

Executive Summary of YIGF Report

Having attended the 4th United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UNIGF) in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, NetMission ambassadors were inspired to organize the Youth Internet Governance Forum (YIGF) camp in Hong Kong.

The aim of the camp is to involve the local community and encourage youth to participate in Internet-related issues and discussions, so that they may understand their role in creating a harmonious and respectable Internet environment. The main idea is to spark their interest to learn more about Internet governance, and to provide a platform where their voices can be heard.

50 participants between 16 and 22 participated in the YIGF camp in June 2010. It turned a new page on youth empowerment and involvement in Internet governance. The purpose of the YIGF report is to:

1. Capture the opinions, experience and lessons learnt by the youth participants
2. Report and detail the format, views, discussions, conclusions, challenges and suggestions throughout the camp by YIGF participants
3. Act as a useful reference those who are thinking about organizing similar youth events, as the report includes the feedback, reflections and important reminders from the YIGF participants themselves, for example, how the camp can be improved and what can be done to foster more effective discussion.

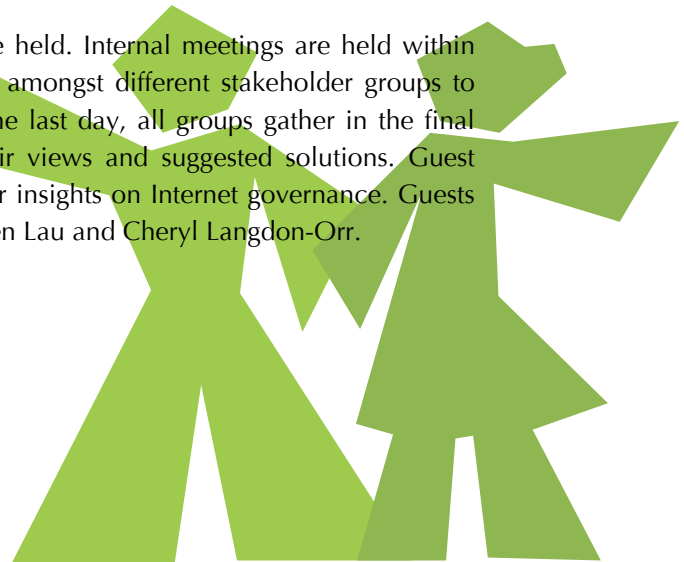
This report is written by us, YIGF participants, with the facilitation and support from NetMission Ambassadors.

The Format of the YIGF

The format of the YIGF camp followed very closely to the international version (UNIGF), with the discussion focused around three main areas – digital divide, privacy and censorship. The topics were chosen due to specific interest and relevance to the Hong Kong society.

Participants were assigned to 6 different stakeholder groups in the discussion of the three topics. Participants were tasked to put themselves in others' shoes to think in their respective stance. The stakeholders included 'government', 'non-government organizations (NGOs)', 'business organizations', 'youth', 'teachers and parents' and 'yourself' respectively. The purpose of role-playing is to encourage youth to think from a multi-stakeholder perspective.

In the beginning, internal and external meetings were held. Internal meetings are held within stakeholder groups, while external meetings are held amongst different stakeholder groups to discuss the topics and seek possible solutions. On the last day, all groups gather in the final main discussion forum to present a summary of their views and suggested solutions. Guest panelists were invited to give feedback and share their insights on Internet governance. Guests include Wolfgang Kleinwächter, Edmon Chung, Stephen Lau and Cheryl Langdon-Orr.



Summary of Discussion on Privacy

Context

Privacy problems emerge when personal information is unwillingly disclosed on the Internet. This may lead to identity theft and cyber bullying.

Discussion Points

- ✧ Both users and content providers are responsible for protecting privacy

We agree that everyone should have the right to know how his or her personal information is being handled and used. Both users and Internet service providers are responsible for protecting privacy. The users should be aware the type of information that they disclose on the digital space, and that they should bare the risk of the information being used or disclosed once they decide to provide their information. On the other hand, content providers should inform privacy regulations to users clearly. On no occasion should they share users' personal information to a third party without the consent of the owners.

- ✧ More effort needed in educating users

There is a lack of awareness of Internet privacy issues among the general public. Furthermore, the legal regulations that govern how information is being handled are often not clear to the average user. Therefore, more effort needs to be put in educating users about privacy issues and its implications.

Suggested Solution

- ✧ Encourage businesses to adopt simple privacy terms

Content providers should make privacy terms more user-friendly, so that users are more willing to read them. The government can regulate companies to mandatorily provide details to users on how they handle personal information.

- ✧ Safe Public Computer Scheme to encourage privacy protected environment

The government can launch a "Safe Public Computer" scheme that certifies businesses that provide publicly available computers with software installed that can effectively protect users' privacy.

Last but not least, education is vital. The government, related organizations and experts can work together to educate teachers, students and parents through school regarding the issues related to online privacy and safety.



Summary of discussion on Censorship

Context

Censorship in this discussion refers to the control of specific content online, and the fundamental argument is “What should be censored in Hong Kong?”

Discussion Points

- ✧ Obscene and indecent articles should be censored

Obscene and indecent articles, such as child pornography, which would negatively impact children’s growth and mental development, should be censored. However, the censorship system used should be sophisticated and accurate enough in order to prevent deterioration in the quality of Internet access.

- ✧ Fear for future censorship on political content

We believe that everyone should have the right to express and access accurate information, including diverse political views. The current Internet situation was examined, and we were generally satisfied with the Internet quality under the “one country two systems” policy.

However, we were more concerned about the preservation of Internet openness and diversity when Hong Kong’s sovereignty as a Special Administrative Region will come to an end in 2047. We believe that censorship should only be executed only if the publication of certain content is considered as unauthorized reproduction that breaches the law and inflicts copyright and privacy. All political content should not be censored in order to preserve openness on the Internet.

Suggested Solution

- ✧ Form a committee responsible for setting up the regulations for censorship, policy-making, annual investigations and education.

The committee should adopt a multistakeholder approach, so that various voices would be taken into consideration before a decision is made. Although one might question children’s decision-making ability because they are too young, however we believe their voices should not be undermined because they also represent the one of the largest user groups of the Internet. Our experience at the YIGF also shows that participation and involvement is also an effective means of educating the next generation about Internet usage and Internet governance in long-term.



Summary of Discussion on Digital Divide

Context

We believe that bridging the digital divide is necessary, as doing so can increase welfare and bring about the following socioeconomic benefits to the community:

1. Minimize poverty gap
2. Increasing competitiveness
3. Stimulate economy
4. Increase cultural awareness

Besides technical differences, the digital divide also refers to a gap between those who are able and unable to access the Internet in Hong Kong.

Discussion Point

- ✧ Equal access opportunities to Hong Kong Citizens

Opportunities should be provided to the Hong Kong people who are digitally excluded by increasing access to computers and to the Internet. However, they have the right to choose whether or not they want to be the part of the Internet, and their decision should be respected.

Suggested Solution

- ✧ Rental scheme for old but reusable computers

We realized that different stakeholders should cooperate to alleviate the problem of digital divide. The government will take an advisory role for the scheme, and lining up the necessary resources for this program.

- Hardware approach---provide them with computers

NGOs can act as a point of contact between end-users and business sector to coordinate a rental scheme of old computers to needy families.

IT companies can donate or sell leftover computers, or surplus equipment at a low price to the NGOs. NGOs can then loan out the computers to the families that have applied for renting the computer.

- Software approach---provide them with the knowledge of computers

Instead of focusing solely on the hardware issues, we realize that having adequate trainings can further narrow the digital divide. To be able to use the computer to the advantage of the user is important too. Schools can provide complementary courses regarding how to effectively use the computers or Internet, and NGO or school can provide the venue for the trainings.

** For more information, please feel free to contact us through email: ambassadors@netmission.asia, or visit our website: netmission.asia*

