CCAOI Newsletter	April 2022

Highlights of April

Some of the key updates of April are related to newly published CERT-In directive, the newly launched Declaration for the Future of Internet, developments on the Digital war between Russia and Ukraine, Elon Musk's Twitter acquisition plans, new regulatory initiatives from China, Global Digital Compact, besides updates related to cybersecurity, antitrust measures, gig economy and more.

CERT-In Directive: Is the ask too much?

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), which is the nodal national agency of cyber security in India has issued new directions to protect, prevent and report cyber incidents. These include reporting cyber incidents within 6 hours, maintaining logs for 180 days within Indian jurisdiction, synchronisation of clocks and linking them to Network Time Protocol (NTP) Server of National Informatics Centre (NIC) or National Physical Laboratory (NPL) or with NTP servers traceable to these NTP servers; VPS and data centres to retain accurate information of customers and subscribers for 5 years such as validated names of subscribers or customers availing the services, period of hire including dates, IPs allotted to or being used by the members, Email address and IP address and time stamp used at the time of registration, purpose of hiring services, validated address and contact numbers, Ownership pattern of the subscribers or customers hiring services). The directive comes into effect end of June 2022.

Concerns have been expressed that there was no open consultation with stakeholders and it is not well thought out. It is argued that 6 hours is too less a time to report a cyber incident, challenges in synchronization of clocks and linking them with prescribed or servers traceable to the prescribed servers, the sheer volume of data that would have to be retained, privacy concerns related to data that VPNs would have to retain of their subscribers, relevance of the information such as ownership pattern of customers asked to be stored, lack of oversight and capacity of CERT-In to deal with all the data and more.

It is believed that CERT-In will be releasing FAQs related to this directive. While the intent behind the directive is good, we wait to see if the concerns raised will be addressed soon, so that the directives are enforceable in practical sense.

Declaration for the Future of the Internet: Is it just another declaration or can we expect more?

This month, over 60 countries and territories launched the Declaration for the Future of the Internet with an aim to promote a free, open, interoperable, reliable, secure global internet and broader digital ecosystem. Through this declaration, the signatories intend to uphold and promote the principles of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms; maintain a global internet; promote inclusive, affordable, and reliable access to the internet; promote trust in the digital ecosystem; and protect and strengthen the multistakeholder model of internet governance.
Interestingly many of the developing nations including India, are not signatory of this declaration. Presently there is a lack of civil society and other stakeholders endorsing the declaration too.

Concerns have been raised that there has not been wide stakeholder outreach to reach out to other stakeholders and no clarity on what the process and next steps will be.

It remains to be seen whether this will just be another declaration, or a global inclusive process to generate some tangible outcomes.

Ukraine Crisis: The Digital War continues

The digital war continues between Russia and Ukraine and the allies. Some of the developments in April include:

The five eyes (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US) issuing a joint cybersecurity advisory against Russia backed cyberattack on critical infrastructure.

China denied claims made by The Times newspaper of launching cyberattacks on Ukraine days before the Russian invasion. Ukraine also denied providing any such information to media.

Microsoft said that it had disrupted cyberattacks by Russian military spies on Ukraine and other NATO countries.

It is reported that Russia rerouted internet traffic from the occupied region of Kherson in Ukraine to its infrastructure. However, days later Ukrainian officials tweeted that telecom connections were fully restored in Kherson region

Further to stop Russia, the EU banned high value crypto asset services to Russia for closing loopholes in existing restrictions; Nokia and Ericsson announced stopping business in Russia, Deutsche TeleKom and few others waived roaming fees in Ukraine.

Chinese drone maker DJI stopped shipments of its products to both Russia and Ukraine including after sales service, over concerns that its products are being used for combat purposes.

In a new order, the US Treasury has exempted US telecommunication companies to provide internet service in Russia. As per the new order, companies can now sell or supply software, hardware, services, instant messaging, chat, email, video conferencing, social media, web hosting, domain name registration services, sharing of photos, movies, documents etc.

Netflix has been sued by Russian users for leaving the country.

Google woes in Russia is far from over and the tiff continues. A Russian court fined Google $50,124 USD for spreading fake reports about losses of the Russian armed forces in Ukraine. In another case Google was fined $137,763 USD for failing to delete "fake" information about the Ukraine conflict and YouTube videos produced by Ukrainian far-right groups. Roskomnadzor has initiated proceedings against Google for failing to remove illegal content from YouTube.

Further, after YouTube blocked Russian Parliament channel, the Russian telecom regulator Roskomnadzor ordered Google to restore it.

Looking at the current state of affairs, this crisis is expected to continue and we can expect more updates in this digital war.

China continues to tighten its grip over Gaming and Livestreaming platforms

China continues to tighten is regulatory grip especially over gaming and livestreaming platforms, to protect children from gaming addiction and protect the "physical and mental health" of minors

Early April the Chinese government resumed licensing new video games, ending a freeze imposed last July. The National Press and Publication Administration (NPPA), which oversees licensing video games in China,

published a list of 45 approved new titles. However, none of the newly licensed games came from Tencent Holdings or NetEase, the country's two biggest gaming companies.

Just a few days later, the Internet watchdog in China initiated a [two month clean up of the Live-streaming](#) and short video platform business.

Next a [ban on live-streaming of unauthorised video games](#) was announced. The National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA), announced that online platforms including variety shows, live-streaming sites and short video services cannot broadcast games that are not approved by regulators. These measures NRTA stated are being taken to address issues of gaming addiction among teenagers.

Recently, the Chinese regulators announced that [minors will be restricted from live streaming](#) and those between 16 and 18 years will have to obtain parental consent before doing a livestream. Additionally, minors are now banned from tipping online.

Concerns are being raised that these measures may have adverse effect in the gaming and livestreaming industry. Further, will these measures be adequate to protect children and achieve the objectives, or will it make minors try to find alternative ways to access the platforms, only time will tell.

The twists and turns in Elon Musk's Twitter acquisition plans

The Twitter Board has [agreed to the bid from Elon Musk to buy Twitter](#). The deal is valued at approximately $44 billion USD and expected to be closed in 2022. This would make Twitter a private company. However Musk has tweeted that it would be taken to the market in three years times.

Musk has been [sharing his plans about Twitter](#) such as increasing Twitter's annual revenue to $26.4 billion by 2028, reduce reliance to ad revenue, increase user base, reinstating Trump on Twitter, allow [free speech on twitter "which matches the law"](#). He has further tweeted that Twitter [will be free for casual users but there may be costs for commercial or government users](#),

Recently, Musk has tweeted that the [deal is 'temporarily on hold'](#) till issue of fake account on Twitter is validated. However, this sale has to be approved by regulators and other stakeholders of Twitter. There is already [an antitrust and stock probe by FTC in the US](#) and been [invited by the UK Parliament](#) to discuss on his proposed changes in Twitter which he rejected.

We can expect to hear more on this saga in the coming months.

Inputs sought on the Global Digital Compact

Last week, the UN Secretariat, through the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, has launched a [public consultation inviting views and suggestion](#) on the [Global Digital Compact](#) (GDC). Views should be focused on two specific aspects (a) core principles that governments, companies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders should adhere to; and (b) key commitments, pledges, or actions that should be taken by stakeholders.

It may be mentioned that the UN Secretary-General in this report [Our Common Agenda](#) released in 2021 proposed a Global Digital Compact to be agreed at the Summit of the Future in September 2023 through a technology track that would involve all stakeholders. GDC is expected to "outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all" and would cover topics.

Issue based updates:

Cybersecurity

The Open-Ended Working Group reached [an agreement to apply modalities for the participation of stakeholders](#). Now NGOs with or without ECOSOC status can inform the OEWG Secretariat of their interest to participate and if no state raises any objection, the NGOs will be invited to participate as observers in the formal sessions, make oral statements during a dedicated stakeholder session, and submit written inputs that will be posted on the OEWG's website.

The US and EU governments [announced that they have jointly taken down Raid Forums](#), a popular website used by hackers to buy and sell stolen data.

US has linked [North Korean hackers Lazarus to the theft of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of cryptocurrency](#) tied to the online game Axie Infinity

A report by Recorded Future Inc. suggests that state sponsored [Chinese hackers targeted India's power grid after collecting intelligence from seven North Indian centers.](#)

A major public sector unit [Oil India suffered a ransomware attack](#) which disrupted its operations in Assam. The attackers demanded a ransom of USD 75,00,000. It is [reported](#) that a Russian malware was planted from Nigeria.

Child Safety

In terms of child safety, Apple plans to roll out [new child safety features](#) that will scan photos sent or received by a child for nudity and alert the child. Apple has clarified that this tool will not affect end to end encryption of message in any manner.

The European Commission [adopted](#) a new [European strategy for a Better Internet for Kids](#) (BIK+), that aims to empower children, improve age-appropriate digital services while ensuring that children are safe online and their rights are protected. The BIK+ is based on three key pillars: safe digital experiences; digital empowerment and active participation of children

The commission also [proposed](#) new EU [legislation that aims](#) to prevent and combat child sexual abuse online. The proposed rules will mandate service providers to detect, report and remove child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from their networks.

Anti-Trust

Big tech and their market power continues to be under the spotlight across the globe.

Apple may be facing a new antitrust investigation in the EU. The [European Commission has informed Apple](#) that their preliminary finding indicate that the company has abused its dominant position in markets for mobile wallets on iOS devices.

Chinese Cyberspace regulator has announced that they will be conducting in depth review of the algorithms used by Big Tech companies to ensure they are in compliance with the [algorithm regulations](#) in the country.

The Shanghai market [regulator summoned 12 e-commerce platforms](#) for issues including price gouging.

It is reported that the Competition Commission of India has launched [antitrust raids on Amazon sellers Cloudtail, Appario](#).

Privacy and Data Protection

A US Appeals court has [ruled that scraping of data which is publicly accessible](#) does not violate the US Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

A French court [upheld a 2019 150 Million Euro](#) fine on Google for its opaque advertisement rules.

The European commission has released a proposal for a [European Health Data Space (EHDS)](#) for 'establishing clear rules, common standards and practices, infrastructures and a governance framework for the use of electronic health data by patients and for research, innovation, policy making, patient safety, statistics or regulatory purposes'.

Content Policy

This month the European Parliament and the European Commission [reached a provisional political agreement](#) on the [Digital Services Act (DSA)](#). It is expected that by the end of June the Act will be formally adopted and come into force 15 months later. We have covered the DSA in depth in our last month's newsletter.

Chinese social media will [now display user locations based on IP address](#), including platforms from ByteDance and Zhihu. It is reported that Wribo has already started displaying locations on user profiles. While this in not mandated by law, platforms are proactively taking this move to comply with increasingly stringent internet content rules targeting 'rumors'

In India, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) issued orders to block twenty-two YouTube-based news channels, three Twitter accounts, one Facebook account, and one news website under the emergency powers granted by the Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, the ministry said in a [press release](#) issued on April 5.

To bring in more transparency and neutrality, [Indian micro blogging site Koo has made its core algorithms public](#).

Gig Economy

The Paris Criminal Court [convicted the food delivery platform Deliveroo](#) and three of its former managers for "concealed employment and abusing the contractor status of its drivers. The platform was fined $405,800 USD and other sums in damages. The judgment said that Deliveroo was responsible for the systemic concealment of jobs since it engaged its drivers as independent contractors "who in reality were employees".

Crypto currency

The Central African Republic has [adopted bitcoin and other cryptocurrency as legal tender](#), becoming the second country after El Salvador.

[Cuba has approved cryptocurrency services](#) but would require license of the central bank.

The Panama's Legislative Assembly has [approved a bill regulating the use of crypto assets](#) as payment systems. While the bill allows the use of crypto assets as a means of payment for civil or commercial operations howverit does not give crypto assets the status of legal tender.

In Uzbekistan by a presidential decree, crypto currency operations carried out by both domestic and international companies [will be exempted from income tax](#). Though no license is required for crypto mining, however the company will have to register with the Uzbek National Agency for Perspective Projects.

The Indian Finance Minister, has called for [global action to regulate crypto currency](#) over concerns of its misuse for terror financing and money laundering activities.

Other Updates:

- The Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have announced a [new set of UN targets for universal and meaningful digital connectivity](#) to be achieved by 2030. The [15 aspirational targets are split into](#): Universality targets, Technology targets and Aspirational targets.

- Members of the European Parliament has [voted in favor of a common charger](#) for portable electronic devices in a bid to reduce ewaste

- The US House of Representatives have [introduced a bill on Quantum resistant cryptography.](#)

- To continue the leadership of the US in quantum information science (QIS), the [US President has issued two new directives](#). The [first directive](#) is a national security memorandum on promoting the leadership of US in quantum computing while mitigating risks to vulnerable cryptographic systems and [the second directive](#) is an executive order enhancing the National Quantum Initiative (NQI) Advisory Committee

- The Supreme Court of Mexico has ruled that [the government-backed cell phone registry with biometric data is unconstitutional](#).

- In a [statement](#) Apple, Google and Microsoft has announced to work together for setting up a common passwordless sign-in standard created by the FIDO Alliance and the World Wide Web Consortium.

Updates from India

India's 5G Story

This month, there was a lot of buzz related to the 5G spectrum pricing and proposed deployment.

The much awaited 5G deployment in India may soon see some light. This month, the telecom minister shared that the [5G spectrum auction may be held in June.](#)

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has been working to resolve challenges relating to infrastructure deployment, which is crucial for the launch of 5G. [DoT has released draft policy guidelines to address the right of way (RoW) issues](#) and is in the [final stages of launching a national portal](#) for clearance of infrastructure approvals related to RoW.

It is believed that DOT is working on a [new law](#) to replace the India Wireless Act, 1933. This law, which is tentatively titled the Wireless & Spectrum Act, is expected to cover issues related to critical airwaves, allotment, auction and reservation of the scarce natural resource, etc.

DOT is also planning on an affordable annual fee for use of street furniture for deployment of 5G infrastructure and is waiting for TRAIs recommendation. TRAI has launched a consultation on the same and doing some pilots. (We have covered the same in our last edition and even in this section under TRAI updates).

In terms of spectrum pricing, for long the telcos have been rallying to be made more affordable, this month, TRAI [recommended](#) a 36% cut in the base rate of 3.3-3.67 Ghz airwaves and a 40% cut in the 700 Mhz airwaves. The telecom industry has expressed disappointment at the regulators recommendation and have [pointed that the 5G](#)

[spectrum in India still remains the most expensive](#) in the world in absolute terms on a `"per Mhz™ basis. TRAI has however refuted the allegation and [argued](#) that India has the lowest 5G spectrum pricing on a per capita basis.

However, the Digital Communications Commission (DCC) of DoT has [accepted TRAIs recommendation](#) and stated that the pricing for 5G spectrum is reasonable and decided not to allot spectrum directly to corporate entities for private 5G networks as suggested by the regulator " but instead that they partner with licensed telcos".

Further, the Indian Space Association (ISpA) has [criticised](#) the regulators recommendations arguing that there will be an oversupply to terrestrial telcos at the cost of satellite industry.

We can expect to see more developments in the months to come.

The other updates of April include,

- The [Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022 was passed in Lok Sabha](#). This bill repeals the 1920 Identification of Prisoners Act, and gives power to law enforcement agencies and courts to process biometrics, DNA samples, and other data of criminal offenders, dubbed as 'measurements' in the bill.

- India and the EU have [agreed to launch a Trade and Technology Council to push connection of of trade, trusted technology and security.](#)

- The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has set up a 17 member [Advisory committee for semiconductor mission.](#)

- The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on the "[Functioning of Unique Identification Authority of India" has highlighted several concerns](#)

- The Parliamentary panel is expected to [summon Google, Twitter, Amazon, other big tech firms to discuss their competitive conduct.](#)

- RBI released [guidelines](#) for establishment of digital banking units and [announced regulatory changes](#) in a bid to tighten regulations for non-bank lenders.

- The National Health Authority (NHA) released a consultation paper on [Drug Registry. The registry is part of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) – the Indian government's multi-tiered health digitisation drive.](#)

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has [allowed WhatsApp to increase its user limit for digital payments to 100 million,](#)

ICANN Updates

In the month of April, ICANN launched a [Special Interest Forum on Technologies (SIFT)](#) to discuss on thematic and technical issues related to evolving Identifiers technologies and their impact on ICANN's mission; announced the [ICANN74 NextGen participants](#) and that the [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) will be the recipient of ICANN's US$1 million emergency financial support](#) for continued Internet access in Ukraine; completed [annual audits confirming](#) proper controls in place for the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions; announced a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for [ICANN 2023 NomCom Chair and Chair-Elect](#) positions by 9 May.

Further, the Contractual Compliance launched a new audit round for testing and validating Registry Operators' compliance with the terms of the Registry Agreement (RA) and ICANN's temporary and consensus policies; the 2022 NomCom provided an update on the nominations received.

It was announced that the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) is developing a process to evaluate the recommendations of the Domain Name System Security Facilitation Initiative Technical Study Group (DSFI-TSG).

The LAC Domain Name Week was organised online between 26 - 28 April.

ISOC Updates

In April, ISOC released a statement to defend the Internet to stop the Splinternet; applications were invited from members for the Mid Career Fellowship till 4 May; there was a call for nomination for the 2022 Jonathan B. Postel Service Award.

The results for the 2022 Board of Trustees elections were announced. And Charles Mok was elected from the Chapters to a 3-year term as trustee.

Further, ISOC submitted comments in response to a United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Notice of Inquiry (NOI) on routing security ("Routing Security Goes to Washington")

APNIC Updates

APNIC54 will be a hybrid conference from 8-15 September in Singapore. APNIC will also be co-hosting AprIGF and APSIG meetings during that time.

In April, the list of fellows for APNIC54 was announced. Further there is a call for Program Committee members for APNIC54 till 11 May

Apart from routine activities in April, APNIC participated in several events including AuSNOG2022, APAC DNS Forum, Youth IGF Nepal etc.

Applications for the 2022 ISIF Asia Grants was open till 15 May.

Further, the ASO AC has selected Christian Kaufmann to serve in the seat10 in the ICANN 2022 Board of Directors

APNIC Foundation is inviting expressions of interest for Switch! SEA from six economies
– Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste, Thailand, The Philippines, and Viet Nam by 30 May. For more details visit this link.

TRAI Updates

In April, TRAI release its annual report for the year 2020-21; released the Telecommunication Tariff (68th Amendment) Order, 2022 on "Regulatory Framework for USSD-based tariff", recommendations on 'Auction of spectrum in frequency bands identified for IMT|5G'; started a pilot study at Deendayal Port, Kandla, Gujarat for deploying 5G using street furniture; extended the date to receive comments and |counter-comments on the Consultation Paper on Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity to 4 May and 18 May; organized open house discussions on Ease of Doing Business in Telecom and Broadcasting Sector and Promoting Local Manufacturing in the Television Broadcasting Sector.

The [Telecom Subscription Data report of February 2022](#) released by the regulator, indicates a drop in telecom subscribers from previous month (1169.46 million in January) to 1166.05 million and broadband subscribers to 783.37million from 783.43 million in January

On the broadcasting part, the regulator released a consultation paper on ['Issues Relating to Media Ownership](#)".

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IGF Updates

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The IGF2022 will be organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from [28 November to 2 December](#). It will be a hybrid meeting.

Further there is a [call for workshop proposals](#) and [session proposals](#) by 3 June

The IGF is now inviting comments by 26 May on the [key action items](#) form the [IGF Expert Group Meeting](#) (EGM) hosted in New York on 30 March - 1 April 2022. The full report of the EGM is available [here](#).

For more updates on the IGF read the [April newsletter](#) from IGF.

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Other Updates

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Articles & Reports:
- The Dialogue and Nishith Desai Associates launched a white paper on '[Advancing the Digital Economy: Shaping the E-Commerce Regulatory Landscape](#)'. The paper analyses the current regulatory environment of e-commerce and suggests a way forward for achieving optimal outputs and the importance of working towards a targeted regulation in the sector.
- The Future of India Foundation has released a report on Politics of Disinformation. To read the report use [this link](#)

Events:
- The Connections 2022 was organised online from 2-8 April.
- The Dialogue organised an online discussion on the Australian-India Data Protection Regime on 12 April
- The [UNCTAD eCommerce week 2022](#) was held between 25-28 April. This year the theme was **'**Data and Digitalization for Development'. The meeting discussed the role of data, cross border data flow in the digital economy and what the impact of this data on the distribution of wealth generated it generates. For more details read the [reports from Diplo.](#)
- [INNOG5](#) was held online between 3 to 6 May. Workshops were organized on 3 and 4, while the conference was on 6 May.

- First Youth IGF Nepal organised

Pic: From Youth IGF Nepal

The first annual meeting Youth Internet Governance Forum Nepal under the theme "Empowering Youths for Open and Inclusive Internet"was organised on 2 May. Around 40 young participants from different stakeholders participated in the event. Anja Genjo, NRI Coordinator at UN-IGF and Anju Mangal, Chair at APrIGF MSG provided their opening remarks in the event. Additionally different national and regional stakeholders were also invited as guests including Chair of Nepal-IGF MSG, Chair and Vice-Chair of APSIG, Director of National Telecommunication Authority, APNIC, and Director of CCAOI.

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

Upcoming Events

- [8th Middle East Domain Name System (DNS) Forum](#) is taking place virtually from 16-18 May 2022
- 11th edition of RightsCon will be held online from 6-10 June.
- ICANN74 Policy Forum Meeting is scheduled to be held in The Hague, Netherlands from 13 to 16 June.
- [APSIG2022](#) will be held in September in Singapore
- [AprIGF2022](#) will be held 12-14 September in Singapore.
- APNIC54 will be held 8-15 September in Singapore.
- ICANN75 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 17–22 September in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- The 2022, edition of the India School on Internet Governance (inSIG) will be held in Hyderabad. The tentative dates are 25-27 Sep'22 with day 0 on 24 Sep. For more details visit: https://insig.in
- The IGF2022 will be organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from [28 November to 2 December](#).

Upcoming CCAOI Event:

- CCAOI would soon be organizing a discussion on the CERT-In directive. More details on the event will be shared soon.

Opportunities

- Fellowship application for APrIGF and APSIG 2022 is now open till 25 May. For more details visit [here](#).
- The IGF is now inviting comments by 26 May on the [key action items](#) form [the IGF Expert Group Meeting](#) (EGM) hosted in New York on 30 March - 1 April 2022. The full report of the EGM is available [here.](#)
- APNIC Foundation is inviting expressions of interest for Switch! SEA from six economies Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste, Thailand, The Philippines, and Viet Nam by 30 May. For more details visit [this link](#).
- There is a [call for workshop proposals](#) and [session proposals](#) for IGF 2022 by 3 June.
- Fellowship applications now invited for inSIG 2022 from both national & international participants. Last date to apply is 10th June'22. For more details [visit this link](#).
- Call for local hubs for AprIGF2022 is now open till 1 August. For more details [visit this link](#).