access). In addition, three new DCs have emerged over the past year – Trade and the Internet, Publicness, and Blockchain technologies – and they meet this week to present their work, together with other coalitions.

Digital Geneva and the data track

The IGF is a result of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), whose first phase, back in 2003, was held in Geneva. It was then discussions started on the concept of Internet governance, and two years later, the UN Secretary General was mandated to convene the IGF.

Having the forum hosted in Geneva this year means not only going back to the place where it all started, but also going to a place which is home to many international and intergovernmental organisations whose work is relevant for Internet governance and digital policy (such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the WTO, and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)). Many of these organisations will host Open Forums at the IGF to showcase their work on digital policy issues and to interact with other Internet governance actors. Seven of these Open Forums will be part of a data track, coordinated by the Geneva Internet Platform, focusing on how data is shaping our digital future.

National and regional perspectives from IGF initiatives

Last year, national, regional, and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs) had their first ever main session at the IGF, raising their visibility and allowing them to exchange experiences and good practices. This year, they again host a main session, focused on the topic of rights in the digital world. Moreover, and for the first time in the history of the IGF, NRIs have joined forces to organise collaborative sessions on issues that are specifically relevant for them, such as the security of critical information infrastructures, digital competences, digital currencies, and Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs).

Youth and newcomers track

If this is your first IGF, you might feel overwhelmed by the packed programme and the number of people and sessions. The newcomers track has been designed specifically for you, to help you better understand the IGF and to meet community members. The track will have a special focus on youth, so if you are a young IGF attendee, you will get tips on how to engage in the discussions and make your voice heard. Knowledge café sessions are held from Monday to Thursday, between 13:15 and 14:00.



DON'T MISS TODAY



Local interventions, global impacts: How can international, multistakeholder cooperation address Internet disruptions, encryption, and data flows?

10:00 – 13:00 | Main Hall (Room XVII – E)

The Internet does not know borders and jurisdictions, and national policy initiatives may have different impacts on the global Internet environment. The session will look at such initiatives in three areas – Internet disruptions (such as shutdowns and slowdowns), encryption, and data flows – and will try to answer questions such as: What are the reasons and motivations for Internet disruptions, and how do they impact the global infrastructure of the Internet? Is encryption a threat to public and national security?

Shaping our future digital global governance

16:00 – 18:00 | Assembly Hall – A

The Internet and digital technologies provide opportunities for growth and development, but also bring challenges that call for a better coordinated global digital governance system. But what should such a system look like?

This is one of the main questions that high-level participants – including Ms Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, and Mr Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – will focus on.

ART@IGF: HOW CAN DIGITAL ART SHAPE OUR DIGITAL FUTURE?

Undoubtedly an innovation at this year's IGF, the Art@IGF project connects digital policy, art, and technology professionals.

The interactive exhibition, set up on the first floor of the Palais des Nations (Building E), uses a subway map as a journey metaphor to explore different Internet governance issues, such as infrastructure, security, and human rights, each depicted as a subway line in a different colour on the exhibition floor.

As participants follow the different thematic lines, they arrive at subway stations where digital artists display their perceptions of the core digital policy issues of the day.

The opening of ART@IGF takes place on Monday, 18th December, at 14.00 CET, Palais des Nations, Building E, first floor. Learn more about Art@IGF

