

Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values Activity Report

(Period January 2024 – January 2025)

This report summarises the activity of the DC on Core Internet Values (DC-CIV) from its session at the IGF in Kyoto in December 2023 until the session at IGF Riyadh in December 2024.

BACKGROUND ABOUT THE DC (STANDING EXPLANATION)

Over the past fifteen years, our work as an IGF Dynamic Coalition has been dedicated to defining and emphasizing Core Internet Values. These values encompass the technical architectural principles upon which the Internet was constructed, and more importantly, what can be referred to as 'social' or 'universal' values that emerge from the way the Internet functions.

First and foremost, the Internet is a global medium accessible to all, irrespective of geography or nationality. It is interoperable, being a network of networks, and does not rely on a single application but on TCP/IP, a common, open protocol. The Internet operates free from any centralised control, with the sole exception being the domain naming system, which provides a unified translation mechanism between domain names and IP addresses as necessitated by design. It ensures end-to-end connectivity, allowing uninterrupted traffic flow from one end of the network to the other. The Internet is user-centric, granting users control over the content they send and receive. Additionally, it is robust and reliable.

In 2017, the Coalition published a discussion paper addressing freedom from harm, as proposed by Vint Cerf. This paper tackled the growing criminal use of the Internet and proposed solutions to prevent harm to users, including unintentional harm resulting from the rapid proliferation of IoT technologies, which connect billions of devices to the Internet and subsequently raise new regulatory concerns.

The Coalition was established 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 Dynamic Coalition, we have convened meetings annually at the IGF since IGF2010 and have also organised sessions at EuroDIG.

ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN THE PAST YEAR 2024

- Response to “The Internet We Want” consultation by the IGF High-Level Panel (29 January 2024)
- DC IoT Session on Collaboration with DC-CIV and IS3C (17 June 2024)
- Intervention at Central Asian IGF (21 June 2024)
- Intervention at Open Consultations and MAG Meeting (26-28 June 2024)
- IGF Riyadh Session in collaboration with DC-NN (December 2024)

RESPONSE TO “THE INTERNET WE WANT” CONSULTATION BY THE IGF HIGH-LEVEL PANEL (29 JANUARY 2024)

The DC-CIV submitted a full response to this consultation, based on its work which was well aligned with many of the findings of the High-Level Panel.

The DC-CIV coordinated its response with the Dynamic Coalition on IoT (DC-IoT) and the Internet Rights and Principles Coalition (IRPC), leading some cross-referencing of responses in between Dynamic Coalitions.

DC-CIV aimed to define and emphasise essential Internet principles. These values, spanning technical and social ideals, were advocated across stakeholder groups for robust Internet policy.

With the Internet often blamed for a range of negative events, the DC-CIV asserted that these issues stemmed from human behaviour rather than the Internet itself, and called for accountability to be placed on the responsible actors.

Supporting the IGF Leadership's collaborative call, the DC-CIV underscored the need for an Internet that was human-centric, universally accessible, balanced, safe, innovative, environmentally friendly, inclusive, and governed by a multi-stakeholder approach. Adherence to Core Internet Values was seen as vital for maintaining an open, free, globally connected, and stable Internet.

The Coalition aligned with the IGF Leadership Panel's key points:

1. **Whole and Open:** Addressing risks of fragmentation and digital exclusion.
2. **Universal and Inclusive:** Emphasizing the Internet's user-centric nature.
3. **Free-Flowing and Trustworthy:** Highlighting the importance of sharing and trust.
4. **Safe and Secure:** Advocating for the development of safety standards.
5. **Rights-Respecting:** Promoting a human-rights approach in Internet governance.
6. **Free from any centralised control:** Emphasising multistakeholder policy development.
7. **Resilient and Sustainable:** Ensuring the Internet remains adaptable to emerging challenges

The Coalition emphasised that these principles were foundational to the Internet's global success and positive impact on world development.

DC IoT SESSION ON COLLABORATION WITH DC-CIV AND IS3C (17 JUNE 2024)

Day Zero Event at the EuroDIG.

The Dynamic Coalition on Internet of Things (DC-IoT) and the Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values (DC-CIV), with input from the Internet Standards, Security and Safety Coalition (IS3C) co-organised a pre-meeting event at the EuroDIG in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 17 June 2024 entitled: “IoT deployment for sustainability”.

The meeting focused on the intersection of IoT and sustainability, emphasizing the need for technology to address climate change. Key points included the importance of global knowledge sharing, local adaptation, and ethical considerations in IoT deployment. Talant Sultanov shared a project in Kyrgyzstan using low-cost IoT sensors for disaster risk management, highlighting the potential of such systems to monitor climate and prevent disasters. Joanna Kulesza argued that sustainability is a legal obligation under international law, emphasizing the need for state due diligence. Jonathan Cave discussed the emergent nature of sustainability challenges and the balance between cybersecurity and cooperative behaviour. Olivier Crépin-Leblond underscored the importance of core Internet values in fostering innovation and ensuring safety.

INTERVENTION AT CENTRAL ASIAN IGF (21 JUNE 2024)

Olivier Crépin-Leblond intervened in a session with High-Level local Stakeholders, explaining the role of Dynamic Coalitions in the Global IGF environment, the work the Coalitions provide and the bottom-up nature of their work. He emphasised the wealth of knowledge present in these coalitions and the resulting advances in the governance process thanks to the work of the coalitions.

Olivier also explained the concept of Core Internet Values and their importance in how the Internet became a global network for innovation and support of the world’s development.

INTERVENTION AT OPEN CONSULTATIONS AND MAG MEETING (26-28 JUNE 2024)

Olivier Crépin-Leblond provided some input under the theme “Improving digital governance for the Internet we want” as to how the Dynamic Coalitions support the IGF mandate and why their work should be supported as much as possible by the MAG and the UN. His short intervention emphasised the Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values submission to the IGF High-Level Panel in 2023.

IGF RIYADH SESSION IN COLLABORATION WITH DC-NN (DECEMBER 2024)

The large number of Dynamic Coalitions now in operation meant that Dynamic Coalition Session slots had to be shared between Dynamic Coalitions. The IGF Secretariat published all DC proposals, and it was clear that the proposal from the DC on Network Neutrality (DC-NN) was aligned with the DC-CIV proposal. Therefore, it was decided to merge proposals and consolidate the key participant/panellist list. The result was a very successful workshop.

The workshop on "From Internet Openness to AI Openness" co-chaired with Luca Belli, Chair of the DC-NN, explored the intersection of Internet governance principles and AI governance. Key points included the need for transparency, accountability, and interoperability in AI systems, drawing parallels with Internet values.

Renata Mielli highlighted the historical development of the Internet and its Core Values such as openness, innovation, and interoperability. She discussed the importance of these principles in AI governance, emphasizing human rights, transparency, and collaboration. Mielli called for AI governance tailored to local realities and advocated for South-South collaboration to foster research, innovation, and digital governance. She also stressed the need for effective laws and regulations to safeguard basic rights and promote inclusive development.

Anita Gurumurthy highlighted the complex relationship between the Internet and AI, noting that while AI doesn't need the Internet to function, they are intertwined. She critiqued the concept of openness as sometimes understood on the Internet, emphasizing that both the Internet and AI are often controlled by a few powerful entities. Gurumurthy called for transparency, reusability, and public participation in AI development, advocating for a societal and collective rights approach to ensure ethical and equitable outcomes for all.

Sandrine Elmi Hersi discussed generative AI's impact on Internet openness, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. She emphasised that AI technologies raise legal, societal, and technical issues, and stressed the need for regulation to ensure transparency, user empowerment, and open innovation. She called for high standards in AI governance to protect Internet openness and foster sustainability and safety.

Vint Cerf explained that AI and the Internet are fundamentally different, cautioning against applying Internet standardization to AI. He emphasised that AI systems are complex, proprietary, and require careful regulation focused on user safety. He expressed concerns about generative AI potentially losing specific details and stressed the importance of accountability and provenance in AI training materials.

Yik Chan Chin highlighted the differences between AI and the Internet, emphasizing the complexity of AI interoperability and the challenges of applying permissive innovation principles to AI regulation due to AI's unique features and risks. Yik Chan Chin advocated for careful consideration of AI's complexity and potential harms when developing regulations.

Alejandro Pisanty emphasised the need to preserve Core Internet Values like Openness and Interoperability when extending them to AI. He cautioned against overregulating AI, stressing the importance of focusing on human behaviour and intentions rather than the technology itself. Pisanty advocated for a federated approach to AI governance and the importance of collaboration among stakeholders.

Sandra Mahannan speaking from the perspective of an AI and robotics company emphasised that AI often reflects its creators' biases, raising concerns about AI response quality. She highlighted the high costs of data acquisition and computing power, advocating for AI regulation focused on data quality, privacy, security, and sharing protocols from the developer's perspective.

Wanda Muñoz emphasised the need to analyse Internet governance values through a gender and diversity lens, drawing on feminist AI scholarship. She stressed the importance of human rights in AI discussions, noting that AI harms often lead to human rights violations affecting marginalised groups. Muñoz advocated for AI regulation to ensure accountability and reparation, and called for positive actions to address systematic discrimination. Finally, she emphasised the necessity of regulation to protect societal and collective rights.

The session concluded with a call for a collaborative approach to AI governance, leveraging existing Internet principles.

A full report of this interesting session can be found at:

<https://intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2024-dc-civ-dc-nn-from-Internet-openness-to-ai-openness>

CORE INTERNET VALUES TRACKING

In 2024, the erosion of Core Internet Values such as Openness, Interoperability, and user-centricity became increasingly evident. Major tech giants continued to consolidate their power, creating walled gardens that limited user access to information and services outside their ecosystems. This centralisation stifled competition and innovation, as smaller companies struggled to compete with the monopolistic practices of these dominant players. Furthermore, the rise of AI-driven content moderation and algorithmic curation introduced new challenges to Internet freedom, as biased and opaque algorithms often suppressed diverse voices and viewpoints. Governments around the world implemented more stringent regulations on online content, sometimes under the guise of national security or public safety, which further restricted the free flow of information. As a result, the Internet in 2024 increasingly deviated from its founding principles, threatening its role as a global platform for open communication, collaboration, and innovation.

Key Impacts from the DC-CIV Activity Jan 2024 – Jan 2025

- The merger of DC-CIV and DC-NN proposals for IGF 2024 fostered greater collaboration among Dynamic Coalitions, enhancing advocacy efforts and resource sharing.
- Participation in “The Internet We Want” consultation reinforced the importance of Core Internet Values and the need for policies that uphold these principles.
- Collaboration with DC-IoT highlighted the intersection of Internet governance and sustainability, particularly in leveraging IoT for climate change management and disaster risk reduction.
- Engagement in global events facilitated knowledge sharing, improving stakeholders’ understanding of governance processes.
- The Coalition actively promoted a human-rights approach in Internet governance, advocating for digital rights and freedoms.
- Concerns about the centralization of power among tech giants were raised, emphasizing the threat to openness and user autonomy and calling for action against monopolistic practices.
- Discussions on trust and safety underscored the importance of developing frameworks that protect users and build confidence in online platforms.
- The role of AI in relation to Core Internet Values was explored, emphasizing the need for transparency and accountability in AI systems to ensure openness and interoperability.
- Regulatory challenges were also noted, with increasing government intervention in online content raising concerns about potential censorship under the guise of security.
- A broader trend of divergence from foundational Internet principles, such as user-centricity and interoperability, was identified as a growing risk to the Internet’s role as a global platform for communication and innovation.

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

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