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Youth IGF
ARMENIA

#armIGF2021

ARMENIAN INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM
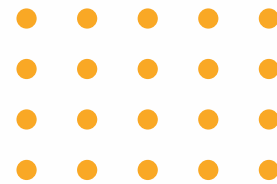
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OCTOBER

MEETING REPORT

#armIGF2021

CONTENT

What is IGC and ArmIGF?

The Internet Governance Council of the Republic of Armenia (IGC) was founded in 2014 by the Government of the Republic of Armenia in order to develop proposals and suggestions as well as contribute to the solutions for Internet governance related issues in the Republic of Armenia. The official website is http://igc.am/.

IGC is a Multi-Stakeholder advisory body consisting of members from Academia, Civil Society, Government, Private Sector, and Technical Community. It is guided by the transparency principle. The Chair of IGC is the Deputy Minister of High-Tech Industry and the Secretariat is the "Internet Society" NGO (.am/.հայ ccTLD Registry).

The Armenian Internet Governance Forum (ArmIGF) is a national IGF initiative organized by the IGC, the "Internet Society" NGO and the Internet Society Armenia Chapter with the support of the Ministry of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia.

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ArmIGF 2021 Sponsors

To organize the event, the organizers applied to international partners for financial support. We proudly represent our sponsors for ArmIGF 2021.
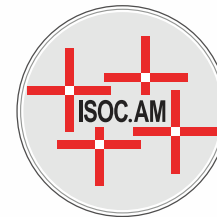
ArmIGF 2021

ArmIGF 2021, the 6th Armenian Internet Governance Forum, was organized jointly with the Youth IGF Armenia to advance the outreach and inclusive discussions on local digital policy issues and current challenges.

It was clear that along with the in-person meeting, online participation should be equally organized for those not able to attend the event. YouTube streaming and Zoom platform was provided to all registered participants. In addition, the novelty for this year was the Armenian surdo-translation.

During the preparatory process, a new website for the current year event was created, providing information about the purpose of the Forum, its organizers, program, speakers, sponsors. Links to the previous meetings were also included.

Topics of the program were developed by the members of the organizing team, representing various stakeholder groups, thus providing a multistakeholder participation in the process.

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IGC | INTERNET GOVERNANCE COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Internet Society Armenia Chapter

ISOC.AM

ArmIGF 2021 organizing team members

IGC members: Grigori Saghyan, Lianna Galstyan, Vahan Hovsepyan, Kristina Hakobyan

IGC Secretariat members: Vesmira Harutyunyan, Narine Derdzakyan

Armenian Youth IGF members: Ani Dallakyan, Christina Gevorgyan, Tatev Hambardzumyan, Diana Asryan

ArmIGF 2021 Program

It was quite a challenge for a one-day event to select the most important and most discussed IG topics relevant to the wide community, especially given the post-war situation in the country.
It was decided to hold 3 panel sessions on: Hate Speech, Online Education and E-Health as well as provide the floor for presentations on other major topics.

For the first time, a Town-hall session was organized on topics of Internet Freedom and Cybersecurity.

08:30-09:30

OPENING & KEYNOTE SPEECH

09:30-10:00

OPEN MIC

Vahagn Khachaturyan
HTI Minister

Mikhail Anisimov
ICANN, Head of Global Stakeholder Engagement for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Vahan Hovsepyan
RIPE NCC, External Relations Officer, Caucasus and Central Asia

Lianna Galstyan
ArmIGF Coordinator

10:00-10:45

TOWN HALL SESSION | INTERNET FREEDOM, CYBERSECURITY

Internet Freedom
Samvel Martirosyan
ArmSec Foundation Director

Cybersecurity
Davit Karapetyan
OWASP Yerevan Chapter Leader

11:00-11:30

UPDATES ON .ՀԱՅ IDN & UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE

Anna Karakhanyan
AMNIC Administrator

Grigori Saghyan
"Internet Society" NGO Board Vice-Chair

Ajay Data
UASG (Universal Acceptance Steering Group) Chair

11:30-13:00

PANEL | HATE SPEECH

Anush Beghloian
Member of Parliament

Tatevik Manukyan
Assistant to the Human Rights Defender

Ara Ghazaryan
"New Armenia – Modern Parliament" UNDP Expert

Davit Alaverdyan
Chief Editor at Mediamax Media

Moderator: Tigran Hakobyan
TV and Radio Committee Chair

13:00-14:00

LUNCH

14:00-15:30

PANEL | ONLINE EDUCATION: ADVANTAGES AND PITFALLS

Narine Mesropyan
National Center of Educational Technologies, Senior Specialist of Distance Learning Organization

Suren Aloyan
"Dasaran.am" Educational Program Founding President

Grigori Saghyan
Associate Professor, Lector at Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University

Rouben Meschian
Arminova Technologies CEO

Moderator: Atom Mkhitaryan
Dean of the International Scientific-Educational Center of NAS RA, Candidate of Sciences, Associate Professor

15:30-16:00

DIGITAL INCLUSION

Integration of Displaced People from Artsakh

Movses Poghosyan
"House of Hope" Foundation Director

Providing Internet to vulnerable groups

Lianna Galstyan
Internet Society Armenia Chapter Board Chair

16:00-16:30

COFFEE BREAK

16:30-17:30

PANEL | E-HEALTH IN ARMENIA

Armine Sargsyan
Head of the E-Health Implementation Department of the National Institute of Health

Gevorg Hayrapetyan
Head of Personal Data Protection Agency

Andranik Vardanean
Illuria Security, Inc. Co-founder

Moderator: Georgi Chaltikyan
MD, PhD, Professor of Digital Health, Deggendorf University (Germany), RAU (Armenia), Founding President of Armenian Association of Telemedicine

17:30-18:00

WRAP UP

19:00-21:00

NETWORKING | AWARD CEREMONY OF WEBSITES & WIKI CONTESTS

OPENING & KEYNOTE SPEECH

Vahagn Khachaturyan
HTI Minister

Mikhail Anisimov
ICANN, Head of Global Stakeholder Engagement for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Vahan Hovsepyan
RIPE NCC, External Relations Officer, Caucasus and Central Asia

Lianna Galstyan
ArmIGF Coordinator

At the opening of the 6th Armenian Internet Governance Forum, the Armenia IGF Coordinator **Lianna Galstyan** welcomed all participants on site and online, briefly representing the purpose and the principles of IGF. She mentioned the format and program of the current event, as well as the novelties brought up in this year. In particular, the surdo-translation to make the Forum a more inclusive platform.

With this, she invited the Minister of High-Tech Industry of Armenia, **Vahagn Khachaturyan**, to address his keynote speech. The Minister Vahagn Khachaturyan referred to the extremely important role of the Internet today, considering it one of the greatest discoveries of mankind, which allows us to communicate while being thousands of kilometers away from each other.

He noted that along with the rapid development of the Internet, it is necessary to implement legislative regulations, and one of the main outcomes of this forum may be the definition of such rules, adding that states have a great participation in this work.

The Minister stressed that the work carried out in this direction is highly valued for its importance. The Armenian Government and the Prime Minister have established the Internet Governance Council, the Chairman of which is the Deputy Minister of the High-tech Industry of Armenia.

The Minister also referred to the problems that the Internet can create - the propaganda of hatred, war, which have become serious problems not only for Armenia but also for the world.

In his speech, the Minister emphasized the issue of internet protection, noting that the main goal is to find effective solutions within the framework of state-society, state-private sector cooperation that will make our lives and the Internet safer.

The Minister Vahagn Khachaturyan ended his speech, wishing success to the participants of the forum, expressed confidence that the meeting would be fruitful, and a wide package of proposals would be developed.

Mikhail Anisimov

ICANN, Head of Global Stakeholder Engagement for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

In his speech, Mikhail Anisimov noted that ICANN operates on two main pillars: technical and policy. From technical perspectives, Armenia is the most connected country in the region, and in terms of participating in ICANN policy, Armenia participates in meetings of the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), the work of the country code name supporting organization (ccNSO), Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO), as well as Fellowship and NextGen programs. He emphasized the strategic importance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDN) and Armenia's participation in various working groups in that direction.

At the end of his speech, the head of ICANN's Head of Global Stakeholder Engagement for Eastern Europe and Central Asia wished an effective discussion to the conference participants.

Vahan Hovsepyan

RIPE NCC, External Relations Officer, Caucasus and Central Asia

In his welcoming speech, Vahan Hovsepyan, RIPE NCC External Relations Officer for Caucasus and Central Asia noted the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in Internet governance. He presented the main activities of the technical community, highlighted possible collaborations and various capacity building programs. Vahan Hovsepyan also emphasized continuous support to the Internet governance processes both on national and global levels.

TOWN HALL SESSION
INTERNET FREEDOM, CYBERSECURITY

Internet Freedom
Samvel Martirosyan
ArmSec Foundation Director

Cybersecurity
Davit Karapetyan
OWASP Yerevan Chapter Leader

Davit Karapetyan presented the Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP). It is a nonprofit foundation that works to improve the security of software. Through community-led open-source software projects, hundreds of local chapters worldwide, tens of thousands of members, and leading educational and training conferences, the OWASP Foundation is the source for developers and technologists to secure the web. All of its projects, tools, documents, forums are free and open to anyone interested in improving application security. Davit Karapetyan presented details about the OWASP Armenia Chapter, highlighting its essential role in raising literacy on cyber security.

Samvel Martirosyan emphasized that the most important issue is that free speech is not discussed at large in society, except for political purposes. The speaker noted that in the Armenian Internet segment, free speech has yielded to its former high positions

according to the standards of well-known international organizations (Freedom House). In these conditions, it should be noted that no representative of the public asked who decides to restrict access to the Internet, what are the legislative norms in Armenia to impose such restrictions. Along with all this, with Internet freedom, we also have a problem with the cyber security of free data flow of people, which can be solved, for example, through education. From this point of view, the fact was quoted that our country had a large amount of data leakage this year, including sensitive data. Another issue is the lack of a state cyber security policy, which poses a number of problems for the country. During this discussion, many questions were asked about the protection of people's personal data, state cyber security, the prevention of data leakage, and the need for appropriate legislation.

UPDATES ON .հայ IDN & UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE

Anna Karakhanyan
AMNIC Administrator

Grigori Saghyan
"Internet Society" NGO Board Vice-Chair

Ajay Data
*UASG (Universal Acceptance Steering Group) Chair*

The ".հայ" domain with Armenian scripts is a part of the cultural values of modern Armenia, the capability and features of which allow ".հայ" to be developed both in the territory of the Republic of Armenia and outside the Republic of Armenia. AMNIC Administrator **Anna Karakhanyan** presented the development of Armenian script domains, statistical data on the ".հայ" domain, advantages and information on considering ".հայ" as a part of Armenian culture.

The other speaker in this discussion, **Grigori Saghyan**, the Internet Society NGO Board Vice-Chair, spoke about the "Universal Acceptance" approaches in the case of launching new, non-Latin script domains, and the prospects for the development of ".հայ" in the community and how to promote its applicability.

Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) Chair **Ajay Data,** continuing the logic of Grigori Saghyan's speech, presented what the Universal Acceptance is in general, why it is possible and what technologies are used to ensure Universal Acceptance of domains. In this context, the speaker emphasized the importance of close cooperation between the public and private sectors, one of which being the platform provided by the Armenian Internet Governance Forum, as an effective way to bring this dialogue to life.
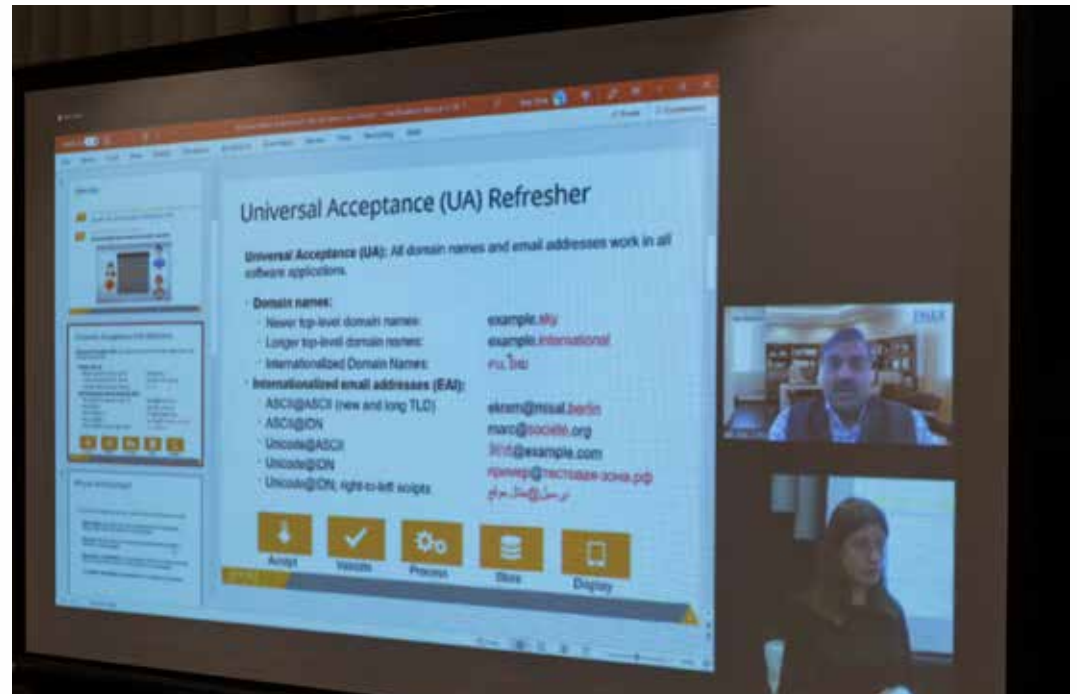
PANEL | HATE SPEECH

Anush Beghloian
Member of Parliament

Tatevik Manukyan

Assistant to the Human Rights Defender

Ara Ghazaryan
"New Armenia – Modern Parliament" UNDP Expert

Davit Alaverdyan
Chief Editor at Mediamax Media

Moderator: **Tigran Hakobyan**
TV and Radio Committee Chair

During the session, the hate speech, which has recently largely expanded, especially in the Armenian social networks, was discussed. The current situation was presented, as well as some statistical data, the experience of Mediamax News Agency in the fight against hate speech through moderation on news websites, the campaign aimed at the prevention of hate speech by the Human Rights Defender's Office were mentioned. It was also mentioned that a relevant law has been adopted by the state, which aims to prevent the use of insults.

Referring to the legislative regulations, the opinion was voiced that the criminalization of hate speech is less effective, its administrative regulation would have been more effective, taking into account that the administration and the procedures for conducting administrative proceedings are quite developed in the Republic of Armenia.

There was an opinion that the state should exercise soft control, and it is more expedient to use mechanisms of self-regulation of the sphere. As an option for the self-regulatory mechanism, it was proposed that registrars and telecom operators control over hate speech.

The opinion was also voiced that there is no need for strict legislative regulations restricting the freedom of speech, but rather wait for the settlement of this issue by the leading countries, which can serve as a guideline. It was especially emphasized that it is necessary to pay attention to the issues of public education and awareness raising.

During the discussion, many questions were raised regarding the freedom of speech, its restriction, the clear definition of the concept of "hate speech".

The proposal of putting control functions of the hate speech over the registrars and telecommunication operators became a subject of especially heated discussion. It was stressed that delegating such functions to registrars and telecommunications operators is wrong, taking into account that the activities of these companies are of a business nature, and their staff are not hate speech specialists, and they do not need to be. At the same time, hate speech clearly prevails on social networks and platforms that are beyond the authority of registrars and telecommunications operators.

PANEL | ONLINE EDUCATION: ADVANTAGES AND PITFALLS

Narine Mesropyan
National Center of Educational Technologies, Senior Specialist of Distance Learning Organization

Suren Aloyan
"Dasaran.am" Educational Program Founding President

Grigori Saghyan
Associate Professor, Lector at Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University

Rouben Meschian
Arminova Technologies CEO

Moderator: Atom Mkhitaryan
Dean of the International Scientific-Educational Center of NAS RA, Candidate of Sciences, Associate Professor

Last year, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, education went online, revealing many problems. What kind of problems still exist for Universities and Schools? What lessons did the participants of the education system learn? How to overcome difficulties and develop advantages?

At the beginning of the discussion, several online educational platforms were introduced, which have successfully completed distance/ online learning and continue to improve their quality in that field. As a positive feature it was mentioned the flexible management of time, but the negative side was not ignored either, as being cut off from society.

Some of the problems of online education were addressed, among them the lack of methodology for teachers, necessary to involve students in the learning process.

The biggest problem is the gap in the capacity of education in the Republic of Armenia, the primary position of which is the strongest precondition of students' willingness and involvement into the process.

Questions were raised about adapting online education for people with special needs, in response to which it was stated that relevant work had been done in that direction.

Another challenge is the combination of online lectures developed by lecturers from local universities and online lectures developed by lecturers from the best universities in the world. It is obvious that there will be competition, especially since some foreign universities are already issuing graduation certificates to students who have passed online courses.

It was mentioned during the discussions that distance education provides several solutions to the Armenian market, one of which is e-management, the ability to collect a large database and turn it into information. It was noted that it is necessary to legislate distance education, which is currently being developed.
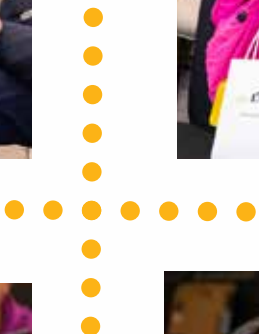
DIGITAL INCLUSION

Integration of Displaced People from Artsakh
Movses Poghosyan
"House of Hope" Foundation Director

Providing Internet to vulnerable groups
Lianna Galstyan
Internet Society Armenia Chapter Board Chair

Movses Poghosyan presented the history of the establishment of the "House of Hope Charitable Center" foundation, the goal and the programs implemented. He noted that the target beneficiaries of the programs implemented by the foundation are single elderly people, families in extreme need, people with disabilities, displaced persons, socially vulnerable families in border areas, and their children. The implemented programs are "Charity Kitchen", "Home Care", "Baby Food", "Protected Childhood at the Border", "Hopeful and Healthy Childhood", "Help to War-Affected Families".

The speaker referred to the recently launched website of the foundation in Armenian script, which presents in detail their implemented programs, as well as the ways in which all those who wish can support the foundation and make donations.

Lianna Galstyan presented the main programs of the Internet Society Armenia Chapter, emphasizing the programs implemented in 2021. From educational programs she referred to the "Internet of Things" course and community webinars. She also mentioned the "Internet Literacy for Vulnerable Groups" program, which was implemented with the funding of the Internet Society.

The main goal of the program was to teach small business skills to the representatives of vulnerable groups, to increase Internet literacy, to help them create their business page on the social platform.

The speaker introduced the vulnerable groups of the society, which the organization supports, in particular, providing Internet courses for blind and visually impaired people, updating their website, providing computer equipment to the Pyunik Association, providing computer equipment and providing digital literacy lessons to retired athletes, displaced soldiers from Artsakh.

Vahan Misakyan, the lead of the program, introduced his work

in providing computer equipment and software to the regional libraries.

PANEL | E-HEALTH IN ARMENIA

Armine Sargsyan
Head of the E-Health Implementation Department of the National Institute of Health

Gevorg Hayrapetyan
Head of Personal Data Protection Agency

Andranik Vardanean
Illuria Security, Inc. Co-founder

Moderator: Georgi Chaltikyan
MD, PhD, Professor of Digital Health, Deggendorf University (Germany), RAU (Armenia), Founding President of Armenian Association of Telemedicine

The speakers of the session stated that e-health is one of the dynamically and rapidly developing spheres. They pointed out the importance of implementing a unified e-health system, especially in the conditions of COVID-19 pandemic. The ARMED unified e-Health Information System in the Republic of Armenia was presented as an example.

As an advantage of the system, it was mentioned that with the consent of the resident, access to personal data reduces medical errors, saves the resident's time to find an online doctor, register with him, it reduces costs, and the healthcare system becomes more transparent. The use of a unified e-health system makes it possible to more quickly and easily study the patient's medical history and overall health's picture, as well as addresses the lack of high-quality medical services in border communities.

Referring to the advantages of the system, the shortcomings and vulnerabilities were not ignored. In particular, it was

mentioned that the program is implemented by one organization, which is less than satisfactory from a security point of view. A decentralized management of the system would be much safer. In addition, the possibility of generating false QR codes for vaccinations was not ruled out. It was mentioned that the data on the citizen's health should be available in the data system of all medical institutions.

Speaking about the data system, the risk of using personal data and their leakage was presented. It was mentioned that raising awareness among the doctors on the peculiarities of the use of personal data and ensuring its security have been carried out.

It was mentioned that there is a need for legislative clarifications regarding personal data. It was also noted that the health database should be maintained in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, taking into account that it is enshrined in law.

Wrap up

At the end of the forum, the session rapporteurs, the members of the Youth IGF executive committee, briefly presented the results of discussions, thus summing up the work of the conference.
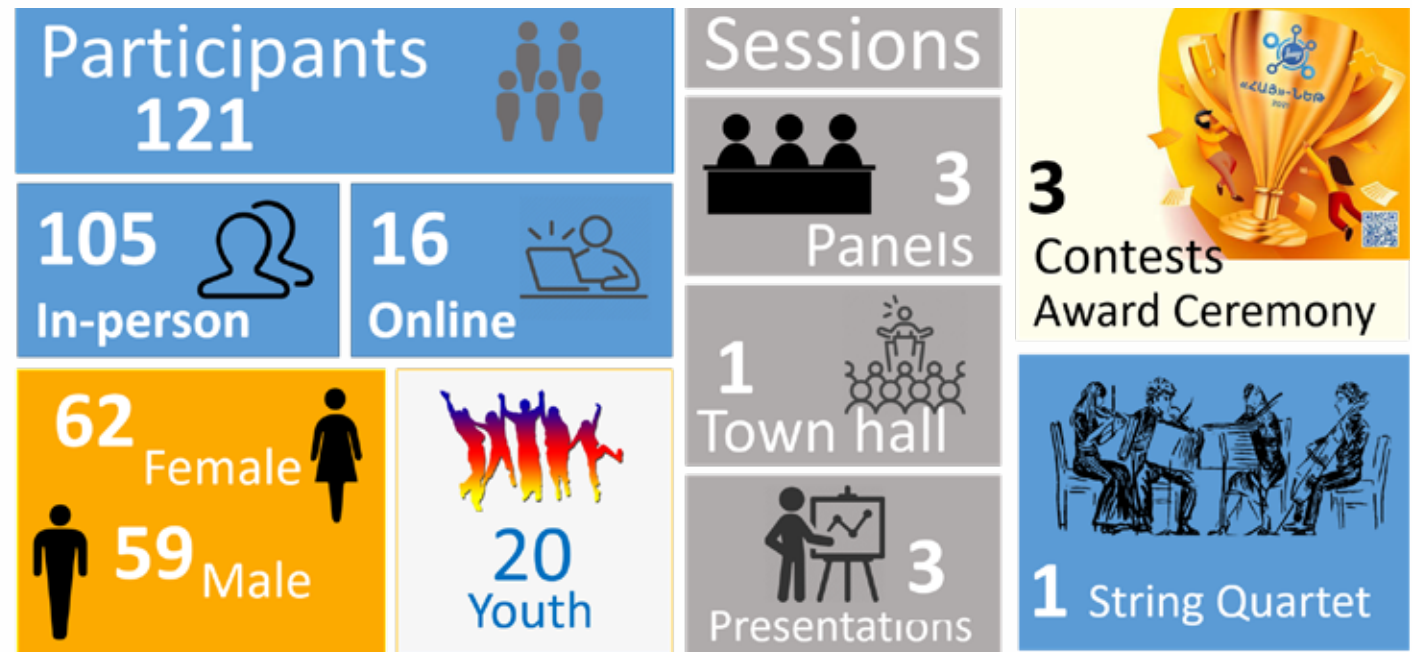
Media Coverage

The event was available to everyone online via Zoom, Facebook and YouTube. It was posted with #armigf2021 hashtag. In addition, traditional and social media journalists covered the event. Links below:

- [HTI Ministry of Armenia](#)
- [news.am News Agency](#)
- [Iragir.am News Agency](#)
- [civic.am News Agency](#)
- [Facebook Platform](#)
- [YouTube Channel](#)
- [starthub.am News Agency](#)
- [geek.am News Agency](#)
- [shamshyan.com News Agency](#)

Acknowledgment

The ArmIGF 2021 team acknowledges all the local, international organizations and partners, all sponsoring companies for sponsoring the Sixth Armenian Internet Governance Forum, for bringing together all stakeholders in-person and online, for supporting to provide an open and transparent platform to discuss Internet issues, for participation, for media coverage of the event to the general public.

As well as thank you to the speakers, moderators, rapporteurs, (surdo)interpreters, journalists, photographers, designers, printing and technical services providers, volunteers, conference participants, and all those who contributed to the implementation of ArmIGF 2021.

Special thanks to:

The Ministry of High-tech Industry of Armenia, Internet Governance Council, Internet Society Armenia Chapter NGO and Internet Society NGO as Conference Organizers as well as Internet Society (ISOC), ICANN, Internet Society NGO, IGFSA and RIPE NCC for sponsoring the conference.