IGF Uruguay 2022 Report

Opening
Laura Margolis - IGF Uy Secretary
Virginia Pardo - Director of the Information Society Area of AGESIC

Laura Margolis and Virginia Pardo welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of the IGF as a space for dialogue and collective construction on internet governance issues. Virginia Pardo also thanked Beatriz Rodriguez for her work in organizing the event and emphasized the interesting agenda of panels.

Panel 1 - Youth Initiatives and Digital Citizenship
Moderator: Rodrigo Alexandre
Panelists:

Nicolás Fiumarelli – Youth IGF Uruguay
María Julia Morales – ObservaTIC
Valeria Colombo – Member of the Digital Citizenship Group
Alvaro Muñoz – Telefónica Foundation

The panel discussed the interrelation between youth initiatives in internet governance and the digital citizenship strategy in Uruguay. The importance of youth participation in the collective construction of public policies and the need to guarantee access and responsible use of the internet for all young people were highlighted. The panelists shared their experiences in projects and organizations that promote digital citizenship and youth empowerment.

Rodrigo Alexandre, as moderator and representative of Youth IGF Uruguay, started the panel on youth initiatives and digital citizenship, presenting a discussion on how citizenship is conceived in the digital age.

Then, Valeria Colombo from the Digital Citizenship Group took the floor. She began by explaining that her team has been working to break down and understand the concept of digital citizenship, analyzing its components: citizenship and digital environments.

In 2019, they collaborated with various organizations, bringing together a group of experts from various sectors, including education, civil society, academia, and international and public organizations. Together, they examined how the concept of digital citizenship has developed in different countries and created a preliminary reference framework, titled "Digital citizenship strategy for an information, knowledge society."

This draft was put up for discussion with experts in areas such as childhood, adolescence, elderly people, gender, and media. Later, it was published on a citizen participation platform, where anyone could contribute to the document.

In 2020, they published the first digital citizenship strategy, considered a living document, subject to constant revisions and discussions. The document serves as a reference framework for all organizations working on this topic.

The document acknowledges that not everyone has the same opportunities to exercise citizenship in the digital environment due to inequalities in access to devices, quality connectivity, and education. To address these differences, it is proposed to work on three main dimensions: the critical and reflective, Safe and Responsible Me, and the creative and participatory.

The critical and reflective dimension focuses on understanding the rules of the game in the digital environment, which include economic, political, commercial interests, biases, and algorithms. The Safe and Responsible dimension focuses on reflecting on our own practices in the digital environment, identifying risks, and managing privacy. Finally, the creative and participatory dimension focuses on developing tools and strategies to create new content and actively participate in the digital environment.

Nicolás Fiumarelli, from Youth IGF Uruguay, spoke about digital citizenship. According to Nicolás, in an increasingly digital environment, it is crucial to exercise the same rights that one has in the offline environment. He acknowledged that this is a major challenge, as there are many considerations that need to be informed not only to young people but to all Internet users, both in terms of opportunities and threats.

As part of the youth group of the Internet in Uruguay, Nicolás highlighted the value of dialogue spaces where all actors, including the private sector, civil society, academia, and the technical community, can come together to collectively define the rules of the game in the digital environment. He stressed the importance of education programs for technology users, as well as the growing attention to the people-centered approach and the harnessing of artificial intelligence technologies.

Nicolás pointed out that cybersecurity issues are relevant not only for individual users but also for organizations. In addition, he emphasized that these discussions are constantly evolving and that it is crucial to understand that these information and policy spaces are unique and constantly improving.

Finally, Nicolás pointed to the importance of young people in the context of digital citizenship. According to various surveys, young people are the ones who use the Internet and a greater number of services and applications compared to other age groups. Therefore, he considers it a great opportunity for young people to start empowering themselves and making use of their rights as digital citizens, contributing to the evolution and development of rules and norms in the digital space.

María Julia Morales from Observatic emphasized that being a digital citizen is not an option, but a necessity in today's society. According to María, digital life and offline life are intrinsically linked, and we must all become digital citizens. Those who do not have access to digital technologies are in a vulnerable position and may be deprived of many rights.

María indicated that approximately 50% of the world's population still does not have access to digital technologies, not only in terms of devices and connectivity but also in terms of the skills needed to use them effectively.

According to María, being a digital citizen is a right, and we have the responsibility to ensure that people develop the necessary skills, have access to devices, and can connect to the Internet. She urged not to separate the traditional concept of citizenship from digital citizenship. In her opinion, if we start from this premise, we must implement policies that allow everyone to become digital citizens.

Alvaro Muñoz, from the Telefónica Movistar Foundation, thanked the invitation to the event and explained the role of the foundation in Uruguay over the last 20 years. In particular, the Foundation has been working for the last decade to promote digitalization among young people, considering it as a crucial element for access to citizenship and social participation.

Muñoz highlighted that the pandemic has accelerated this need for digital participation, and that from the private sector, the Telefónica Movistar Foundation works to promote access to digital skills. It is not just about physical access, but about providing digital skills training for free and in an accessible way, reaching areas where other institutions may have difficulty reaching.

The Foundation has been working on its digital literacy program for some time, with the belief that young people, regardless of whether they have direct access to technology, must have the skills necessary to navigate the digital environment. They work with institutions like Inisa to ensure that young people, even those who have lost their freedom, have access to these digital skills, which are fundamental for their future employability. Muñoz concluded by recognizing that this is an area of continuous evolution and will be part of the future of their work.

Nicolás Fiumarelli, from Youth IGF Uruguay, responded to Rodrigo Alexandre about the initiatives they carry out in the ecosystem of youth internet governance forums. He highlighted the importance of the multistakeholder model and the participation of all interested parties to advance internet governance. Young people are concerned about issues such as the protection of children and adolescents, vulnerability, human rights, artificial intelligence, and privacy. Fiumarelli emphasized that young people now have formed opinions and solutions for public internet policies and are taking an active role in building public policies in civil associations, governments, and as activists. The goal is to motivate more young people to learn about these spaces and their role in the construction of public policies.

In the last segment, the session dealt with youth and digital citizenship and emphasized the importance of fostering participation from childhood and adolescence. It was discussed that the digital environment can be a useful tool for political participation, but it is important to first

incentivize interest in general matters and provide them with a voice and space to express themselves. It was mentioned that the pandemic has brought opportunities in the field of virtual education, but it has also posed challenges in assessment and the lack of skills among students and teachers. In the end, a discussion was opened about what is lacking in Uruguay regarding digital citizenship and youth participation, and the need to create more participation spaces and include cybersecurity education from an early age was raised.

Panel 2 - Protection of Children and Adolescents on the Internet

Moderator: Magdalena Seijo - AGESIC

Pablo Pajes - Plan Ceibal (Government)
Cecilia López Hugo - Pensamiento Colectivo (Civil Society)
Carola Kweksilber - Universidad Católica del Uruguay (Academia)
Pablo de los Campos - Teacher of Adolescents (Users).

Magdalena - Magdalena Seijo, from Digital Citizenship AGESIC, explained that the panel was conceived based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Comment 25, a document that is still under discussion. Seijo stated that, although the Convention was signed in 1990, it does not specifically mention the internet or digital issues, as these topics were not prominent at that time.

Starting in 2014, discussions began on how the rights of children and adolescents apply in the digital environment. In 2021, Comment 25 was formalized, addressing the rights of children and adolescents in relation to the digital environment. Seijo highlighted the uniqueness of this document, as it involved the participation of about 700 children and adolescents.

Comment 25 recognizes the growing importance of the digital environment in almost every aspect of children's lives, especially in times of crisis. Although digital technologies offer new opportunities to make children's rights effective, they also pose risks related to their violation or abuse. Furthermore, it states that the rights of all children must be respected, protected, and effective in the digital environment.

Seijo concluded by noting that Comment 25 has been validated by her country and that there is much work to be done. The goal of the panel is to delve into these issues and begin addressing questions about how children's and adolescents' rights relate to the internet and what the main challenges and achievements are in this area.

The panel addressed the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its adaptation to the digital environment through Comment 25. The importance of protecting children and adolescents from risks and harms in the digital world, as well as ensuring their rights in this environment, was emphasized. Panelists discussed the responsibilities of families, educational institutions, the Government, Civil Society, and private companies in promoting and protecting these rights.

Cecilia López, from Pensamiento Colectivo and a member of the digital citizenship working group, highlighted the achievement of the formation of this group and the publication of the digital citizenship strategy. This strategy advocates for the development of skills that enable safe, responsible, critical, reflective, creative, and participatory internet use.

López noted that this strategy provides support for the work they have been doing in workshops at educational institutions with students, adolescents, their families, and organizations. Participating in the digital citizenship working group allows them to bring the group's discussions and agreements to their workshops and vice versa. This means they can listen to and learn from adolescents and their families, providing them with information but also understanding what they are doing on the internet.

López emphasized that information is power, but reflection is equally valuable. She sees the publication of this document and the creation of this group as an achievement that allows them to continue working together toward the common goal of building a more informed and reflective digital citizenship.

Pablo Pagés, Government - Head of the Department of Citizenship and Digital Wellbeing, representing Ceibal, spoke about his organization's work at the intersection of education and technology, highlighting several key points.

The first achievement he mentioned was addressing the gaps in access to devices. Ceibal has taken historical responsibility for distributing devices to children and adolescents, and in the past year, it has deepened its efforts by launching a reference center for inclusion technologies, which designs customized devices for children and adolescents with disabilities.

Furthermore, Pagés mentioned the achievement of providing quality connectivity in all educational centers, which has been especially useful during the pandemic, as it has allowed students to continue connecting with their teachers and peers, and access free, safe, and locally governed educational platforms.

Another important milestone he highlighted is the Student Voice Forum. This forum, which has been held for four years, brings together children and adolescents from all over the country to discuss topics of their interest and concern, many of which are related to the exercise of their rights in the digital environment. This forum has expanded to include primary, secondary, and teacher training students.

Pagés concluded by emphasizing the importance of consolidating and expanding these initiatives systematically and recurrently, as this allows for new discussions and adds greater value.

Pablo de los Campos, as a teacher, stressed the importance of installing the topic of digital citizenship on the educational agenda and highlighted the achievements of the Ceibal program in educational institutions. He emphasized the availability of a variety of physical resources, such as computers and connectivity, as well as numerous platforms and specialized resources for working in the classroom.

De Los Campos also appreciated the presence of multimedia resources and publications available for working in the classroom, and mentioned his use of concrete learning materials and reinforcers.

In addition, he highlighted the importance of having research in Uruguay that provides evidence and consults children and adolescents, specifically mentioning the Kids Online Uruguay report as a valuable tool for interdisciplinary work.

Finally, De Los Campos emphasized the need for education not to become disconnected from technology, although he acknowledged that education will always be one step behind. However, he considered the focus on digital citizenship within the national curricular framework to be positive, especially in the subject of Technology in Integrated Basic Education, as these contents do not depend solely on the individual teacher's will to be included in the curriculum.

Carola Kweksilber, from the academic area of the Universidad Católica, highlighted the goal of the academic network to have quality evidence and information on internet access for young people and adults. From a rights perspective, the aim is to analyze opportunities and risks in order to develop strategies that provide digital skills to children and adolescents. Carola noted that, although young people may seem more skilled in using technology than their parents, it is essential that adults do not withdraw and remain the main references in the education and protection of children in the digital environment.

What is discussed in this last section of the talk is fundamentally the responsibility that all adults have in protecting the rights of children and adolescents in the digital environment. Emphasis is placed on two key aspects: exposure and control.

On one hand, exposure is addressed as a way to violate the privacy of minors, for example, by sharing photos of them in personal situations or information about their daily lives. These actions, although they may seem harmless, can contribute to building an online identity for children and adolescents and may put their safety at risk.

Regarding control, the idea is discussed that, although it is necessary to protect children and adolescents from certain content and situations online, excessive control can deprive them of the opportunity to learn and seek help on the internet. For example, if a teenager is experiencing a violent situation and wants to search for online resources to deal with it, excessive control could prevent them from doing so.

Additionally, the importance of reflecting on our own online practices and behaviors, and how these can influence children and adolescents, is emphasized. For example, if discussions on social media are based on insults and personal attacks instead of an exchange of ideas, this could be sending a negative message to children and adolescents about how to behave online.

Finally, the challenge of how, from a small country like Uruguay, it is possible to influence global internet governance to protect the rights of children and adolescents is raised. It is suggested that a possible solution could be to establish clear policies at the national level

and work in collaboration with other nations and international organizations to promote a safer internet for minors.

Panel 3 - Implications of Online Content Regulations
Moderator: Ernesto Majó – LACNIC
Panelists:

Nicolás Antúnez – UDELAR
Raúl Echeberría – ALAI
Gustavo Gómez – Observacom
Dr. Guzmán Acosta y Lara – DINATEL
Secretariat Chat: Paula Oteguy – LACNIC

This panel brought together experts to debate the need to regulate or not regulate online content and how to protect fundamental online rights, such as access to information and freedom of expression. Regulatory measures carried out by regional governments and their consequences on the use and benefit of an open and secure internet were discussed.

The conversation focused on online content regulation, a topic of growing relevance that impacts businesses, governments, and citizens. A space was opened to freely and broadly discuss challenges and key questions, such as whether to regulate or not, why, and to what extent.

Guzman Acosta y Lara, from the government, highlighted the importance of internet technologies, which have changed the way society functions and expresses itself. He emphasized that any regulatory process should address the needs of all stakeholders and, fundamentally, respect the rights of individuals.

Regarding the government's position on online content regulation, the government leans towards freedom and non-regulation but with certain caveats. It favors collaborative regulation, in which various actors are consulted and limits are set in relation to commercial audiovisual content.

It was noted that piracy and illegitimate use of audiovisual content have led to significant losses in the industry and violated international treaties and intellectual property laws. In response to this, the government has started to take measures in the audiovisual sector to protect rights and maintain a balance between different rights.

The government has implemented an administrative mechanism to address online content piracy, through which rights holders can report illegitimate use. However, it was acknowledged that the internet has a special governance that goes beyond state borders and that the regulation of online content may need to be addressed at the international level.

There has been cautious progress in regulating online content to limit disruptions to the right to expression and freedom, which are fundamental values that this government does not intend to curtail. The recent accountability law was mentioned as another relevant aspect that could be explained further.

Then, the question of how domestic companies perceive and manage the impact of Uruguayan legislation and similar laws in other countries was raised. The possibility of learning from good and bad examples elsewhere to apply in Uruguay was mentioned.

In addition, the issue of how these companies internally manage these challenges, especially in a space where self-regulation is often preferred, was addressed. The question of how to ensure self-regulation addresses the particularities of each society was raised, a task that requires a delicate balance and deep understanding of local and global contexts.

The private sector representative, Raúl Echeberría from ALAI, thanked the invitation to the panel and highlighted the importance of the diversity of perspectives present, although he mentioned the absence of representatives of other genders on the panel.

He addressed the existing dichotomy in content moderation by internet companies, where one school of thought suggests that platforms should do more to limit hate speech, fake news, digital violence, among others, and defend intellectual property. Another group believes that platforms should do less to avoid becoming powerful controllers of online expression.

Internet companies, in this delicate balance, try to establish their own policies and adhere strictly to them in a transparent manner. Echeberría emphasized that transparency can vary depending on the companies, their business models, and types of moderation.

He highlighted the existence of two gaps: an information gap and an expectations gap. The expectations gap refers to the various opinions on what constitutes transparency, which means there will always be demands for greater transparency, a gap that will not fully close and is normal and healthy in society. The information gap refers to a widespread lack of knowledge about existing tools for moderation and content transparency.

During the panel, Raúl Echeberría emphasized that content moderation is not exclusive to large social media platforms, but is also carried out in various companies, including financial services platforms, which use moderation to detect and prevent fraud.

He addressed the complexity of regulating content moderation, highlighting that many attempts at regulation may have the unintended side effect of infringing on other rights, especially freedom of expression. Echeberría argued that this right is not only essential in itself but also facilitates the exercise of other rights. He advised that legislation should establish clear rules and fair processes for the removal and blocking of content, including the possibility of appeal. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of these decisions being judicial and not administrative, to avoid the risk of abuse.

Gustavo Gómez, from ObservaCom, argued during the panel that content moderation is already under private rules and that even media outlets, defined as accounts on social networks, can be removed by rules that are not imposed by the state.

He noted that there are already state regulations for online content and judicial processes against people who violate these rules, for example, those who publish content involving child abuse. His position is that regulations already exist, and the challenge lies in whether these regulations are protecting the rights of users, whether the rules are established by the platform-owning companies or by state decisions.

Gómez stated that regulation, despite its negative connotation, basically guarantees rights, although this may involve certain limitations on others. According to him, the state can and should establish rules in society to seek a balance between rights that may be in tension.

ObservaCom focuses on evaluating private and public rules that establish the conditions for the exercise of the fundamental right to freedom of expression online, examining whether they are proportionate and legitimate. Gómez expressed concern about the speed with which we are moving towards fast mechanisms, without due process guarantees, to remove online content.

Finally, he questioned the proportion and flexibility of current rules, arguing that money seems to be above health and life in current legislation. He maintained that the law passed in 2020, which is above a decree, establishes that what is prohibited is the dissemination of subscriber services for commercial purposes, while the decree contradicts this, which according to him could lead to abuses and risks in the fine print of the regulation.

Antúnez began by thanking the opportunity to participate in the panel and highlighting the importance of the Internet and social networks in public debate and freedom of expression.

He pointed out that a new legal complexity has emerged in this context since freedom of expression and its limits, which have historically been defined by the State, are now being regulated by private operators, such as large technology companies.

Antúnez highlighted that the central issue is who should have control of regulation: the State or the private sector? He also questioned whether guarantees should be administered by the administrative sphere or by the judiciary, or whether a balance should be sought between both.

He discussed the challenges of regulating freedom of expression on the Internet, especially with regard to protecting speech with the potential to cause harm. He assured that the right to freedom of expression protects even wrong, offensive, or disruptive speech.

It is noted that we are in a time of change in the regulation of freedom of expression in the global arena, where norms are being adjusted in real-time, often in response to political and social events.

It mentions that one of the problems is that there is no consensus on these limits of freedom of expression, which is especially problematic when companies change their policies and regulations based on commercial considerations rather than democratic principles.

Finally, it is suggested that we need to consider whether the current paradigm is changing, with powerful multinational companies establishing supranational norms and adhesion contracts, often without the knowledge or consent of users. It concludes by suggesting that these issues are of great importance for democracies and the rule of law.

Ernesto asks the panel how Uruguay, a small and moderate but internationally respected state, is adapting to the regulation of online content and the impact of internet platforms on society.

It is answered that, although Uruguay is a leader in defending democracy and the autonomy of the rights of other countries, it cannot act alone in the global context. It admits that the country is awaiting developments in these issues at the global level.

It is explained that the government of Uruguay has been working to minimize the impact on freedom of expression while regulating the economic rights of companies. It assures that they have no intention of restricting rights or entering into additional regulatory processes in other aspects at this time.

It mentions that they are observing advances in digital rights at the global level and reaffirms that, although they are in favor of freedom of expression, they are concerned about the great influence of internet platforms. It suggests that the government is willing to work with these platforms to ensure better dissemination of their tools and services.

Finally, it is concluded that, although Uruguay is a small point on the map, the responsibility for ensuring adequate regulation does not fall solely on the Uruguayan government, but also on the internet platforms themselves.

The last part of the session focused on the discussion about the importance of including multiple actors in the development and development of policies, especially with regard to media legislation and regulations. Participants highlighted the need for greater efficiency and the inclusion of all perspectives to ensure a balance of rights and avoid unwanted effects. They talked about the importance of public consultation mechanisms and the need to address regulatory asymmetries in offline and online audiovisual media.

Issues for future working groups were mentioned, such as audiovisual media legislation and the challenge of disinformation and polarization of public debate. The idea that these discussions should be anticipated and not simply reactive to problems as they arise was discussed.

The concept of the "right to be forgotten" was also discussed, which has emerged in Europe and is being introduced in Uruguay. Some participants expressed concern about the implications of this right on freedom of expression, suggesting that it could be used to remove uncomfortable information from people in the public sphere, while others argued that it might be necessary to protect the dignity of private individuals.

Finally, a student who attended the session urged those present to join forces and work together on these issues, highlighting the importance of data and the need to regulate

without limiting freedom of expression. She also suggested looking at other countries, such as Spain, which have successful data protection agencies.

In summary, the session was an open and enriching debate on a variety of issues related to politics, regulation, and freedom of expression in the context of digitization and globalization.

Panel 4 - The Internet Fragmentation Phenomenon
Moderator: Oscar Giudice – IoT CiberSec LAC
Panelists:

Christian O'Flaherty – Internet Society LAC
Rodrigo Alexandre – Institute of Computer Law/Youth IGF Uruguay
Nicolás Antoniello – ICANN
Chat Secretary: Laura Margolis – Internet Society Uruguay

The panel addressed the phenomenon of internet fragmentation and its implications for maintaining an open, interconnected, and interoperable internet. The panelists discussed the matter.

Christian O'Flaherty from the Internet Society emphasized in his speech the growing problem of internet fragmentation. According to him, this fragmentation manifests itself when different visions and connections are presented on the internet, which may be due to network restrictions and controls imposed by content owners or authorities.

O'Flaherty pointed out that this trend towards fragmentation is increasing and is a concern for his organization, which focuses primarily on technical and infrastructural aspects of the internet. According to him, decisions that result in internet fragmentation not only do not solve existing problems but also can generate new ones.

He gave the example of regions in India where the internet is cut off during exam seasons to prevent plagiarism among students. However, this measure, according to O'Flaherty, not only does not prevent students from cheating but also has negative side effects, such as the inability to access health services or report incidents.

Another extreme case he mentioned was the proposal to disconnect Russia from the internet during its invasion of Ukraine. According to O'Flaherty, this proposal is absurd, as it has no relation to the war and harms many internet users in Russia who may not be in favor of the invasion.

In summary, O'Flaherty argues that measures that lead to internet fragmentation are bad and problematic decisions that do not solve existing problems and, instead, generate new and potentially more severe ones.

Nicolas Antoniello from ICANN focused his speech on defining and classifying internet fragmentation. According to him, fragmentation refers to the division of the internet into

segments or networks, which breaks with the fundamental principles of universality, interoperability, and stability of the internet.

He identified three types of fragmentation. The first is technical fragmentation, related to the infrastructure, protocols, hardware, and software of the internet. The second is governmental fragmentation, which occurs when governments restrict or prevent access to certain services or internet regions. And the third is commercial fragmentation, which results from business practices that restrict access or create "walled gardens," where users are induced to exclusively use certain applications or services.

Antoniello also addressed the issue of undersea cabling infrastructure, arguing that he does not see this as a cause of fragmentation. Although companies that traditionally did not deal with infrastructure are beginning to invest in cabling, this does not necessarily imply fragmentation. According to him, fragmentation occurs more due to the three factors mentioned above.

Rodrigo Alexandre from the Academy and Youth IGF Uruguay reflected on the concept of fragmentation, emphasizing that the idea of "splinternet" or "splitting" the internet goes against the fundamental principles that gave rise to the internet. He highlighted that the internet is not only a technological entity but also a political, organizational, and decision-making construction, a multi-stakeholder model.

The speaker also noted that fragmentation can be understood as a limitation to the flow of information. This limitation can occur at an international level, as in the cases of Russia and China, or through political polarization that seeks to expel certain people, groups, or countries from the network. In summary, Alexandre emphasized that fragmentation is harmful to the interoperability that characterizes the internet and limits the flow of information for various reasons and actors.

Oscar Giudice asked Christian from ISOC how to classify the situation where, while in a certain country, one tries to access Google or Facebook and finds that they are not available or are different from what they expect.

Christian replied by differentiating several situations. If the owner of a platform decides to display different content in each country, such as Google showing versions in local languages, it is not considered fragmentation. Although this may vary depending on the country and language, it is a decision by the platform owner and does not affect the overall functionality of the Internet.

However, when filters are installed so that certain content does not reach a specific country, that is considered fragmentation. In addition, Christian mentions a gray area where the content owner decides to self-censor and not allow their content to be seen in a country due to some obligation. Although this does not affect the infrastructure of the Internet, Christian personally considers it a form of fragmentation, while acknowledging that this is an issue that may involve legal aspects, international policy, and blockages, making it more complex.

Nicolas Antoniello from ICANN expressed his agreement with Christian's previous comments but also highlighted some nuances. He commented on the blockages by authorities of a country to certain services, considering them government fragmentation.

However, he also mentioned more subtle situations, such as geolocated restrictions related to copyright and intellectual property. For example, a movie that can be seen in Uruguay might not be available in Argentina due to the producer's license. This, he pointed out, is not government-origin fragmentation, but commercial, and is related to international copyright and intellectual property standards.

Furthermore, Antoniello emphasized the need to define and prioritize the types of fragmentation that are affecting the Internet in the short and medium term, and those that might affect it to a lesser extent for many years. He suggested that perhaps a global analysis and regulatory change are needed to prevent this fragmentation from perpetuating.

The last part of the internet fragmentation panel concluded with a series of questions and answers that addressed the concepts of cyberattacks, multilingualism, net neutrality, and service provider monopolies. Here is a summary of the final discussions:

Cyberattacks: The panelists agreed that cyberattacks, such as manipulation of BGP (Border Gateway Protocol) routes or route hijacking, are security issues, not fragmentation. These attacks are crimes that need to be tracked and prosecuted, regardless of whether they occur online or offline.

Multilingualism: Regarding internet access in different languages and the acceptance of universal characters, the panelists indicated that this is a transition period rather than fragmentation. As DNS (Domain Name System) servers update to support universal characters, this issue should be resolved.

Net neutrality: The discussion about whether internet service providers that offer limited access to certain parts of the internet are contributing to fragmentation was more controversial. Some panelists argued that this is closer to a net neutrality issue, while others considered it a form of fragmentation.

Service provider monopolies: In response to a question about whether fragmentation could lead to an increase in internet service prices, the panelists indicated that this is a commercial, not technical, issue. Although they acknowledged that monopolies can be problematic, they also suggested that competition among multiple players could help keep prices low.

Overall, the panelists insisted on the need to distinguish between Internet fragmentation and other issues related to security, competition, and net neutrality. While they recognized the potential risks of fragmentation, they also suggested that some of these problems can be resolved over time as technology and markets evolve.