Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values Activity Report

(Period December 2020 – December 2021)

This report summarises the activity of the DC on Core Internet Values (DC-CIV) since its session at the vIGF in December 2020 and until the hybrid IGF in Katowice in December 2021.

BACKGROUND ABOUT THE DC

Over the last ten years our work as an IGF Dynamic Coalition is focused on defining and emphasizing Core Internet Values, which comprise of the technical architectural values by which the Internet was built, and, more importantly, what can be called 'social' or, in other words, 'universal' values that emerge from the way the Internet works.

The first is that the Internet is a ***global*** medium open to all, regardless of geography or nationality. It's ***interoperable*** because it's a ***network of networks***. It doesn't rely on a single application. It relies on ***TCP/IP, a common, open protocol***. It's ***free of any centralized control***. The only supposed control is the domain naming system, which provides a single translation system between domain names and IP addresses, and that's, of course, needed by design. It's ***end to end***, so traffic from one end of the network to the other end of the network goes unhindered. It's ***user centric***, and users have control over what they send and receive. And it's ***robust and reliable***.

These values have been under stress due to various developments, particularly during the Pandemic. Also, as the Internet expands with newer products, services and applications, there are emerging needs for focused pursuits on important aspects of the Internet, for instance, ***freedom from harm***. (In 2017, the Coalition put together a discussion paper focusing on freedom from harm as proposed by Vint Cerf in the context of addressing the rise of criminal use of the Internet and the solutions towards prevention of harm to the users of the Internet, including the harm that arises unintended from the staggering growth of IoT technologies, causing billions of devices connected to the Internet which in turn bring about new regulatory concerns.)

The Coalition was formed following the IGF Egypt workshop in 2009 titled "Workshop on Fundamentals: Core Internet Values" chaired by the then Internet Society President Lynn StAmour. As a DC, meetings were held at the IGF annually since IGF2010 and has also held sessions at EuroDig.

Activities within the IGF (e.g. participation in the annual IGF meeting, relations with other IGF workstreams)

The DC-CIV participated in DC coordination meetings[1] that gave rise to several papers:
- The DC Paper[2]
- The DC Substantive Paper that was related to the intervention at the DC Main Session at IGF 2021.[3]

The 2021 IGF session of the DC-CIV[4], on the topic of "Internet Regulation during Crisis" - One Year Later, Introduced by Olivier Crépin-Leblond and Chaired by Alejandro Pisanty, UNAM, included as panelists Olga Makarova from Mobile Telesystems, Alison Harcourt from the University of Exeter, Bob Franskston, Internet Pioneer and author of The Regulatorium and the Moral Imperative, Gregory Name, Jutta Croll from the German Digital Opportunities Foundation, Desiree Miloshevic from the Global Initiative for Human Centered Digital Governance.

As such it was a repeat of the 2020 IGF Session of the same name, only with updates on last year's situation, plus new perspectives brought by a new panel line-up. The session report provides full details on the discussion that took place, including its wider background.

The Coalition also took part in the preparation and contribution of the DC Main Session.

Activities beyond the IGF (e.g. events attended/organised, input submitted into various processes, cooperation with various entities/groups/processes)

During the last two years we have seen 100+ Internet shutdowns by 29 governments (2020); Continued suppression of political dissent; Calls by some governments for encryption to be weakened; a visible trend towards fragmentation through national regulation, resulting in: Multiple layers of accountability that do not necessarily work together and weakened technical resilience of the global Internet.

The coalition has kept informal track of these events and engaged in discussions that relate to these events, insofar they relate to a breach of the Core Internet Values.

The Internet Society's "Internet Way of Networking" has followed a parallel track, building on its work of the Internet's Invariants. It has released a toolkit named the "Internet Impact Assessment Toolkit". The DC was unfortunately not associated with its design, but members of the coalition have made use of it in their local environment.

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[1] DC Coordination Group: https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/dc-coordination-activities
[2] The full version of the DC Paper is available at this link:
https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/186/18941.
The short version can be found here: https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/186/18940
[3] DC Substantive Paper input : https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QDi9TIGB2he-z_lab6bQx-ufv281sWFe_QPHMfsVSs8/edit?usp=sharing

[4] Session "Internet Regulation during Crisis": https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-dc-civ-internet-regulation-during-crisis-one-year-later

"If we don't consider how our actions could impact the Internet, we risk breaking what makes it work for everyone."
Collaboration with the Internet Society has been punctual, focussing especially on the supply of speakers for DC sessions.

In June 2021, the Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values held a joint session with the Dynamic Coalition on Internet of Things (DC-IoT) entitled: "IoT Technologies and Standards Evolution and their impact on Core Internet Values"[5] at EuroDIG, the European IGF.

The first part of the session provided an overview of technologies and standards in IoT. There are many different ways to connect "things", some of them proprietary or with consortia for standards. They do not necessarily follow a strict layered architecture along the same lines as the open Internet. Their requirements for low latency and low power (electrical power is meant), long duration and stability, no access to software updates, and a great variation in the frequency of polling for signals (from once a day to millions per second) may be very different from the open Internet. Among some novel things coming, 5G, the 6GHz spectrum (in many countries there is a tense debate between keeping the band open, closed, or half-and-half, debate which is also between different gigantic corporations), and "slices".

In the second part of this hour, panellists and the audience were asked how this evolution impacts on Core Internet Values.

Session co-chairs were Shane Tews, Dynamic Coalition on Internet of Things (DC-IoT) and Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values (DC-CIV). Panellists were Jeff Wilbur, Internet Society, Benoît Ampeau, AFNIC, Dominique Lazanski, Last Press Label and Rudolf van der Berg, Stratix.
The aim of this joint session was to be used as an initial step to a wider discussion at a session at the Global IGF, which the coalitions were preparing. However, the stretching of the Global Pandemic to a second year running made it more appropriate to hold a session at the Global IGF that focussed on "Internet Regulation during Crisis" - One Year Later.

The Coalition will maintain both tracks in parallel:
- A track following Internet Development with its new services especially IoT. This is a distinct track that is pursued in collaboration with the DC-IoT
- A track following Internet Development with 5G and new regulations – such as the new European Directive on Network and Information Security. NIS2. This year's session has included collaboration with members of the Dynamic Coalition on Children's Rights in the Digital Environment

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[5] Day 0 EuroDIG Session on IoT Technologies and Standards Evolution and their Impact on Core Internet Values: https://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/IoT_Technologies_and_Standards_Evolution_and_their_impact_on_Core_Internet_Values_%E2%80%93_Pre_02_2021

Outputs produced and/or research/studies conducted.

In December 2021, Dr. Olivier M.J. Crépin-Leblond, chair of the DC on Core Internet Values, was invited by the Youth Coalition on Internet Governance (YCIG) to take part in a webinar/workshop with Marwa Azelmat (APC & BPF Gender), Carolina Rojas (MGCY) and the moderation of YCIG SC member Eileen Cejas. Each webinar had different scenarios facilitated by the guest facilitators, and participants were split into break out rooms to discuss for approximately 30 minutes in the rooms. Afterwards, facilitators shared the main outcomes in the main room. The title of the workshop was "Inclusive Internet Governance ecosystem and Digital Cooperation".
Further collaboration with the Youth Coalition on Internet Governance is expected in 2022.

CORE INTERNET VALUES TRACKING

The global changes caused by the Pandemic to the economy, work flows and society have been significant. The Internet with its current architecture has been able to adapt surprisingly well to the change in consumer behaviour and traffic flows, including a marked increase in video content delivery and social media. However a number of Governments are focussing on combatting "online harm" and this is likely to introduce legislation that could infringe on Core Internet Values, especially in the area of "end to end" services, especially encryption, as well as some of its infrastructure for which some national projects are introducing the concept of a network of National DNS infrastructure, which might break its open and distributed nature. At present, it is still early days – thus the DC will continue monitoring these developments and produce alerts if negative impact is forecast in the future.

The roundtable sessions that were organised in 2021 are very likely to be followed by further roundtable sessions that will bring all actors to the table. Participants in the DC believe that it is through dialogue with legislation makers and other stakeholders that solutions will be found for the future of the Internet, without negatively impacting Core Internet Values. This is likely to be interesting work in 2022.

Report submitted by Olivier MJ Crépin-Leblond, DC Core Internet Values Chair
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