IGF Serbia 2023

Belgrade, Serbia

IGF SERBIA

About IGF: Global Outlook

The IGF is an international arena for discussion and cooperation in areas relating to the development of the information society, Internet governance and issues facing the Internet as a whole. The IGF is not a decision-making body but rather a forum at which the problems defined and approaches discussed can be formulated into public, international or national policies and presented to other bodies, whether to those within the UN or to other international organisations or governments, for their consideration.

The range of subjects cover technical, legal, economic and social aspects, including the topics of:

- primary infrastructure and global regulations for management of primary resources (critical information infrastructure, internet service and bandwidth providers, the IPv4/IPv6 protocol, IP/DNS/IDN, open standards);

- cybersecurity, cyber conflict, cybercrime, child safety;

- access to information and knowledge (digital media, intellectual property rights);

- the economy (e-commerce, taxation, the gig economy, labour rights);

- human rights (freedom of speech, privacy and anonymity, hate speech and violence, content policy, ethics);

- development (universal access, education and digital literacy, emerging technologies, e-governance and services, e-health);

- regulatory aspects (relationship between regulators, service providers and tech companies, civil society and users; approaches to governance, policies and regulatory issues at the global, regional and national level).
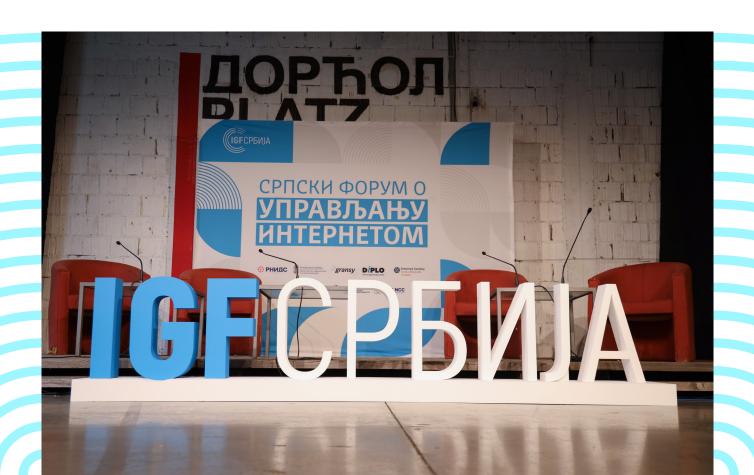
IGF brings together a broad range of stakeholders: representatives from many countries, representatives of the business sector, technical communities, networks of non-governmental organisations, international organisations and institutions and telecoms regulators.
In addition to the global IGF under the patronage of the UN, a large number of national and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) have also been established. The European process, known as the **European Dialogue on Internet Governance** (EuroDIG) has existed since 2008, organised by the Council of Europe, the EBU, Swiss OFCOM, the European Commission and many other partners.. Belgrade has hosted the meeting, in 2011. Institutions and organisations from Serbia have been regular participants in EuroDIG and in 2021 Belgrade hosted one of the centres of the event, which was held in a hybrid format. In the South-Eastern European region there is also SEEDIG, in which organisations and professionals from Serbia take active part, and there are a number of national IGF processes too.

Dialog in Serbia

The first meeting to focus on IGF themes in Serbia was held in 2009 in the form of a panel debate titled "Serbia in the international information society process", with several ministers and the director of RATEL in attendance. Between 2012 and 2014 the annual Serbian Internet Dialogue was held, with the participation of numerous institutions, companies and organisations and active discussion of key topics of significance to Serbia and digital policy in this country.

The Serbian Internet Governance Forum (IGF Serbia), held for the first time in 2022 under this name and as part of the NRI network of the global IGF, represents the continuation of national discussions about digital policy and internet governance. It has been initiated in the multi-stakeholder spirit of IGF as the shared initiative of several organisations and institutions, under the auspices of the Ministry. The establishment of a national IGF is also one of the objectives set out in the Serbian Information Society and Information Security Development Strategy which was approved in autumn 2021 and runs until 2026.

The intention of the organisations and institutions which initiated, and which organise and support IGF Serbia was to have an annual meeting in the coming years which will grow into an open, inclusive, public, open, constructive and useful process that helps shape national digital policy, thus creating the conditions for further digitalisation whilst preserving the rights of citizens. This outcome will largely depend on the interest and involvement of the public at large and of a significant number of institutions, companies and organisations going forward.

Internet Governance Forum Serbia 2023

The Serbian Internet Governance Forum (IGF Serbia) was held on 16th May 2023 at the Dorćol Platz venue, Belgrade, Serbia, in a hybrid format.
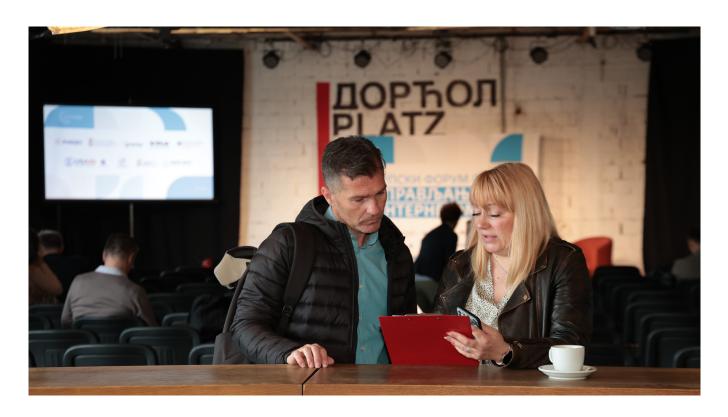
It was attended both by a live audience at the venue and online one via YouTube stream. Attendees had the opportunity to hear four plenary debates and on the sidelines of the event a cybersecurity workshop for media representatives was held. This year's event focused on the challenges of Internet governance, primarily on the current global, European, regional and national political processes that are shaping our digital world.

Keynote was delivered by Chengetai Masango, head of the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum of the United Nations, and a speech from Andrea Beccalli, Stakeholder Engagement Senior Director, ICANN and Olga Kyryliuk, Chair to Executive Comity, SEE DIG followed.

Stakeholders and supporters

Serbian National Internet Domain Registry (RNIDS) — the host; Ministry of Information and Telecommunications, the Diplo Foundation, the Internet Society of Serbia, Belgrade branch, and Gransy, with the support of USAID/Internews, RIPE NCC and ICANN and the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality

Thematic scope and general outlines

IGF Serbia 2023 participants debated on topics spotlighted by the international Internet community and the United Nations Internet Governance Forum. Challenges in digital space, in the world and in Serbia, bearing in mind the current complex geopolitical situation were discussed. How to maintain and improve coordination and governance and what is the future of the Internet in general was a topic considered.

Digital rights and the challenges brought by the issue of digital surveillance, the digital footprint we all leave when using digital technologies, what our rights are in the digital environment, the manners of their violation, mechanisms for their protection and realization was another theme discussed.

Panel Artificial Intelligence Between the Technologies of Rights and Freedoms, considered the technological level of algorithm development, together with the views of international organizations and supranational institutions on the challenges created by the development of artificial intelligence and on the challenges that await legal science in future

The IT business in context of the economic crisis and emerging technologies is the topic of a panel, where speakers from Serbian IT companies and organizations related to the IT industry attempted to identify both the challenges and the opportunities brought by continuous changes in market conditions and technologies.

IGF Serbia 2023 discussions and key messages

Session: Geopolitics and digital spaces

Panelists:

- Vladimir Radunović, Diplo Foundation

- Danko Jevtović, ICANN Board of Directors

- Desiree Željka Milošević, ISOC Serbia

Moderator: Slobodan Marković, UNDP
Report by: Andrijana Gavrilović, Bojana Kovač, DiploFoundation

- The simple solution is to block things, but that hinders freedom and in turn society and the economy. The pressure is on to find solutions, but the situation is complex. Promoting good content is a better solution than filtering entire services.

- Pushing for filtering at the infrastructure level, shutting down servers and domains, is wrong — the global nature of the Internet, as the network of all networks, must be preserved else it will lose its value. Neutrality is what keeps the Internet global and makes it possible for the big players to use that infrastructure.

- Coordination amongst all stakeholders is of crucial importance, the state alone cannot decide. The asymmetry of power provided by a multi-stakeholder approach is vital and we must make use of this.

  The question is, who could police content and how. For example, the EU is trying to impose order on the tech giants. Small countries cannot act alone the way the EU does because they would be pulling an iron curtain around themselves, so they have a choice — do they replicate the model used by authoritarian states and cut off entire services and sections of the Internet in order to establish control, regardless of any benefits that the use of those services brings, or go the way of mostly Western countries (first and foremost the EU) which seek to influence the key players, tech giants, through regulations and political and economic pressure. Latin American countries, the Balkans and the Global South can act together to put pressure on both East and West.

- Points:

    - We need to change the way of thinking about decision-making at the national level. How we change society, because the Internet mirrors society.

    - Digitalisation must be accompanied by a policy framework.

    - Strengthening national competencies is essential

    - Make use of the multi-stakeholder society which already exists in Serbia — regulations should not be introduced behind closed doors.

    - Avoid regulating the Internet and seeking quick and simple solutions without the participation of the wider community of experts; instead, work on regulating, improving and advancing society itself.

Session: Digital rights and digital surveillance

Panelists:

- Ana Toskić Cvetinović, Partners Serbia

- Bogdan Banjac, office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality

- Duško Gudurić, Office of the Data Protection Commissioner

Moderator: Bojan Elek, Belgrade Center for Security Policy
Report by: Boris Begović, DiploFoundation, Damjan Mileusnić and Milica Tošić, Partners Serbia

- The Internet and technology are not the cause of discrimination, the responsibility for this lies on individuals and society as a whole. Awareness of these topics needs to be raised, and about privacy and personal data protection too, and the causal relationship between sharing data and the importance of its protection needs to be explained using examples that are relevant to the individual.

- Exposure of sensitive data is a significant risk factor that can lead to further discrimination. Surveillance inhibits freedom of expression and jeopardises the equality of particular social groups. Caution must be exercised in introducing invasive systems such as biometric surveillance and collecting particularly sensitive personal data.

- With new technologies and the regulations which govern them, a balance needs to be found between human rights and security. The legislative branch needs to take into account and assess the impact of regulations on human rights, assess their necessity and seek to ensure that all provisions are proportionate.

- In Serbian there is a lack of knowledge about these topics at multiple levels, from state institutions to the courts, but also among the general public. The greatest challenge is a lack of democratic mechanisms. The question is, what should we do as citizens? Apart from personal "digital hygiene" we need to know how to protect others' data. We need to use the mechanisms that are already available. It is not just about the mechanisms though, digital literacy is vital, too.

- The general public need to know when their data is being shared in the digital world, where it is ending up and what purposes it is being used for.

- The victims of hate speech need to be protected.

- There needs to be an insistence on the media respecting the right to privacy in their reporting.

IGFСРБИЈА

Session: AI: between technology, rights and freedoms

Panelists:

- Maja Zarić, Ministry of Information and Telecommunications

- Sanja Savčić, Faculty of Law, University of Novi Sad

- Branimir Todorović, CEO, Autonomne inteligentne mašine i sistemi

Moderator: Dejan Đukić, RNIDS
Report by: Boris Begović, Diplo Foundation

- A balance needs to be found between the challenges artificial intelligence brings, especially for privacy, personal data protection and protection of intellectual property, and the development of these models. The purpose of the legal framework should be to stimulate the further development of technology whilst taking ethics and human rights into account.

- Positive law states that only human creations may be subject to copyright protection, whilst machines are not subject to law, and therefore legislation relating to intellectual property does not need to be changed.

- Artificial intelligence brings immeasurable benefits, but also challenges. The responsibility for damage caused by technology must be on all of us, not only on the users but on those developing it. Efforts must be made to apply artificial intelligence ethically and to use it positively, and one of the keys to this is education and raising awareness. One good thing is that the proposed European Union regulations introduce not only subjective responsibility for unscrupulous use, but also objective responsibility on the part of the provider.

- The creation of public policies both at the global and the local level is proceeding too slowly compared to the pace of change. The response to the challenges of artificial intelligence needs to be agile. International experts need to get together and talk, and the IGF is an excellent place for dialogue.Cooperation also needs to be accelerated. Networking at the global level needs to be more agile and stronger across borders. An international body might be a solution to the challenges.

- The responsibility rests with us. Every line of code and every item of data we enter is our responsibility. What we as a society decide to develop, and what we decide should be implemented in real life, will affect the kind of future we have. We must be ready both for the challenges and for the responsibilities. In developing these systems we need ethical values and a conscience, both on the part of the user and on the part of the manufacturer.

- As a race we need to learn to manage and use artificial intelligence, and that will require education and raising awareness. We have reached the moment when we need to respond. Our future actions need to be tailored to a global population that currently does not understand artificial intelligence. Responsibility for raising awareness lies most of all with state institutions, followed by the civil sector, and the individual themselves.

Session: IT business in an age of crisis and emerging technologies

Panelists:

- Filip Karaičić, Quantox Technology

- Sanja Kekić, Women4Cyber Serbia

- Đorđe Vukotić, Joberty, Serbia

Moderator: Dušan Stojičević, Director, Gransy
Report by: : Bojana Kovač, DiploFoundation

- The executive and the regulative branch need to keep up with changes in the digital world and the world of new technologies so as not to stifle further development. Better training is needed for professionals in all spheres (lawyers, bankers, economists etc.) regarding all the issues – both the challenges and benefits of information technologies. The state must play a proactive role in these processes.

- There are good ties between the IT ecosystem and universities, and in regard to capacity-building in the area of cyber-security this is recognised internationally, with Serbian professionals enjoying a good reputation. However, one of the challenges or shortcomings is that IT experts (programmers, developers etc.) often lack awareness or the broader picture of the dangers. That is why raising their awareness, in regard to cyber-security but also other issues such as personal data protection, is of great importance. Awareness of security issues amongst IT professionals is of crucial importance.

- Traditional areas of the economy need to adapt to new ways of doing business and making payments if they are to facilitate business relationships between companies here and abroad. One example of this is the fact that current tax law covers freelancers but the "institution" of freelancer is not recognised in law.

Session: Cyber-security workshop for journalists

Lecturers:

- Jovan Milosavljević, National CERT of the Republic of Serbia

- Dijana Milutinović, RNIDS

Stream and parallel sessions recording

Stream recording in Serbian: https://youtube.com/live/w1_h0K4sxp4

Sessions recording with subs in English:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOtWtarr_G5edA02KMyN-60Hfa3FljPpa

Following up on IGF Serbia activities: www.igf.rs