



2024 REPORT

CANADA YOUTH INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

POST-FORUM REPORT

FIRST CANADA YOUTH IGF

27 SEPTEMBER 2024

VENUE: THE CATALYST AT

TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY



YOUTH INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM CANADA
Forum Canadien des Jeunes sur la Gouvernance de l'Internet

Toronto
Metropolitan
University

the **dais**

Organizing Committee

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Mira Gillis (United Kingdom/ON)
Julianna Kowlessar (ON)
James Caldwell (NB)
Skylar Johnson (MB)
Hammad Khan (AB)
Harnoorvir Josan (BC)
Shannon Thom (ON)
Wyatt Jerome (AB)
Laine McCrory (ON)
Luzalen Marcos (ON)
Jared McGill (BC)
Ellen Taylor (ON)
Bianca Salamis (BC)
Polina Lihograd (ON)
Nathaniel Sukhdeo (BC)
Camara Chambers (ON)
Catherine Amburgey (ON)
Fahmida Kamali (ON)
Tiffany Kwok (ON)

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Mira Gillis
Julianna Kowlessar

**Engagement and Stakeholder Relations
Sub-Committee**

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Julianna Kowlessar
Bianca Salamis
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Procurement Sub-Committee

Dana Cramer
Shannon Thom
Wyatt Jerome
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**Marketing and Communications
Sub-Committee**

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Registration Sub-Committee

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Bianca Salamis

Logistics Committee

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Catherine Amburgey
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Volunteer Coordinators

Dana Cramer
Hammad Khan
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Accommodations Honorariums Recipients**

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Arslan Azeem (SK)
Bibi Rookaya Gulmahamed (PEI)
DeAndra Greenland (YK/NWT)
Donel Kadima (AB)
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Accommodations Honorariums
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Samia Sami (AB)

Stacie Smith (AB)

This Report has been written in compliance with the United Nations Internet Governance Forum National/Regional Initiatives (NRI) Toolkit. The Report was published for two weeks in draft form on Youth Internet Governance Forum Canada's official website with a feedback form to collect inputs. This allowed for all attendees, both virtual and in-person and synchronous and asynchronous, to ensure their views were captured in the inaugural Canada Youth Internet Governance Forum Report. Additionally, a second feedback form for attendees was circulated while the Report was in draft form to collect responses to provide feedback for future planning.

“Attending the 2024 Canada Youth IGF was an inspiring experience that provided valuable insights into Internet governance, offering the opportunity to connect with both seasoned experts and passionate youth leaders, while inspiring us to take action as future leaders in creating a more inclusive and equitable digital future”

- Youth Attendee

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Introduction

Canada had not held a Youth Internet Governance Forum (IGF) until 2024. In 2018, a group of University of Toronto undergraduate students started an organization called, 'Youth Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Canada.' They began this initiative after being contacted by a global youth cybersecurity consortium. These undergraduate students took part in the NextGen@ICANN program, the Internet Society's Youth Ambassadors program, and conducted a study on the Internet of Things (IoT) sponsored by the Internet Society, throughout 2019 as part of bridging into the complex world of Internet governance. Their IoT study was presented at the 2019 Canadian IGF. They also held a youth brunch at this Canadian IGF, which was sponsored by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), and they presented further comments about enhanced youth engagement in Canadian Internet governance which was recorded into the [2019 Canadian IGF Report](#). Following the 2019 Canadian IGF, Youth IGF Canada underwent leadership changes internal to their handful of members at University of Toronto as their original membership prepared to graduate and start careers. Suddenly, with the 2020 pandemic and the shift to online learning and work, Youth IGF Canada dissolved early that year and ceased to exist.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2023, Dana Cramer, a PhD student at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU), participated in a CanStudyUS Fellowship offered by The Dais, a policy think tank out of TMU. She had been thinking for some time about the lack of Canadian youth representation in Internet governance and wanted to change this trajectory. Energized by her Fellowship, she decided to resurrect Youth IGF Canada and began building its presence with Internet governance organizations, areas of the Government of Canada, and international governance organizations such as the United Nations IGF and the International Telecommunication Union. She also presented this initiative to the United States Embassy in Toronto and members of the U.S. State Department in August 2023.

In the autumn, Julianna Kowlessar, a fellow PhD student in the same program as Dana, was the first Executive Council member to join Youth IGF Canada. As 2024 began, Dana opened a call for applications to form a wider Executive Council for Youth IGF Canada, and in February 2024, Dana and Julianna were met with 16 new colleagues scattered across five provinces and five stakeholder groups (academia, international governance organizations, government, civil society, and the technical community). Together, this Executive Council began focusing on four Audacious Goals for 2024 which included: Launching [Youth IGF Canada's website](#); Building engagement with broader Internet governance organizations; Hosting Canada's first ever Youth IGF; and Developing a guide for students to Internet governance-focused university programs in Canada. Youth IGF Canada was to be a 'big tent' organization that also acknowledged and practiced Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The key goal for Youth IGF Canada was to host the inaugural Forum. This was held on 27 September 2024 and welcomed 88 in person attendees throughout the day and approximately 40 distinct virtual attendees. In order to get to this point, Youth IGF Canada's Executive

Council—which also served as the Forum’s Organizing Committee—separated into four Sub-Committees to ensure the fulfillment of this complex file. These committees met biweekly for three months’ time. Youth IGF Canada partnered with The Dais to hold the Canada Youth IGF. This was necessary as, at the time of applying for funding to support the Forum, Youth IGF Canada was not incorporated and needed a partner organization to hold these funds. Additionally, with this inaugural Forum, it was seen as incredibly beneficial to work with an organization who had carried out similar initiatives to help with project management planning and mentorship to ensure the Youth IGF Canada team could successfully implement annual Forums for years to come.

The Canada Youth IGF was generously sponsored by a Net Good grant by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) as an overall sponsor. ICANN served as a lunch sponsor and The Catalyst at Toronto Metropolitan University served as the venue sponsor. The Canada Youth IGF also received letters of support for grants, promotional aid, and community members to analyze and provide comments to the Draft Agenda for the Forum by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) Digital Policy Hub and the Young Diplomats of Canada. CIRA’s Net Good grant allowed a key benefit of the Forum: to fly in youth from across Canada to Toronto to attend in person. These youth included out-of-Toronto Youth IGF Canada members, as well as 12 at large recipients of these Travel and Accommodations Honorariums. These youth represented nine of 10 provinces and two of three territories in Canada. 20 of these travel supports were offered, however, two individuals had to cancel their travels due to unforeseen circumstances, leaving 18 recipients of travel support who attended the Canada Youth IGF.

The Canada Youth IGF was a non-commercial event. Tickets were free of charge thanks to the generosity of sponsors.

Multistakeholder Organizing Committee

The table is reflective of the multistakeholder composition as sent to the United Nations IGF in May 2024. Please note that some members have changed their affiliation, stakeholder group, residence, and participation in Youth IGF Canada since hosting the Forum. Additionally, we have opted not to post workplaces of the Organizing Committee as many early career members have restrictions on acting as ‘representatives’ for their organizations. Therefore, we treat each member in their own individual capacity but note which stakeholder group their views may be shaped by for ensuring a pluralistic approach to multistakeholder Internet governance.

Youth IGF Canada (sent to UN IGF in May 2024)		
Dana Cramer	Academia	Toronto, Ontario
Mira Gillis	Government	Ottawa, ON
Julianna Kowlessar	Academia	Toronto, ON

James Caldwell	Civil Society	Glen Levit, NB
Skylar Johnson	Government	Ottawa, ON / Winnipeg, MB
Harnoorvir Josan	Technical Community	Edmonton, AB
Shannon Thom	Civil Society	Toronto, ON
Hammad Khan	Government	Edmonton, AB
Luzalen Marcos	Technical Community	Toronto, ON
Wyatt Jerome	Civil Society (aspiring)	Edmonton, AB
Bianca Salamis	Government	Vancouver, BC
Ellen Taylor	International Governance Organization	Toronto, ON
Jared McGill	Government (aspiring)	Surrey, BC
Laine McCrory	Academia	Toronto, ON
Nathaniel Sukhdeo	Government	Victoria, BC / Vancouver, BC
Polina Lihograd	Civil Society (aspiring)	Toronto, ON
The Dais (not sent to the UN IGF)		
Camara Chambers	Think Tank	Toronto, ON
Catherine Amburgey	Think Tank	Toronto, ON
Fahmida Kamali	Think Tank	Toronto, ON
Tiffany Kwok	Think Tank	Toronto, ON

Details

Website: <https://www.youthigfcanada.ca/canada-youth-igf/>

Social Media: <https://ca.linkedin.com/company/youthigfcanada>

Email: yigfcanada@gmail.com

Preparatory Process

Number of Meetings

Youth IGF Canada Organizing Committee (Full)	7	30 June 2024 and biweekly until the Forum (as well as thereafter, however, this 'after' is not reflected in number)
Agenda & Programming Sub-Committee	6	7 July 2024 and biweekly until the Forum.
Procurement Sub-Committee	5	14 July 2024 and biweekly until the Forum
Stakeholder Relations Sub-Committee	7	14 July 2024 and biweekly until the Forum
Marketing & Communications Sub-Committee	This sub-committee worked asynchronously via email.	This sub-committee has an 'always on' function in Youth IGF Canada without start or stop times.
Youth IGF Canada-The Dais Logistics Sub-Committee	5	June 2024 until the Forum (check-in meetings since the Forum are not included in this number).
Meetings with TMU officials (e.g., Security, Venue, Catering)	6	From August 2024 up to 25 September 2024.
Meetings with Keynote's Team	4	From July 2024 until 25 September 2024.
Draft Agenda Stakeholder Consultation/Focus Groups	2 meetings with three large back-and-forth email chains.	July 2024 to August 2024

Note: The one common person along all meetings was Dana Cramer aside from one Stakeholder Relations Sub Committee where the Youth IGF Canada [Engagement Strategy](#) was developed.

Listservs

Youth IGF Canada utilizes Google Groups for a listserv, for both external communications as well as internal processes. This allows for an archive of all communications. The Youth IGF Canada Executive Council has a listserv, as well as each of the Sub-Committees had a

dedicated listserv. Youth IGF Canada also mirrored the listservs with a WhatsApp community and groups for quick-turnover communication, but with the caveat that any decisions or voting occurred over the various listservs for accountability in governance processes.

Outreach Process for Draft Agenda

- Formal meetings involved focus groups to discuss the Draft Agenda with various communities. We used these to help create a bottom-up agenda approach since our youth community was not yet defined prior to this first Canada Youth IGF. We consulted with academic groups, think tanks that have an intersection of youth and Internet governance (or digital policy), and government agencies. These meetings took place over Zoom. In lieu of other meetings, lengthy email chains parsed out feedback and potential avenues and speakers for the Draft Agenda.
- We published our Draft Agenda for two weeks (14 calendar days) to solicit further feedback from the Canada youth Internet governance community. We included a Google Form to allow community engagement with the proposed Draft Agenda. We marketed this across our social media channels and listserv, but did not receive any replies on the Draft Agenda. We ratified this Draft Agenda on 18 August 2024.

Report of Meeting Day

Summary of Remarks

Opening Remarks

The forum began with opening remarks beginning with Karim Bardeesy, Executive Director of The Dais. Karim's remarks emphasized how this is the moment to drive real change in protecting and representing youth in digital spaces. He discussed how the Internet can be a fantastic tool and a place where problems can occur, so it is crucial to voice concerns and raise awareness. Karim also brought up the fact that policymakers and politicians, who were also able to be present for the forum, are accountable to the youth and the public. This point was furthered by the fact that global events such as the G7 and B7 are to be hosted in Canada in 2025, and impactful decisions will be made that will affect the lives of society. Karim's main point was the importance of being united for a free, safe Internet regardless of one's background and the ability of youth to influence and make a difference in the digital governance space.

Dana Cramer, President and CEO of Youth IGF Canada, followed Karim's remarks. She began by explaining the importance of Youth IGFs internationally and the crucial role that the Youth IGF Canada is playing concerning national representation in the digital governance space. Dana highlighted the vital role that youth bring to the stakeholder consultation process that is often forgotten and, especially given how youth have grown up with and will be working with the evolution of the Internet, how vital our contribution to the digital governance sector is. Dana discussed how the Internet is not equal to all who use it; to address this ongoing issue, Youth IGF Canada established a travel honorarium that was offered to 20 youth from across the country to attend the forum. She concluded by thanking all the sponsors, organizations, partners, panelists, and participants who helped make the forum possible.

The Honourable Senator Andrew Cardozo gave the final set of opening remarks. Senator Cardozo began by challenging the way in which we as youth may have approached not only the forum but our points of view as young people in the digital governance space; we, as youth, are the first group of digital natives and have come to know and understand the Internet instinctively better than anyone else. This is vital as youth not only fully comprehend the Internet, but should be involved in the regulatory process as we can visualize where the Internet will go. The Senator also highlighted how, although attendees may be youth now, youth are only young for so long. A long-term perspective is also vital when considering digital governance issues. As Senator Cardozo stated, "Youth are the guardians of the long-term future of the Internet." In conclusion, he reiterated how when young people are challenged, we are optimistic about accomplishing goals and preserving and considering both the short and long-term perspectives of digital governance.

What the Online Harms Act Means for You(th)

The first panel discussion, “What the Online Harms Act Means for You(th),” was moderated by Youth IGF Canada’s Director of Engagement and Programming, Julianna Kowlessar. This session highlighted the implications of Bill C-63, the proposed *Online Harms Act*, for Canadian digital policy and particularly for youth. Panelists included Esli Chan, PhD Candidate at McGill University; Bianca Salamis, Youth IGF Canada Executive Council member; Donel Kadima, Lead Research Coordinator and Youth Advisor at Children First Canada; and Amira Shousha, Founder and President of The Youth Guide. A key message heard from the panellists was that Bill C-63 is a step in the right direction when it comes to keeping children and youth safe online, but there is still room for improvement. For example, it is unclear how the legislation will keep pace with rapidly evolving technologies and associated harms, as well as what degree of accountability platforms will be asked to take on with respect to the harms that occur on those platforms. Further, while the bill focuses on the most severe forms of online harm, it lacks acknowledgement of the manner in which lesser harms like misogynistic and extremist ideologies can gain momentum and enable more severe harm down the road. Given that young people may be particularly vulnerable to online harms, it was argued by panelists that the legislation should also have clearer tailoring to youth and recognition of the ways technology misuse can impact other issues that matter to young people, like climate change and systemic discrimination.

Panelists had mixed views when discussing whether the proposed *Online Harms Act* will make the Internet safer in practice. There was hope that the bill would support some improvement in online safety, but additional work and supporting interventions are needed. For example, recognizing that women and girls may be at an elevated risk of online harms, responding to these harms must go beyond looking at statistics also to amplify the voices of victims and work with them to co-produce solutions. Panelists noted that it is also important to better understand and address the root causes of perpetuating or falling victim to online harms, as well as to target not only individual behaviour but also the ways in which platform design can enable harmful behaviours. Panelists flagged that the Digital Safety Commission will need to find ways to evolve Bill C-63 to keep up with the progression of technology because the realities of online harms will change as technology does. It was noted that online harms can take many forms, including impacting body image and mental health and facilitating extreme ideologies. While free speech is often cited as justification for hate speech, this is actually a false dichotomy that minimizes the harm that hate speech can cause, as noted by a panelist. Looking ahead, the promotion of digital literacy skills that will support healthy internet use in young people was argued to also be an important accompaniment to online harms legislation. Panelists concluded that future work focused on young people’s online safety should be multidisciplinary in nature and, importantly, recognize youth as equal partners with lived expertise that can inform solutions.

Keynote Speech by the Honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Arif Virani

Minister Virani discussed mainly the impact that Bill C-63, the Online Harms Act, has on youth. He acknowledges that the Bill isn't perfect and that it can be improved through the input of different stakeholders, such as young Internet leaders. He also acknowledged that the world is a very different place now than the one he grew up in. In order to ensure safety online, we need to understand the different identities people have and how they can be impacted by what they see online. He believes that the online world is becoming increasingly unsafe and things need to be done to ensure the safety of people online. He gave an example of a woman by the name of Elyse Beauvais, who got involved in discussions around the George Floyd protests. Due to the online discussions and arguments pointed at her when she expressed her opinion, she retreated away from online and in real life. Her mental health got worse due to these online harms.

25% of teens experience cyberbullying and online hate crimes and content are increasing year over year. Due to this increase in hateful content, Minister Virani stated he believes that he needed to create legislation to protect Canadians online. He gave a personal story to make the point that we wouldn't accept people to show up to our houses late at night, but at the same time, kids are communicating with people and consuming content throughout the day. He provided examples of real-life attacks on Muslims and others by people who are radicalized online by hateful content. Furthering the argument that this kind of legislation is important, he talked about why he doesn't want to split the Bill into different parts so that the parts of the Bill that have broad consensus go forward, but the parts that are getting a lot of push back can be rethought. His argument is that his job is to protect all Canadians, not just kids. He linked back to his early comments about multiple identities that people have and pointed to the fact that even kids have multiple identities and all of their identities need to be protected.

The Minister addressed criticisms about the Bill in his speech, especially the comments around how it may limit freedom of expression. His argument is that hate speech is not protected speech. Hatred content is not going to be taken down just because an online company, such as Meta, may deem hateful. The onus is on the company, in Bill C-63, is to reduce a person's exposure to hateful content when they flag it. No decisions about which content is hateful and what isn't will be made by political actors, only the courts and online companies.

The Minister asked attendees to engage with the New Democratic Party MPs and Bloc Québécois MPs to ensure that the Bill is moved to committee stage and that it can progress through the House of Commons.

Language Diversity Online: Inuktitut and Canadian Indigenous Languages in Internet Domains

The "Language Diversity Online - Inuktitut and Canadian Indigenous Languages in Internet Domains" panel focused on language inclusivity on the internet and explored efforts to increase Indigenous language representation in digital spaces. The panel was moderated by Dana

Cramer, President and CEO of Youth IGF Canada, in place of Luzalen Marcos, Youth IGF Canada's Web Master, Librarian, and Records Keeper. The panelists were Patrick Jones, representing the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), Louis Houle, representing PointQuébec, Tsista Kennedy, representing the Indigenous Friends Association, and Bridget Chase, representing Typotheque. The panelists were in mutual agreement that digital representation of Indigenous languages is not only about language inclusion but also about data sovereignty, ensuring that Indigenous communities control how their cultural information is represented and shared online.

The panel emphasized the Internet's dual role as an opportunity and a vulnerability, capable of both enhancing cultural exchange but also posing threats to data sovereignty. They expressed hope in reclaiming digital spaces for Indigenous languages and cultures. The Internet allows the sharing of vulnerable information including stories, data, and languages about various cultures and when misused, could lead to misrepresentation and appropriation. Indigenous data sovereignty was a critical concern as panelists argued that Indigenous communities should control how their language is represented and shared. Bridget highlighted the technical barriers of making Indigenous languages accessible online including the required updating of keyboard accessibility, unicode compatibility, and font support. The panel agreed that Internet technology must align with the linguistic and cultural values of Indigenous communities. Louis highlighted the ongoing efforts and challenges in integrating Indigenous scripts into domain names and making them fully functional online. This means facilitating digital infrastructure that supports Indigenous languages, a challenge that requires broad collaboration among registry operators, government, and technical experts. This underscored the role of Universal Acceptance in order to create a multilingual and digitally inclusive Internet.

Audience questions during the Q&A addressed the intersection of data sovereignty with digital literacy, especially for Indigenous youth. In response, panelists stressed the importance of equipping young Indigenous users with digital literacy skills to engage responsibly online. An audience question raised concerns about language diversity creating "splinternets." Patrick argued that enabling multiple languages online fosters global connection rather than fragmentation, as different languages would coexist on a globally accessible Internet that would also be able to be shared by users of the same scripts and languages in other regions.

A recurring theme from the discussions was the importance of youth engagement. Panelists agreed that educating Indigenous youth in digital literacy and Internet governance is crucial for long-term preservation and representation of Indigenous languages online. ICANN's NextGen program was highlighted as it enables youth to participate directly in Internet governance, empowering them to advocate for spaces that respect and protect linguistic diversity. Panelists suggested a multigenerational, community-led approach that takes input from both Indigenous elders and youth to foster cultural preservation. This involves teaching youth the significance of language and technology in preserving culture and enabling community leaders to guide the language integration efforts instead of uninvolved parties.

Both Wireline and Wireless Broadband Access for Youth

In the first half of the panel moderated by Nathaniel Sukhdeo, the panelists shared their insights on improving broadband access for youth in Canada. Nathaniel first asked each panelist to discuss their journey into broadband policy and the emerging issues they're addressing. Vitali Berd, representing TELUS, shared his background as a lawyer and emphasized TELUS's role in addressing broadband access challenges, especially for youth. TELUS leads initiatives like affordable internet for vulnerable youth and digital literacy programs. Michel Mersereau from the University of Toronto discussed his focus on telecom issues at the municipal level, highlighting the complexities of broadband access for rural and Indigenous communities. Jewel Pierre-Roscelli from North End Connect described her initiative to provide affordable Internet to underserved Indigenous youth in Winnipeg, aiming to address digital equity—especially during the pandemic, when access became a critical issue. Greg Lang from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) explained the CRTC's role in regulating telecom competition and expanding broadband access, highlighting initiatives like the Wireless Competition Program and the Broadband Fund to improve service affordability.

Nathaniel then asked Greg about the CRTC's efforts to drive competition in broadband markets. Greg explained that the CRTC's decisions are guided by the Telecommunications Act and government priorities, with key initiatives including: Wireless Competition, allowing smaller companies to use large networks (e.g., MVNOs) to increase regional competition; Wireline Competition, supporting independent providers to offer services over fibre networks; and the Broadband Fund, an industry-funded initiative to support broadband expansion in underserved areas. Nathaniel then asked Michel about international examples that could inform Canada's broadband policy. Michel pointed to Wholesale Open Access Models in Europe and California, which enhance competition by providing independent providers access to existing infrastructure; California's Publicly Owned Fiber Infrastructure, which has successfully increased broadband coverage and access; and the FCC's Digital Discrimination of Access regulations in the U.S., which hold telecom companies accountable for equitable service delivery and could serve as a model for Canada.

Nathaniel then asked each panelist about the role of their respective groups in ensuring youth have access to broadband. Vitali emphasized TELUS programs like "Internet for Good" and "Mobility for Good" to help vulnerable youth access affordable services and improve digital literacy. Michel highlighted Toronto's Universal Free Wi-Fi Program and efforts to leverage public assets to expand broadband access for youth. Jewel focused on North End Connect's community-based approach, providing low-cost or no-cost broadband for Indigenous youth and engaging them in service design. Greg encouraged more public engagement with the CRTC to ensure that youth and marginalized groups are heard in regulatory decision-making.

Key themes from the roundtable discussion were: Collaboration, with a focus on cooperation among the private sector, municipalities, and communities to improve youth broadband access; affordability and accessibility, aiming to make broadband affordable for low-income youth; digital literacy, through programs that teach youth to use the Internet safely and responsibly; research and data, emphasizing the importance of data to identify barriers and design effective policies;

and regulatory advocacy, highlighting the need for greater public participation in the regulatory process to ensure youth needs are addressed.

In the second half of the panel, Nathaniel asked Jewel about the role of youth in opportunities for innovation in the broadband sphere regarding Indigenous communities. Jewel highlighted youth engagement in cultural ownership and advocates for community over competition. She supported initiatives like internships with Computers for Schools to encourage youth in technology. Jewel envisioned youth leading broadband management to ensure inclusive access and digital equity for all. Nathaniel then asked Vitali what opportunities he saw for companies like TELUS to enhance wireline and wireless broadband competition and innovation in northern and remote Canada. Vitali pointed out how TELUS can enhance broadband competition and innovation in northern and remote Canada through increased investment in telecommunications, expanding access with new networks, and utilizing satellite technology. The panel wrapped up with a final question about successful aspects of Canada's telecommunications competition framework, and countries Canada could learn from. Greg mentioned co-investment frameworks in telecom infrastructure and policies that reduce barriers to entry for new providers, inspired by international examples like spectrum sharing in Europe. Jewel highlighted Hawaii, and the need to approach the issue holistically. Michel argued for the necessity of municipal, alongside private, involvement in broadband infrastructure. Vitali then closed off with highlighting Canada's high broadband speeds and extensive mobile coverage as successes, and Greg jumped in underscoring connectivity challenges in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities, where broadband access remains limited. During the Q&A, the panel discussed challenges and solutions for expanding rural connectivity in Canada. They weighed fibre versus satellite for cost-effectiveness, advocated public-private partnerships with safeguards, and emphasized digital literacy as a community-driven, trust-based approach, with less formal teaching and more peer-supported, hands-on learning opportunities. Overall, some key themes tied to the second half of the discussion were balancing the high costs of rural connectivity; the role of public-private partnerships; the need for digital literacy and community-centered solutions; and the importance of flexible, context-sensitive policy design.

Youth Leadership in Canadian Internet Governance

The final panel of the day was titled, 'Youth Leadership in Canadian Internet Governance.' This panel was moderated by Reanne Cayenne, Program Manager for the Centre for International Governance Innovation's Digital Policy Hub. Panelists included Rida Tahir (Innovation, Science and Economic Development [ISED] Canada), Christelle Tessono (University of Toronto and The Dais), Dana Cramer (Youth IGF Canada and Internet Society Youth Ambassador), and Jenna Fung (DotAsia and OpenMedia). The panelists represented government, academia, civil society, and the technical community, respectively.

Throughout the questions posed by the moderator, panelists described their journeys into the Internet governance space. For many of them, this began through their university education, however, it was stated that early career jobs within the Internet governance space were formative to ensuring these youth leaders continued to build Internet governance careers. Panelists also described how entering the space of Internet governance might have begun with

learning about Internet governance as a student, but also continuing in this space with various Internet governance opportunities (such as academic and professional fellowships, ICANN-funded participation, the Canada Parliamentary Internship Program, and opportunities with the Internet Society) allowed careers to be built in this area and to grow as an emerging leader in Internet governance.

The topic of privilege in building oneself up as an emerging Internet governance leader came up. Dana Cramer and Jenna Fung both spoke to how economic hardships faced by youth in various circumstances (e.g., new to Canada youth) can disrupt a youth's trajectory to becoming an Internet governance leader. Christelle Tesson also mentioned how existing stratification issues—such as gender and race/ethnicity—can also limit how youth participate as emerging Internet governance leaders if spaces which offer leadership opportunities only do this in a tokenistic fashion, or do not practice authentic allyship to traditionally disenfranchised demographic communities. Rida Tahir discussed the importance of Internet governance as a multistakeholder space where youth can engage with various sectors and communities in building interest as well as building ties across the Internet community.

Towards the end of the session, a large emphasis came to discussing the multistakeholder model in Internet governance. Rida, Dana, and Jenna all spoke to this as three emerging Internet governance leaders who have occupied international Internet governance spaces. They discussed how the multistakeholder model is incredibly beneficial, but can also sometimes act as 'ideology' within Internet governance spaces.

The panelists took questions from audience members who asked about building themselves and their communities up in the Internet governance space. It was emphasized that access to the Internet (broadband and digital literacy) were foundational and for communities needing this support, to reach out to their CRTC regional commissioner or to funding programs such as with the Internet Society.

Closing Remarks

To close the inaugural Canada Youth IGF, two speakers offered closing remarks. Bram Abramson, the CRTC Commissioner for Ontario, congratulated participants on a successful event, particularly highlighting the passion and enthusiasm for Internet governance that Canadian youth demonstrated throughout the day. Abramson emphasized that events such as the Canada Youth IGF are great examples of the types of inclusive, multistakeholder discussions that we need to engage in when practicing Internet governance. Abramson also reflected on the history of Internet development and the critical infrastructure that we need to maintain today. To end his remarks, Abramson took three questions from the audience. The first question concerned the role of regulators in the complex Internet ecosystem. Abramson shared that policies guide the CRTC's work and the need for intervention on issues related to competition, improving rural connectivity, and more. In response to questions related to current proposed Bills C-27 and C-63 as well as incentives for more individuals to share localized networks with each other, Abramson did not share specific answers, though reiterated the importance of those questions.

Georgia Evans, a Policy and Advocacy Analyst from CIRA, shared brief closing remarks as well. Evans thanked audience members for their participation and noted the thoughtful and insightful commentary throughout the day that helped make the event a success. Evans also reflected on CIRA's Net Good program, a key sponsor of the event, and the new round of applications that will be open in March. To close, Evans promoted the Canadian IGF to be held at the end of November as a great way to continue this dialogue on Internet governance at the national level.

Meeting Records and Logistics

Number of Meeting Participants

Tickets registered, in person	147
Tickets registered, virtual	117
In person attendees	88
Virtual attendees day-of	40

- In person arbitration rate came to 40%. Virtual attendee arbitration rate came to 66%.

Demographic Information

- **Geographic:** The vast majority of participants were local to Toronto, Ontario as this was the site for the Forum. Through the CIRA Net Good grant, we were able to fly in youth from nine of 10 provinces and two of three territories in Canada. The only geographic areas not represented in person were Nunavut and Newfoundland and Labrador.
- **Gender:** We did not collect self-identifying gender information. We did, however, hire a photographer to [take pictures](#) throughout the day which demonstrates various demographic diversity of attendees.
 - For panelists, we did request pronouns, providing us information of:
 - 13 of 25 speakers were women.
 - 11 of 25 speakers were men.
 - 1 of 25 speakers were gender non-binary.

Feedback from Participants

“The Canada Youth IGF was not only an opportunity for me to meet young internet governance leaders across Canada, but I also learned about the various and diverse areas of research the industry is focused on.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed each session on the agenda, as they provided a balanced mix of thought leadership, policy discussions, and practical insights. The keynote speech by Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Arif Virani, and the moderated Q&A session were particularly compelling. The opportunity to hear directly from such a prominent policymaker about the intersection of youth and justice in the digital space was both inspiring and insightful.”

“It was amazing seeing that the honourable Arif Virani could be in attendance, and especially in person! Very moving. It was incredible to learn about his efforts with the online harms act bill.”

“The session on Language Diversity Online: Inuktitut and Canadian Indigenous Languages in Internet Domains was a personal highlight for me, as I strongly support Universal Acceptance, and it is one of my ongoing projects. Learning about the challenges and advancements in promoting Indigenous languages online deepened my understanding of how UA principles can be applied to support linguistic diversity and inclusivity in the digital ecosystem.”

“[The aspect of the event I enjoyed the most was] Interdisciplinary panels, especially the ones related to indigenous governance.”

“What I enjoyed most, however, was hearing the diverse perspectives shared across the panels. Each speaker brought unique insights to the discussions, whether from a policy, technical, or cultural standpoint. These varied viewpoints enriched the conversations and provided a holistic understanding of the issues at hand.”

“[T]he networking opportunities during registration and throughout the event were invaluable. Meeting peers and experts in the field provided a great platform for exchanging ideas and building connections.”

Budget

Funding Sources	
Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) Net Good Grant	\$65,510
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Funding	\$2723.00 (USD\$2000.00)
The Catalyst at Toronto Metropolitan University venue levy	\$1250.00 (was levied as non-applied venue cost as a student status benefit)
Costs	
Salary costs for members of The Dais	\$24,275.40
Administrative support for The Dais (15% of CIRA grant)	\$8544.81
Youth IGF Canada Organizing Costs	\$1751.19
AV Support	\$440.00
Flights to Toronto for Youth IGF Canada Executive Council (outside of Toronto)	\$3198.82
Accommodation costs for Youth IGF Canada Executive Council (outside of Toronto)	\$3153.52
Youth IGF Canada Travel and Accommodations Honorariums for selected youth across Canada	14,517.94
Speaker honoraria to panelists able to accept	\$1250.00
Live captioning of event using Artificial Intelligence	\$1000.00
Branded swag	\$2359.04
Food and Catering	\$6630.28
Security and venue insurance	\$812.00
Photography	\$300.00
Total: \$68,233.00	

Meeting Main Information Sources

Official Website	https://www.youthigfcanada.ca/canada-youth-igf/
Official Listserv	https://groups.google.com/g/youth-igf-canada-general
Official Email Address	yigfcanada@gmail.com
Official Social Media Handle	https://ca.linkedin.com/company/youthigfcanada

Video Recording

To review the Canada Youth IGF, please see the archived video via YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3zCtZpG_I1), or via the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/details/canadayouthigf>). We would like to extend our thanks to Joly MacFie who completed this simultaneous streaming and archiving of the Canada Youth IGF as an in-kind support.

Meeting Programme

The final programme is available via [Youth IGF Canada's website](#).

Photo Gallery

All Canada Youth IGF photos are available via [Flickr](#), with a sample reflected below.







