

GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH 2017

*Internet governance from the edges:
National and regional IGFs in their own words*



GISWatch 2017
SPECIAL EDITION

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

Global Information Society Watch 2017 Special edition
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Global Information Society Watch 2017 special edition:
Internet governance from the edges: NRIs in their own words

Disclaimer: The views expressed in survey responses are not necessarily the views of APC or of its members.

This report is a special companion edition to Global Information Society Watch 2017: National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs), which can be downloaded from <https://www.giswatch.org/2017-local-and-regional-internet-governance-forums-igfs>

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NRI founding stories and development

What is the story of the founding of your NRI? What were its inspiration, its objectives?

After coming into contact with TaC-Together against Cybercrime, Federico (a researcher at ObservaTIC, a research institute) and Nicolás (an engineering and fine arts student) began, in 2016, to carry out a few initiatives around the subject of internet governance (Governance Primer, first Youth IGF Uruguay). After that, they went to the South School on Internet Governance (in Rio de Janeiro) and the Youth LACIGF and LACIGF (in Panama City), where they did some networking and interacted with young people from other places with similar situations. Through conversation with different actors, the idea began to emerge of putting together a group of young people who would tackle these issues and lead up the process among other young people. This is how this team was formed – with a multidisciplinary perspective from the very beginning, as well as an emphasis on gender equity – and it began to grow and consolidate with the support of other institutions like ObservaTIC, Internet Society (ISOC), LACNIC, ANTEL [the Uruguayan state telecommunications and internet service provider], among others.

How did it develop and what difficulties did you experience along the way?

At first all of the members of the current team were brought together in a WhatsApp group (after being recruited personally) and they began to focus on working in particular on the second Youth IGF Uruguay event. Initially, the biggest challenge was finding a location to carry out the activities, especially considering that this was one of the first times that an event like this was being organised, with a new institution like the Youth IGF Uruguay, which would be addressing emerging themes that are not at the top of the public agenda. It should be noted that we received a lot of support from the previously mentioned institutions, which has contributed to achieving recognition and legitimacy as well as to the actual execution of the initiative.

How do you imagine your NRI and its activities in the future?

As a group that is active on these issues, leading discussions and processes for inclusive changes in Latin America and the Caribbean (in the medium term) and at a global level in the future. We want to empower ourselves and empower everyone to take action on what is happening with the internet and create a more just ecosystem that benefits more people.

NRI internal governance and initiatives

Who are the people involved in your NRI and how do they contribute to it?

Alessia Zucchetti (International Relations), Federico Rodriguez Hormaechea (Development), Hernán Albano (Software Engineering), Ignacio Martínez (Law), Javier Landinelli (Sociology), Marcelo Pereira (Sociology), Paula Oteguay (International Relations). We are an interdisciplinary team with a horizontal work structure.

Have you experienced difficulties in ensuring all stakeholder groups participate fully and more or less equally?

We are essentially just starting out, and we are primarily focusing on ensuring participation with a gender balance and a range of different disciplines, but also of different stakeholders.

Do you measure gender balance in your NRI? Did you undertake measures to encourage gender balance?

Yes, this is something we have strived for from the beginning, it was clearly established as a priority. The main challenge we have faced is finding young people interested in working on internet issues on a volunteer/unpaid basis. And although we are a group that was only created a short time ago, there has been a focus on gender equity from our

inception, and it is something we will continue to take into account at all times.

How was your last forum organised, what were the topics chosen and the outcomes of discussion? How was it financed?

The first forum we organised in 2016 addressed different topics (the digital divide, net neutrality, the right to be forgotten, the internet ecosystem). Presentations were made on the different subjects, and these were followed by discussions, and then a few work exercises to generate reflections on the different topics. The financing came from the two team members who were working at the time, and ObservaTIC actively participated through logistical support (the venue, projector, PC). At the second edition of the forum, the subjects were explored in greater depth, because the group was enriched with more people working and its horizons were expanded. The dynamics included a strong component of gamification, which has become the basis for a new way of working with new content with young people. The topics addressed included how the internet works, net neutrality, freedom of expression and hate speech, cybersecurity, privacy and use of data, human rights and the digital divide, convergence, the digital economy, and social networks. The support of LACNIC, FIC and ObservaTIC were fundamental for this edition, although we are continuing to expand.

Are there controversial topics that have been difficult in your NRI and if so, why?

At the first edition, the topic of the right to be forgotten was addressed through a strategy of case studies that generated highly enriching discussions on how important it is for young people to be aware of this issue.

Perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance

What is your take about the role of your NRI in internet governance processes, at the level of your country, region and globally?

For the moment, it is an incipient role, but a solid team is being built that could have significant influence in this area if it is given sufficient support.

How do you perceive your role and position towards other NRIs, the IGF and the IGF Secretariat?

We are aligned with the national IGF and the actors who are involved in it, as well as with the topics and modus operandi of the regional IGF.

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) emerged in response to the success of the first two global Internet Governance Forums (IGFs). The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the outcome document of the final phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), alongside the call for the creation of the IGF, served as the foundations for the model of bottom-up, multistakeholder internet governance. The first NRIs were set up in 2007 and 2008, and there are now close to a hundred initiatives, comprising national, sub-national, regional and youth initiatives, which organise autonomously and cooperate with the global IGF Secretariat. The importance of NRIs has increased throughout the years, as they have grown in number and their work has expanded in scope. They have acquired such relevance within the IGF that an NRI session was included in the IGF 2016 and 2017 main sessions agendas.

This year, APC has taken the initiative to compile two editions of Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch) focused on the work of NRIs. While the main 2017 GISWatch annual report provides independent and analytical perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance broadly, the present companion edition, *Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words*, aims to give voice and visibility to the stories of each NRI, share their experiences and achievements, and highlight their perspectives on internet governance.

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