

UK INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM REPORT 2019

24th October 2019

Cavendish Conference Centre
22 Duchess Mews, Marylebone
London W1G 9DT

www.ukigf.org.uk



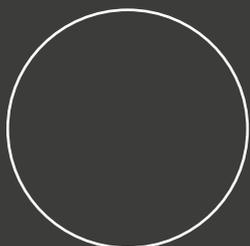
The UK Internet Governance Forum (UK IGF) is the national IGF for the United Kingdom. IGFs are an initiative led by the United Nations for the discussion of public policy issues relating to the internet. A key distinguishing feature of IGFs is that they are based on the multi-stakeholder model – all sectors of society meet as equals to exchange ideas and discuss best practices. The purpose of IGFs is to facilitate a common understanding of how to maximise the opportunities of the internet whilst mitigating the risks and challenges that the internet presents.

On 24th October 2019 131 delegates from government, civil society, parliament, industry, the technical community and academia met in London to discuss how the UK could ensure a healthy digital society by 2050. This report summarises the discussion and provides key messages for consideration at the United Nations IGF.

The UK IGF has a steering committee and secretariat. The committee members can be found at ukigf.org.uk/committee and the secretariat is provided by Nominet, the UK's national domain name registry.

If you are interested in contributing to the UK IGF, please contact info@ukigf.org.uk

Download this report: ukigf.org.uk/2019



KEY MESSAGES

- The UK internet community in general strongly supports the multi-stakeholder model and welcomes moves towards actionable recommendations from the IGF.
- Public debate, civil discourse and parliamentary scrutiny are essential for public policy development.
- The issues faced today are human, not technology issues. We should focus on what we value in terms of those human issues, and build systems and frameworks which support them. We need a holistic multidisciplinary approach that considers the whole internet ecosystem and societal impact.
- Online and offline should not be treated differently. The internet and digital technologies are part of everyday life, and include everything that frustrates and fulfils us.
- The legal standards for criminal behaviours should not differ online. We must not create an online space that is less free than offline, nor should we allow criminal activity online that is not tolerated offline. Enforcement of criminal law in the digital arena does however require additional collaboration, capacity building and must be adequately resourced.
- Technical and policy decisions should be informed by inclusive discussion in advance – both can have unintended consequences and geopolitical implications. Full multi-stakeholder socialisation of all the wider considerations can help to mitigate some of the problems that arise.
- Public policy decisions must recognise the limits of technology. Technical decisions must in turn be made with consideration as to their impact on regional laws and communities.
- We must protect human rights, innovation and freedom of speech. Regulation should be outcome based, but must still provide legal clarity. We need safe spaces to proactively discuss what it means to develop technology responsibly.
- The internet is going to fundamentally change in the next 30 years. We all have a responsibility to create a future that reflects what we value most.

WELCOME

Eleanor Bradley, Managing Director of Registry & Public Benefit, Nominet opened the day by championing the multi-stakeholder model and encouraging us to create a positive vision for the future.

“At Nominet we see internet safety like road safety. There are dangers, but they are manageable. And we can use these conferences as a platform to facilitate a common UK position and then broadcast that globally. We should raise our sights higher and also hope that the digital society of 2050 could be credited with being part of the solution to some of the biggest and most pressing issues today – like climate change for example.”

Vision for the future of the internet over the next 30 years

Adrian Lovett, President & CEO, World Wide Web Foundation presented the ‘Contract for the Web’ – principles for governments, companies and citizens to safeguard the future of a web that serves the public good. It aims to tackle a twin challenge: more than half the world’s population cannot access the internet. For the other half, the web’s benefits come with too many risks to privacy, democracy and rights.

The contract is underpinned by a global plan of action which will be launched at the UN IGF in Berlin. The process has involved nearly 300 companies, more than 100 civil society organisations, 10 national governments and more than 8,000 citizens from around the world.

A quick poll indicated those present were divided on which group has the most important role to play to ensure a health digital society by 2050: governments (46%), companies (24%) or citizens (30%).

If you wo
code UK



“I had a naïve assumption with the internet that if you build it, they will come. In reality the barriers to getting online are much more complex than that.”

Adrian Lovett, President & CEO,
World Wide Web Foundation

TAKING STOCK: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE PROPOSALS FOR INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Stacie Hoffman, Digital Policy & Cyber Security Consultant, Oxford Information Labs chaired and opened the session, highlighting that the internet – the whole stack – is going to change fundamentally over the next few years. What do we want our future internet to look like? What values should we protect? What rules and policies do we need?

Dominique Lazanski, Independent Consultant, Last Press Label spoke to the ever increasing tension between governing the internet in a multi-stakeholder model vs a multi-lateral approach. This “crisis of internet governance” will continue to shape future discussions, with some countries preferring to stick with the current multi-stakeholder approach, valuing a free and open internet built on best practice, norms, capacity building and shared responsibility, and others however inherently looking to a multi-lateral solution based on formal treaties between member states.

Sheetal Kumar, Senior Programme Lead, Global Partners Digital noted that the libertarian internet dream is over – but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. As technology and policy draw closer together, it's essential we have adequate frameworks and safeguards in place, technology must work for humanity. Equally, we must not create an online space that is less free, or more criminalised than the offline world.

Maeve Walsh, Associate, Carnegie recognised that we currently have an issue with trust and technology. Companies should be proactive – not reactive – to issues. Government has a responsibility to create proportionate regulation that encourages companies to engage in risk assessments of technology. Regulation should encourage user safety, but must also preserve the innovation and dynamism of the internet and social media companies.





The panel reflected positively on the UK's digital regulation and commitment to parliamentary scrutiny. They raised concerns that the current Online Harms White Paper focuses too strongly on notice and take down requirements, and called for a holistic and systematic approach that also considers the malign use of new technologies, such as algorithms spreading disinformation. They emphasised that cooperation and collaboration is essential to enforcing criminal law, both online and offline. Law enforcement agencies must also be supported with capacity building and resources to manage the unparalleled amount of data which needs to be processed and analysed.

Maeve emphasised that the UK government has an opportunity – and indeed the responsibility – to ensure it continues with its stated aim to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online in a period of great political uncertainty.

Stacie highlighted the internet protocol DNS over HTTPS (DoH), explaining that this will fundamentally change the trust models and expectations we have of stakeholders. The encryption it provides can be beneficial – particularly for citizens who have their human rights threatened. However, it also creates a more centralised system. This has implications for combatting harmful conduct, elements of local jurisdiction for national policies and procedures are being placed with new stakeholders – in this case private companies in the US. Network operators have legal requirements in countries in which they operate.

While not all stakeholders will agree on filtering of content and security threats, we are fortunate that the UK's strong tradition of civil discourse allows us to debate this openly.

The panel questioned an opt out implementation, wondering whether the average citizen could make an informed choice on such a technical subject.

They emphasised the need for nuanced and inclusive civil discourse, this benefits everyone – most of all, the citizen. We must not oversimplify issues into dichotomies of “privacy v security” or “big tech v government”.

“It’s not privacy vs security. It’s understanding the limits of technology - who is benefiting and for what purpose?”

Stacie Hoffman, Digital Policy & Cyber Security Consultant, Oxford Information Labs

“Cross-party consensus in the UK on online harm should not be lost in a moment of political uncertainty.”

Maeve Walsh, Associate, Carnegie

KEY FINDINGS: OFCOM'S ONLINE NATION REPORT 2019

Ian Macrae, Director of Market Intelligence, Ofcom summarised the UK communication service regulator's recent report – **Online Nation: interactive report**.

Online is transforming the communications sector, this threatens traditional media services and increases demands on network infrastructure. Half of adults consider the smartphone to be their most important device for getting online. Internet users of all ages spend much more time online on smartphones than computers.

Changes in online behaviour are driven by being constantly connected, particularly to the mobile internet via mobile apps. Raising awareness of online harms is critical to Ofcom's duties to promote media literacy – 79% of children (12-15) have had potentially harmful online experiences in the last 12 months. To regulate or not to regulate online services is a very hot public policy question in the UK.

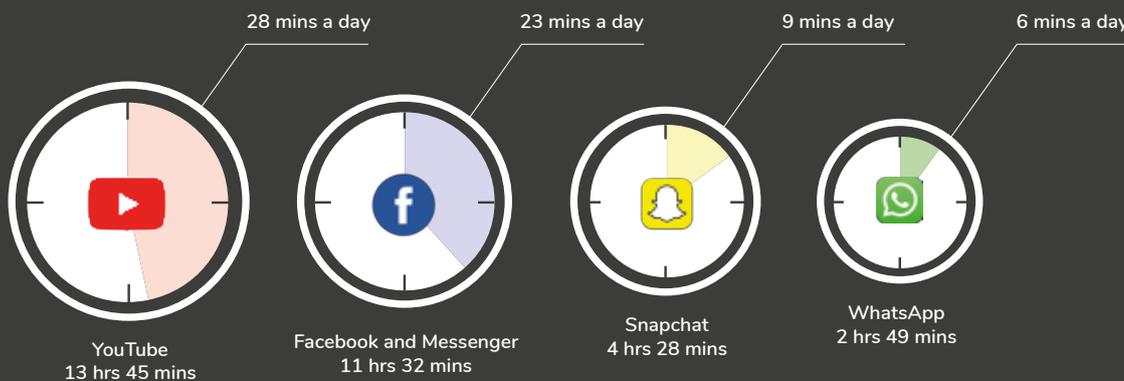
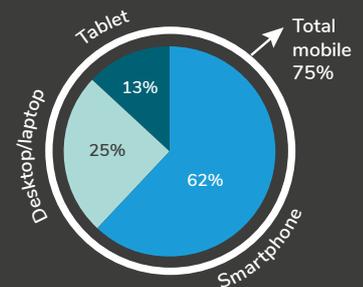
Search generated £6.7bn of ad revenues last year – but nearly half of internet users are unaware how search engines are funded. The collection of user data powers the internet. Less than 5 in 10 people are aware that smartphone apps collect their information, but people are concerned about how their data is used, and many do not trust the largest internet sites to use their data responsibly.

A large proportion of online time is spent on Facebook and Google – but overall people have a varied online diet. Facebook is still the social media network with the greatest reach – although fewer are using it as their only one. Many people – teenagers in particular – no longer consider Facebook as their main social media network.

THE AVERAGE FREQUENCY PEOPLE USE THEIR SMARTPHONE



SHARE OF TOTAL MINUTES, 18+



The full Online Nation: interactive report is available at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/internet-and-on-demand-research/online-nation/interactive>



DIGITAL INCLUSION AND EDUCATION

Adam Micklethwaite, Director of Digital Social Inclusion, Good Things Foundation highlighted key issues for digital inclusion and inequality:

- There is still a digital divide and it falls along the lines of other forms of inequality
- 6 million adults can't turn on a device, 11.9 million adults lack the essential digital skills. Over half of those lack the basic digital skills they need to thrive
- Digital inclusion is about people not tech
- Building our digital future needs partnership
- Digital is both a leveller and an opportunity

“Digital exclusion compounds inequality. In turn, inequality reinforces and entrenches digital exclusion”

**Adam Micklethwaite, Director of Digital Social Inclusion,
Good Things Foundation**

Gareth Jones, Member of Scouts Board of Trustees explained the Scouts' approach to inclusion:

- It's not always about big transformative changes to your organisation. Subtle changes - tweaking your branding to improve contrast can boost accessibility and readability for all
- Non-formal education has a huge role to play in boosting digital inclusion. Motivation and lack of trust are key reasons people choose to remain offline. Addressing these reasons takes time and has to be understood in the context of their personal life

“Scout values - integrity, respect and cooperation - are as essential online as they are offline”

Gareth Jones, Member of Scouts Board of Trustees





RISK, HARMS AND ETHICS IN DIGITAL SOCIETY

Alex Krasodomski-Jones, Director of Centre for the Analysis of Social Media, Demos challenged panellists to articulate a positive vision for our UK digital society by asking “Is the internet really that bad?”

Darren Jones MP, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom described how, as a legislator, he is concerned with protecting constituents’ interests, creating a competitive economy and having a global impact on regulation of the internet. The geopolitics is important – we need more international collaboration. He noted that the EU has a reputation globally for being a regulatory exporter, his preference is that the UK continues to align with EU standards to have a broader impact. The internet is not that different to other industries – people want somewhere to turn when they need help.

Professor Victoria Nash, Deputy Director, Associate Professor, and Senior Policy Fellow, Oxford Internet Institute (OII) pointed out that digital technologies and the internet are not separate from our everyday life – they are part of every activity that we find fulfilling and frustrating. OII research indicates that 79%

of all people who use the internet agree that technology is making life better, this is much lower in those who do not use the internet (29%). A healthy digital society is one where it’s perfectly possible to flourish through your use of technology. We must focus on all the ways that technology contributes to things that we find fundamentally important and then ensure the design of those technologies keeps us safe and secure while doing those things. Regulation will be necessary, but not sufficient; we also need diversity in the development of technology, and education and training on social aspects of technology.

Chloe Colliver, Digital Research Unit, Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) argued that the conversation around digital has focused too much on smaller specific issues – specific content, content moderation – we need to step back look broadly. What are the systems and processes that enable the problems to exist? These are not just questions for governments and regulation. There are a whole range of stakeholders that need to be involved – private sector, industry, brands – this makes the IGF an important forum.

EMPOWERING USERS: CAN “SAFETY BY DESIGN” LEARN FROM TECH FOR GOOD?

Ben Bradley, Senior Policy Manager – Digital Strategy, techUK chaired a panel on empowering users and “safety by design”.

Noor Mo’alla, Commercial Director, DotEveryone explained that “safety by design” is a way of mitigating harms before they happen. It should go hand in hand with responsibility – it’s not just about “do no harm”, it’s about intent at the very beginning to build technology in a responsible way. Technology issues are not separate from human issues – if we all recognise this, protecting human rights is important for “safety by design”. Retrospectively thinking about content removal is not enough, regulating solely for this is not enough. We must innovate at the same pace with a framework that encourages the responsible development of technology.

Antonia Bayly, Online safety policy at Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) outlined that “safety by design” is an important preventative and proactive approach to online harms. A challenge at this stage is developing a culture that values “safety by design” and recognises that it is not at odds with commercial objectives.

David Hunter, Programme Manager, Crisp Thinking noted that platforms that have existed for a long time weren’t originally designed with safety in mind. Technology alone won’t solve this problem. The content can be the issue – for example Child Sexual Abuse Material – but often we are concerned with behaviour and the context is essential. It’s challenging for platforms because there is no single global jurisdiction and technical decisions have consequences beyond national borders.

Dr Rachel O’Connell, Founder and CEO, Trust Elevate emphasised that the internet is a wonderful thing, but we need to think about ethical and human rights issues. The principle of “safety by design” is critical but it needs to

be legislated for and mandated – like our rights to privacy are enshrined in the GDPR. We need to adopt a systems thinking approach. We are seeing a blurring of roles between different regulators, we need oversight with transparency and accountability based on principles. We also need to bring our collective wisdom together and focus on horizon scanning. Enabling digital identity and pseudo-anonymous identification will be important to manage risks while protecting human rights.

Audience questions focused on the UK government’s Online Harms White Paper and how it should develop.

“Tech issues not separate from human issues.”

Noor Mo’alla, Commercial Director, DotEveryone

“Sometimes content is the concern. We can’t just think of content. Context is essential when it’s the behaviour we are concerned about”

David Hunter, Programme Manager, Crisp Thinking

“We need to adopt a more systems thinking approach. Boundaries of the roles of regulators are blurring.”

Dr Rachel O’Connell, Founder and CEO, Trust Elevate



MINISTERIAL ADDRESS

Matt Warman MP, Minister for Digital and Broadband provided a virtual address highlighting the importance of the multi-stakeholder model while noting the plans for future content regulation.

“I firmly believe that the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance is the best way to ensure a free, open and secure Internet... Our challenge as a society is to help shape an internet that is open and vibrant but protects users from harm. I believe the UK is uniquely placed to spearhead the digital transformation of society... Regulation needs to be innovative, agile and forward-thinking to match the pace of technology.”

CYBERSECURITY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Sheetal Kumar, Senior Programme Lead, Global Partners Digital discussed current debates on cybersecurity with Kat Jones, Head of Cyber Policy at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

Kat explained that the UK is working to gather agreement around the vision of a free, open, peaceful and secure cyberspace, and to champion multi-stakeholder governance of the internet, in a context where some are pushing alternative visions and approaches.

The UK is supportive of large parts of the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation but has some reservations on aspects of the cybersecurity section. The UK argues that international law applies in cyberspace – this is contested by other states, so it’s principle that needs defending. The UK FCO promotes alignment between domestic digital policy and international aims.

The audience was supportive of the UK’s promotion of a multi-stakeholder approach, especially the level of stakeholder participation that it allows on foreign delegations.



“The UK invites stakeholders to join their delegation to the ITU - that’s not something that many other countries do”

**Kat Jones, Head of Cyber Policy,
UK Foreign and Commonwealth
Office (FCO)**

POLICY & TECHNOLOGY: DEVELOPING BOTH IN HARMONY

Rowena Schoo, Policy and Government Relations Manager, Nominet interviewed panellists on how policy and technology can develop in harmony.

Frédéric Donck, Regional Bureau Director, ISOC Europe highlighted that the decentralised internet and the principles that govern it have created certain consequences for online behaviour – for example anonymity. He cautioned that we must consider unintended consequences for the ecosystem as we create regulation.

Lindsay Taylor, Head of Strategy and Futures at The Better Regulation Executive, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) highlighted the UK government's recent White Paper Regulation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It sets out plans to transform the UK's regulatory system to support innovation while protecting citizens and the environment. It includes measures for a new Regulatory Horizon Council to advise government on rules and regulations that may need to change to keep pace with technology.

Andrew Puddephat OBE, Chair of the Internet Watch Foundation noted the internet has largely been beneficial for society, it has democratised freedom of speech, revolutionised health, education, work and the wider economy. He cautioned against quick political reactions to the traditional media's current dystopian narrative. He advocated for a change in the tenor of public debate. There are serious issues, but we can deal with them constructively.

Vinous Ali, Head of Policy, techUK was optimistic that the UK is setting up institutions of the future such as the Regulatory Horizon Council that will allow sensible nuanced debates. She encouraged industry to better communicate how carefully they are considering these important issues.

The panel contemplated balancing proscriptive and outcome-based regulation. Lack of legal clarity could result in risk averse implementation by private industry to remove content. Overly proscriptive regulation could stifle innovation. They felt outcome-based regulation could include implementation guidance, but this requires a safe space for companies to ask questions and a clear strategic vision of what type of internet the UK wants to create to prevent disjointed approaches across regulators.

When asked to provide examples of policy and technology developing in harmony, the panel noted data portability and development of FinTech; the DCMS guidance on securing the Internet of Things; work on insurance and autonomous vehicles by the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and the Solicitors Regulation Authority; and the work of the Internet Watch Foundation.

“It's really important that those in government have the subject knowledge to engage with these issues at a technical level”

Vinous Ali, techUK

“It's on all of us to create a future that works for everyone... We need to ensure our regulatory system is sufficiently flexible and outcomes focussed”

Lindsay Taylor, BEIS

A quick poll of the audience indicated pessimism (59%) and optimism (41%) on the current state of technology policy.

SUMMARY SESSION

Dr Howard Leicester MBE, a newcomer to the IGF and a DeafBlind professional in Health Informatics and Chair of BCS' Digital Accessibility Specialist Group spoke on his experience of joining remotely for the first time. He humorously extolled the virtues of communication in brail as a form of encryption, while also drawing attention to the need to ensure technology and services are created using best practice accessibility design. See www.lexdis.org.uk/digital-accessibility for further information.

Paul Blaker, Head of Global Internet Governance at the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) highlighted the importance of a responsive multi-stakeholder environment that adapts to the increasing pace of change. There was strong support for the "IGF+" model proposed by the UN High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation.

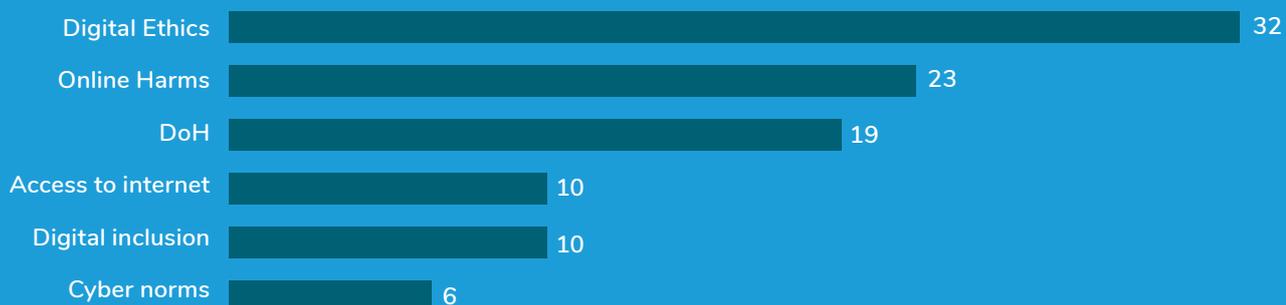
Olivier Crepin-Leblond, Chair, Internet Society UK England Chapter highlighted the importance of constant evolution and voiced his desire that next year's UK IGF be even more inclusive and vibrant.

Gareth Jones, Member of Scouts Board of Trustees said "We all recognise what the issues are and where we need to go, but we have different views on how we get there. The question now is how do we move beyond debate to solve these problems?"

Ninety six delegates engaged with Slido on the day, the online Q&A/ polling platform. The audience asked 100 question and voted on polls 196 times. In the summary session, they were invited to participate in some final polls of opinion, reproduced to the right



Looking ahead to the global IGF, what issue should the UK representatives be prioritising? (%)*



Who should the UK be aligning more closely with post-Brexit? (%)*



*This is not academic research, the results are not statistically significant. Results merely indicate sentiment of those who contributed to the poll on the day.



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