THE YOUTH IGF BATTLES 2020

REPORT

A NEW GENERATION OF INTERNET LEADERS FOR CIVIC PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GOALS OF THE UN ROADMAP FOR DIGITAL COOPERATION

FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE THRIVING

Youth IGF Battles 2020

FR Souveraineté numérique et les noms de domaine : besoin de connaissances — 16/12, 3pm CET — Youth IGF Francophonie	**PT** Cybersecurity: Should it be the concern of the young? — 17/12, 2pm CET — Youth IGF Lusophone

EN Misinformation : a threat to Human Rights — 17/12, 4pm CET — Youth IGF Commonwealth

EN Digital euro, new way of independence from GAFA or a new surveillance era? — 18/12, 2:30pm CET — Youth IGF CEE

ES Internet connectivity and online administrative services — 18/12, 5pm CET — Youth IGF Latin America

EN AI and rural areas: An opportunity or a bigger digital gap? — 19/12, 3:30pm CET — Youth IGF ACP

EN 5G and green IT — 21/12, 2pm CET — Youth IGF ASEAN

AR Digital transformation of the economy — 21/12, 3:30pm CET — Youth IGF ARAB

RU Digital online learning and accessibility of the quality education — 22/12, 10am CET — Youth IGF RUSSIA

EN DSA: A new EU vision of digital or a new utopia? — 22/12, 5pm CET — Youth IGF Europe

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4 RECOMMENDATIONS
8 AREAS – 10 YOUTH BATTLES - 8 IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

Youth IGF ACP • Youth IGF Arab • Youth IGF ASEAN • Youth IGF CEE
Youth IGF Commonwealth • Youth IGF Europe
Youth IGF Francophonie • Youth IGF Latin America • Youth IGF Lusophone
• Youth IGF Russia

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

POLICY ACTION

1.
   Promote and encourage constant dialogue between the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation and the globally recognised youth groups working on Internet Governance.

2.
   Encourage youth representation in bodies, such as the MAG IGF and the creation of a permanent consultation channel between the MHLB of the IGF and the globally recognised youth groups working on Internet Governance.

DEVELOPMENT ACTION

1.
   In collaboration with the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology and other relevant bodies, develop a process for the global recognition of innovative ideas by young leaders in digital cooperation – proposals that can be scaled from an idea to a fully-fledged solution.

2.
   Promote the formation of youth consultation committees and/or bodies within the corporate governance structures of the organisations involved in Internet Governance. The .EU Youth Committee could serve as an excellent best practice case.

REPORT

To support the UN Secretary-General Roadmap for Digital Cooperation
To promote internet governance among the young

The importance of the voice of the younger generations on Internet Governance was underlined by different stakeholders during the annual UN Internet Governance Forum.

The Youth IGF Battles are intended to support the UN Roadmap on Digital Cooperation and to generate powerful ideas for locally integrating the global pillars of digital cooperation.

The Youth IGF Battles encourage developing responses to generate a global pipeline of robust civic solutions from young people around the world. We want to highlight the projects where ideas evolve to solutions so global youth can share and learn on the digital frontier.

10 Battles have been organized by the Youth IGF during December 2020.

Each battle was conceived as a 30-minute debate between two groups of young people, based on one of the eight priority areas. Each of the debates was region-based, e.g. Youth IGF Europe.

1. **AI in rural areas**

Young people discussed whether artificial intelligence will help farmers in rural areas, or will only create a bigger digital gap. Among the reasons they cited for AI generating a digital divide were problems with connectivity, the lack of awareness about new digital technologies in the farming sphere and unequal access to them, the lack of skills and digital literacy among farmers and the absence of information about AI in local languages. Another point of view concerned the benefits of AI for rural areas. Farmers can monitor and improve a lot of farming processes and grow crops better thanks to artificial intelligence. The role of young people lies in raising awareness and spreading the idea that AI can help farmers in rural communities make better farming decisions and generate more bountiful crops. The most important issue is to ensure people know what artificial intelligence is and how to use

it for good by avoiding possible risks. Awareness, education and skill-building will help farmers fully exploit the potential of artificial intelligence.

2. 5G and green IT

Young people welcome the implementation of 5G, since it should create new jobs and develop new sectors with the help of AI and IoT (e.g. agriculture, manufacturing) and will also provide people with faster connectivity and quicker access to services. However, since 5G is a new technology, its impact on the environment cannot be fully assessed. There are a number negative aspects of 5G that concern young people: the greater energy consumption involved, e-waste, radiation that could harm birds and animals, as well as security risks for critical infrastructure that will be needed for 5G deployment. These are some of the actions proposed by young people to mitigate the possible risks related to 5G: to ensure policy-makers and general public are informed about the use and the impact of 5G technology; to educate users on how to use 5G in a safe and responsible manner; to create legal frameworks to ensure the technology upholds human rights principles; to enable the readiness of infrastructure and the usage of green technologies in the deployment of 5G (for example, to decarbonise the electrical system to minimise the bad effects of electricity consumption); to prepare a recycling plan for discarded phones and electronic devices so to reduce e-waste.

3. Cybersecurity

A fragmentation of cybersecurity skills curricula is taking place. What we can see today is that the existing educational tracks on cybersecurity offer sectoral education, i.e. they are oriented towards sector-oriented professions: IT professionals, legal professionals and, to a very limited degree, policy/diplomacy. However, the rapid development of the digital space and the role that digital technology is taking in our lives, especially as demonstrated by the coronavirus crisis, requires cybersecurity skills to be cross-sectoral and not only focused on one specific skill. In order to be able to produce adequate cybersecurity professionals that will answer the workforce market demand and to eliminate the cybersecurity gap, the EU urgently needs to take a lead on cybersecurity skills and re-think formal and informal cybersecurity education.

Private sector and corporations can help in harmonising cross-sectoral cybersecurity education to facilitate a structured EU-based approach towards the cybersecurity skills agenda. By investing in a cybersecurity skills-structured approach and initiatives, the private sector can facilitate the development of policies on cybersecurity skills within the EU. Today's post-corona moment can be fruitful for such a collaboration.

4. Digital euro

According to young activists, the launch of a digital euro could be a positive solution for the EU, since it would lead the union towards independence from big corporations and companies. Citizens will have an additional means of payment and will no longer depend on private tech firms. However, the young fear that if the majority of financial information is stored in one place, it could lead to surveillance and infringements of users' privacy. It also raises the issue of security, because sensitive financial data may be the target of hackers. Young people propose introducing measures to ensure the security of data and financial transactions when introducing a digital euro. They also promote multi-stakeholder participation in the development process. Citizens and young people in the EU should be involved in discussions and decision-making. Hackathons can be organised to involve representatives from the public and private sectors and civil society to present tangible and innovative solutions regarding the development of a digital euro.

5. Digital sovereignty and domain names

Some young people think the use of national domain names is an indicator of the country's digital sovereignty, because it gives a country independence from overseas corporations and GAFA. They say governments should have control over domain names. Some believe the main indicator of digital sovereignty is the localisation of data and not the name of a domain. Another key point is that governments should be able to ensure the security and the safe and transparent use of personal data on websites with national domain names. The young generation say that national domain names might result in higher costs, so they would rather turn to generic domain names. Young people should be placed at the heart of discussions about national domain names and ensure the general public is informed about the pros and cons, about how data is processed and whether people can freely choose which domain names to use.

6. DSA

New EU legislation on digital services, the Digital Services Act, and Gaia-X, an independent EU cloud, have the potential to be a catalyst for a competitive European economy, innovation, the creation of EU-based technologies and startups. They can boost the EU's digital sovereignty while upholding European rights and values. The problem is the lack of infrastructure that would support a European cloud and other technologies, and this could create risks for the security of data. The young encourage the EU to create its own resilient infrastructure. They urge EU member states to come up with EU-based technological solutions using open-source software, to continue cooperating with non-EU members and to preserve partnerships with them. Young people have to be involved more in discussions and the decision-making process where the implementation of EU projects is concerned.

7. Misinformation

Young people see misinformation as a serious threat to human rights and public health. For example, false information on vaccines deters people from taking informed healthcare decisions and denies them the right to health. Social media is playing a huge role in accelerating the spread of dis/misinformation. The young are concerned that actions taken by governments to stop the spread of fake news could limit the freedom of expression. Young people urge policy makers to come up with feasible solutions that do not violate the right to freedom of speech. They encourage governments to educate the public about digital literacy and incorporate it into the school curriculum. The young generation can improve the digital literacy and critical thinking of internet users by taking an active role on social media and educating people about how to use social media platforms correctly.

8. Online learning

Young people say digitalisation and the transition to remote work require the transformation of the learning process. The online format is more affordable, allows people to study in a safe atmosphere, and helps them to acquire the necessary skills for the jobs of the future and remote work. The negative aspect is that people from remote areas who do not have access to digital technologies cannot benefit from online learning and are left behind. The transition to online learning is widening the digital gap. The young call on governments to develop the necessary infrastructure and digital technologies in regions that

are suffering from the digital divide. The young say the quick shift to online learning could even boost the digital transformation in remote regions. However, online learning can impede the acquisition of soft skills such as communication and networking. The young see online learning as a positive trend, but call for improved ways of learning in order to combine the online format with face-to-face learning.

Acknowledgements

The present report was prepared as part of a joint effort by the Youth IGF[1], administered by TaC International with the support of the Swiss government.

This report is based on 10 public debates, called Battles[2] carried out by the Youth IGF in December 2020.

The report will be presented and discussed during the common EU Delegation to the IGF – Youth IGF Open Forum[3] at the UN IGF 2021.

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[1] Referred to in this report as the Youth IGF. The Youth IGF was created in 2011 during the MAG IGF meeting. More information is available at: www.youthigf.com

[2] https://www.facebook.com/pg/globalyouthigf/videos

[3] https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2021-open-forum-62-eu-delegation-to-the-igf-the-youth-igf