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**Hong Kong Youth
Internet Governance Forum 2021
Final Report**

22 December 2021 @ Hong Kong

Organiser



Supporting Organisation



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Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum 2021 Final Report

Introduction

Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum 2021 (HKyIGF 2021) was held virtually on 22 December 2021 with the theme of *Reimagine the future of our Internet*. With the advisory support from the **DotAsia Organisation** ([Dot.asia](https://www.dot.asia)), and the dedication of the NetMission ambassadors from [NetMission.Asia](https://www.netmission.asia), our virtual event was completed successfully.

This year, HKyIGF was held as a 2-hour virtual meeting with a series of sharing or workshops delivered by our honorable speakers, and a panel discussion on the topic of *Netizen's reaction to Global outage: Problems behind big tech monopoly*. We believe all attendees have gained tremendous knowledge and insights by exchanging innovative ideas with each other.

Background

Nowadays, the Internet has become a part of our lives since we can practically find and do anything on the Internet. During this pandemic, the Internet has become the primary means to maintain our daily life. While technology and the Internet have encouraged more digital activities, concerns over fraud, cybercrime, security, and privacy in cyberspace are definitely rising.

As much as society enjoys the convenience of the Internet and technology, not many have enough awareness of the costs that are incurred in enjoying such convenience. As we are living in the new normal, there are certain things that we should be aware of and one of them is to protect our environment and reimagine our future together.

This year, the forum will explore the future of our Internet together with our invited speakers of different backgrounds in the context of the ongoing pandemic. This event consists of sharing, workshops, and panel discussions on a wide range of topics, including sustainability and the future of education, etc. We hope this event can help build up a sense of digital citizenship for youth in Hong Kong. By providing a platform for the younger generation in Hong Kong to speak up on Internet-related issues, we hope to engage and empower more young people in Internet governance participation.

Organiser – NetMission.Asia



The NetMission Ambassadors Program is a non-profit initiative that engages and empowers university students from Asia. Ambassadors are given the skills and knowledge to participate in Internet Governance discourse and to further build the capacity of other youth in Asia so their voices may also be heard. Ambassadors have the opportunity to participate in local, regional, and international conferences, and organize conferences and training activities for other youth.

Since the program was started in 2009, NetMission Ambassadors have regularly attended international Internet Governance conferences, including the United Nations International Governance Forum, ICANN, Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum, etc. NetMission Ambassadors have also played a leadership role in regional and local youth events, including the Asia Pacific Youth Internet Forum, Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy, and starting the annual Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum in 2016.

Supporting Organisation – DotAsia Organisation



DotAsia Organisation is a not-for-profit organization with a mission to promote Internet development and adoption in Asia. DotAsia has a strong mandate for socio-technological advancement initiatives including (a) digital inclusion projects to bridge the digital divide and the poverty gap; (b) educational initiatives, e.g. scholarships and promotion of Internet adoption for the advancement of knowledge, etc.; and, (c) research and development projects, including relief and re-build efforts in the wake of natural and otherwise disasters. DotAsia oversees the ‘.Asia’ top-level Internet domain name and is formed as an open consortium of 20 official top-level-domain authorities around the region. In the past two decades, Asia has developed into a global force in the commercial, political and cultural network. The .Asia domain aspires to embrace this dynamism in the Asia Century to become a nucleus, intersection, and breeding ground for Internet activity and development in the region.

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Organizing Committee List

- Jenna Fung, Digital Policy & Community Relations Manager, DotAsia
- Tina Chim, NetMission.Asia
- Kin-yu Lau, The Education University of Hong Kong

Guest List

- Jenna Fung, Digital Policy & Community Relations Manager, DotAsia
- Edward Choi, Head of Research and Advocacy, V'air Hong Kong
- Kin-yu Lau, The Education University of Hong Kong
- Clive Lee, Founder, Phoenix Foundation
- Aris Ignacio, Dean of the College of Information Technology at Southville International School and Colleges
- Jaewon Son, Doctoral researcher at the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS), Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)
- Svaradiva A. Devi, APNIC Fellow
- Maryam Lee, Strategic Program Manager, The IO Foundation

Participant Statistics

This year, we held our virtual event in the format of a Facebook Livestream. Up until April 1st, 2022, The Livestream and the recordings have reached 489 people, 35 post clicks, 12 likes and/or reactions, 5 shares, and a total of 47 engagements.

Since we did not imply a strict attendance rule to enhance participation in our event, and many attendees have joined us on Zoom or Facebook Livestream without pre-registration, we did not have any evident statistics that can reflect the aspect of gender diversity this year.

Program Agenda

Time (UTC)	Time (HKT)		Speaker
11:30-11:40	19:30-19:40	Introduction: What is Internet governance	Jenna Fung
11:40-11:55	19:40-19:55	Act Now! Achieving Sustainability via Green Tourism	Edward Choi
11:55-12:20	19:55-20:20	Nurturing student's positive Internet behaviours in education sector	Samuel Lau
			Clive Lee
12:20-12:30	20:20-20:30	Critical Times: Impact of Digitalization on Climate Change	Christine Or
12:30-13:30	20:30-21:30	Panel Discussion: Netizen's reaction to Global outage: Problems behind big tech monopoly	Aris Ignacio Jaewon Son Svaradiva Maryam

Panel Discussion

Netizen's reaction to Global outage: Problems behind big tech monopoly

Background:

On October 4, 2021, at 15:39 UTC, the social network Facebook and its subsidiaries, including Messenger, Instagram, WhatsApp and etc. became globally unavailable for 6 to 7 hours. Most of us might not remember when particularly, we have become heavily dependent on technologies to keep our "life" running. From connecting with others to completing our tasks from work or school. While we enjoy the convenience and benefits brought by technologies and social networks, how many of us are aware that most of these technologies are owned or operated by a few big tech companies, like Google or Facebook (now known as Meta). What are the problems behind "Big tech monopoly"? What should we do now before the problems get too serious?

Policy questions:

- What could be the societal harms enabled by the platforms operated by these companies?
- Is big tech monopoly the reason that makes it hard to get the public involved in solving the problems that already exist in these platforms, such as privacy, data protection, content moderation, etc.?
- What should be the way of eliminating the issues brought by big tech monopolies?
- What kinds of approaches do you suggest to deal with a big tech monopoly? Is regulated competition the way out?
- Who should regulate them?

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Format

- Introduction (5 mins)
- Panellist's presentation (20 mins)
- Panel discussion (15 mins)
- Roundtable discussion (15 mins)
- Wrap-up and panelist's remarks (5 mins)

Panel Discussion Report

Panel discussion started by Miss Maryam from IO foundation. She pointed out that we, humans, were part of the political economy. Technologies were our tools and we had to contextualize data. Without connection with the source of data, data was still simple numbers. But indeed, data represented the digital world. From extracting material in the pre-digital economy, we now extracted data from everyone. Humans became the raw material - a prediction and analytical tool.

As we were already commodities in the digital economy nowadays, Maryam suggested that big technology should act to balance the use of personal data and justice in digital space. First, companies were responsible for protecting human rights with suitable human conduct. Second, to ensure individual data is not being abused, the process of subscription cancellation should not be complicated. Furthermore, firms should redirect attention to actively involve in anti-harm and enhance awareness of users' information.

The second speaker, Jaewon Son from KIT agreed that humans were an inevitable element in Net society. However, not all of us were capable of opposing the injustice under monopoly as some Netizens did not fully understand the importance and meaning of personal data. Channels for suggestions on social media platforms were not user-friendly and hence failed to facilitate communication. With reference to a survey has done targeting iPhone users, Jaewon revealed that digital users would go for privacy when choices are given. However, challenges were presented as users already signed up for numerous agreements on various platforms. Therefore, users had no choice but to keep using social networking. In order to improve the mentioned situation, Jaewon recommended legal experts should foster practical and innovative regulations for big-tech companies.

Aris then introduced the situation by listing examples in the Philippines. For example, monopoly was a common phenomenon in the Philippines. Filipinos believed Google equaled the Internet. Big tech was involved in all parts of citizens' lives like telecommunication, recreation, or even toll gates. Despite the broad coverage, Aris advocated some actions to break the monopoly. First, coordination and cooperation in multi-stakeholders should be promoted. By

working united, the Internet could be diversified. Second, companies should share anonymous data together to foster innovation. Third, companies should stop blocking their own users from using a different platforms. Switching usage in numerous platforms could encourage development. And as an educator, Aris believed teaching a sense of awareness to ordinary people, especially the youth, was essential.

Diva from Indonesia shared social media usage in her own country. 68% of the entire population were facebook users and Facebook was the top company that owned most of the user's data. Although the Law of the Republic of Indonesia regulates information and electronic transactions, the above law only regulates competition in one or similar markets. Without rival or backup, users were insecure about data usage. To keep updated regulations in Asia, Diva advised efforts could be made in accordance with the Google case in EU antitrust.

Overall, the panel discussion highlighted potential harm from big tech monopolies, such as the use of data and personal freedom. To eliminate the dangers, speakers believed actions could be done through empowerment, education, intervention, and proper regulations.

HKyIGF 2021 recordings

You may access the recordings of the event at <https://nma.asia/hkyigf2021-recordings>.