

ISOC@IGF 2013

Report

Overview

The 8th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in Bali, Indonesia, from 22 to 25 October and focused on “***Building bridges – Enhancing multistakeholder cooperation for growth and sustainable development***”. The event gathered around 1,500 participants from 111 countries, including Ministers, members of Parliaments and senior officials. The ambitious objective of the Bali meeting was to build bridges and strengthen the cooperation between and among various stakeholders, allowing and strengthening a constructive multistakeholder dialogue.

This year again, the IGF has proven that it was more relevant than ever. Ministers and senior officials reaffirmed their support to the Forum and important stakeholders called for the renewal of its mandate after 2015. Indeed, the IGF has evolved over the years into a platform attracting an increasing number of stakeholders, community leaders and organizers of national and regional IGFs. It has become a unique place for them to share views on difficult topics, exchange best practices, and ultimately “build bridges” for a sustainable Internet.

This year’s IGF was generally hailed a success. Many of the themes were high up on the policy agenda, ranging from the role of governments, to Internet governance and multistakeholder principles, human rights, cybercrime and spam to the contribution of the Internet to sustainable development and the post 2015 agenda. The dominating theme was government surveillance which was addressed in different sessions and workshops. Participants noted that the IGF had matured and been able to create a climate of trust that allowed for discussions on sensitive issues, such as surveillance, that would not be able to take place anywhere else.

The Internet Society community, including Lynn St. Amour, ISOC’s President and CEO and Jari Arko, Chairman of the IETF (read their [Opening remarks](#)), was actively engaged and visible at the event. Markus Kummer, ISOC’s Vice-President for Public Policy, in his capacity as interim Chair of the MAG and Open Consultations, had led the preparatory process and played a leading role in running and managing the meeting, also behind the scenes.

The complete list of [ISOC activities](#), [speaking roles](#) and highlights from our daily activities in Bali is available on our website.

ISOC's Membership: a central piece of our engagement @IGF

ISOC's Membership was an essential part of our contribution to the IGF. We engaged in-depth and substantively with our members who travelled from places like Nepal, Malaysia and Singapore and became one voice during the IGF, allowing ISOC to leverage its message; their stories further encouraged interest from new actors, like Indonesia, to join the ISOC community. A very constructive **chapters' meeting** with representatives from the APAC Region ([see online comments](#) and [video testimonials](#)) was organized to discuss issues of sub and cross-regional importance, and to consider how they might work together to enhance Internet access and policy in their region.

Members were actively engaged in the topics discussed at the IGF. They have a unique perspective on what is going on at the regional and local levels. [Read more](#) about how they contribute to keeping the Internet open and sustainable.

They were also actively engaged in the two horizontal tracks, devoted to capacity building and national/regional IGF initiatives.

The different organizations engaged in **capacity building** (ISOC, DiploFoundation, Freedom House, IFLA, dotASIA, EuroSSIG, etc.) collaborated for the first time to deliver a Collaborative Leadership Exchange (CLX). The objective was to bring together staff, ISOC members and participants in the different sponsored programmes to the IGF to network, build relationships and exchange ideas on key local / regional capacity building and Internet governance issues. The unconference format consisted of social orientation tasks, relationship building exercises, fish bowls (<http://tinyurl.com/c7ft5a>) and solution rooms (<http://tinyurl.com/p9ec8q6>). Feedback received from the community was excellent as it allowed for peer-based learning, and created a multiplier effect on the capacity building track throughout the IGF week, and beyond.

The **national/regional track** aimed to improve the integration of the around 30 national and regional IGF initiatives. 20 of them responded to a survey of their activities and in two special sessions they exchanged information and shared experiences, learning from each other how to improve their meetings.

Finally, ISOC sponsored [20 IGF Ambassadors](#) from among its membership. The participation of these young Internet professionals across the Internet ecosystem, contributed to the Forum's overall regional, cultural, gender and professional diversity, while allowing them to develop their diplomatic skills and deepen their technical expertise.

The IGF: a platform for discussing critical Internet issues

Each year, the IGF provides all interested stakeholders a unique opportunity to discuss emerging Internet-related policy issues. In the context of the recent revelations about government-led Internet surveillance activities, discussions focused on the proper balance between national security concerns and the respect of human rights such as the right to privacy and freedom of expression. Read Nicolas Seidler's blog "[Protect the Open Internet, Protect Your Freedom](#)".

Throughout the IGF week, issues such as **Internet principles** and future frameworks for the Internet and Internet public policy were also discussed. Many organizations and individuals from governments, civil society, the business, academic and technical communities shared their insights and presented the work they had done to develop their ideas and principles. In light of the upcoming

review of the WSIS in April 2014, these discussions helped identify common ground among all initiatives, including the bottom-up, open and multistakeholder principles that are embedded in the technical community's culture.

Debates also focused on the role of governments and on how cyber security issues fit within the realm of a cooperative, multi-faceted and open Internet environment, and more generally on the notion of **multistakeholder cooperation** that guides Internet governance. To better grasp the historical evolution and current trends of multistakeholder processes, ISOC launched a consultation ahead of the IGF. [Findings of this consultation](#) shed light on the variety of regional and national perspectives; interestingly, they also revealed that discussions on "enhanced cooperation" are seen as a possible catalyst for further multistakeholderism. To continue the dialogue with our Members and the academic community after the IGF, ISOC launched a [call for papers on open and multistakeholder governance](#) during the Giganet meeting, soliciting the views and input from researchers and the wider academic community. ISOC believes that scholarly research can help shape the crucial policy and governance discussions that will take place in the forthcoming years.

The programme of this year's IGF picked up from WCIT where spam was identified as a problem by developing countries. A focus session dealt with this and other **security** issues, drawing on input from ISOC's spam programme and also from a workshop ISOC co-organised with the OECD. The aim of the session was to show that there are tools available to deal with spam. The discussions explored many facets of Internet security approaches, including objectives, preconceptions, impact on rights, shared responsibility and collaboration and also how to restore users' confidence following revelations of pervasive mass surveillance. It was also suggested that as a follow-up a one or two day technical training workshop be organized prior to IGF 2014.

Discussions also explored the importance of developing **local infrastructures** through local communities to create a sustainable ecosystem and spur economic growth and social development. In this regard, IXPs are critical for the development of local infrastructures, content and applications. This was debated during the ISOC Open Forum as well as an ISOC IXP workshop. During the latter there was an excellent discussion about the importance of negotiation and the "human" side of IXP Development. Participants noted that it was crucial to have local agreement and "buy-in" for sustainability. This supports the point that ISOC teams often raise: "80% of IXP development is social engineering, and 20% is technical engineering". The workshop had an unexpected participant from the Diplo Foundation who later blogged about this very topic.

Finally, in view of the forthcoming WSIS +10 review and the post 2015 development agenda the IGF also examined how best to mainstream **ICT4D** into the sustainable development agenda. There was a general agreement that the Internet contributed to economic growth and social development and should be taken into account in the review of the MDGs and the formulation of the post 2015 agenda.

Putting discussions into perspective

In addressing all the critical issues mentioned above, what essentially remains at stake is **the sustainability of the open Internet**, which is challenged at different levels (technical, governance, political, societal, commercial and developmental) and at different degrees. To feed the debate, the Internet Society released a paper on "[The value of Openness for a Sustainable Internet](#)" which is intended to describe openness in the context of the Internet and its effects, and proposes a vision for the post-2015 agenda.

Clearly, there are areas that are challenging and are difficult or complex to solve – they impact or implicate many different stakeholders or involve many disciplines or types of expertise. One example includes how the open Internet assists creativity and the importance of multistakeholder participation in preserving that creativity. Read Konstantinos Komaitis' blog: [Building Bridges to protect Creativity](#).

To help shape a constructive debate, ISOC also drafted a [taxonomy](#). It is still in its early stages and we will be looking for help in refining it. It is intended to aid in gaining a shared understanding of the challenges of today, and clarity on how they can be addressed effectively. Since many issues are quite broad (e.g. Security), it is helpful to disaggregate them in order to find solutions.

The IGF: a platform for catalyzing the community

The IGF has become a key platform where a broad range of stakeholders and policy makers gather to discuss issues of common concern. The Bali meeting allowed the I* community to engage other stakeholders in its effort to catalyze community-wide efforts towards the evolution of global multistakeholder Internet cooperation, following the Montevideo statement.

Speaking on behalf of the Internet technical community during the closing ceremony of the IGF, Anne-Rachel Inné, Chief Operations Officer from AfriNIC, commented; “as signatories of the [Montevideo Statement](#) we have followed with interest the discussions after its publication, including the discussions during this week’s IGF. We appreciate the generally positive reception that the statement received, and the opportunity to open inclusive discussions since then, regarding the way forward. We intend to continue these discussions beyond the meeting, in a fully open manner, with the aim to improve the mechanisms for multistakeholder Internet cooperation. We encourage wide participation by all parties – governments, civil society, business and technical community – on an equal footing, in the spirit of the IGF.”

IGF 2014 will be held in Istanbul, on 2-5 September. We will engage with you as soon as the preparatory process starts. In the meantime, if you wish to review the Internet Society's participation in IGF 2013, please visit our website at <http://www.internetsociety.org/igf/2013-igf-mini-site>.