



Representing the ecosystem of Internet -Bharat Model

CCAIOI Newsletter

April, 2021

Highlights of April

This month while India has been fighting its deadliest battle against COVID-19, some of the key developments the world witnessed have been discussed below.

Massive Data Breaches is it the new norm?

In recent times, reports of data breaches have become quite common. This month two massive data breaches which impacted millions of users across the globe were reported.

Data of [533 million Facebook users](#) was leaked in an online hacking forum. The data breach has triggered investigations in several countries. The [Irish Data Protection Commission](#) which is in charge of overseeing Facebook in EU is examining the reports; data regulators in Germany and UK will be investigating this breach, [Russia](#) and [Brazil](#) has requested Facebook for an explanation; [Turkey](#) has launched an investigation. It is believed that this data breach may bring [regulatory focus on the company in the US](#).

In another instance, the data of over [500 million LinkedIn users](#) was leaked online and sold to hackers.

Interestingly both the companies termed it as a data scraping incident that happened a few years ago and not a hack. However, from a user perspective, whether it was data scraping or hack, it is a punishable crime, where the personal data which should be private and protected has been breached. These breaches raise questions whether companies should be made more accountable for the data of users they hold or is this the price users must pay for availing free services; the obligations of a company to report data breach immediately to authorities and the users, and creating awareness among users on what to do when their data is compromised.

China continues tightening regulation against Tech giants

In China, antitrust action against tech giants continue, The Chinese regulator SAMAR imposed a record fine of \$2.8 billion on Alibaba for having implemented anticompetitive business practices and is now [investigating a joint venture](#) between Alibaba Group (9988.HK) and Minmetals Development (600058.SS). The regulator has launched [antitrust probe against food delivery giant Meituan](#) and warned [34 tech companies](#) including Baidu and Tencent to correct their anti-competitive practices within a month.

Looking at the trend of the last few months, it can be expected that the authorities will continue tightening their grip further in the coming months.

Europe's framework to regulate use of Artificial Intelligence

At a time when all nations are aspiring to regulate the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the European Union published a [new framework to regulate the use of AI](#) across its member states. The framework groups AI system based on risks they pose. Systems posing enormous risk such as use of facial recognition are considered outright unacceptable; high risk systems such as critical infrastructure that can present dangers to lives of people, should be regulated heavily; for systems that pose limited risks such as chatbots, it is proposed that the

user be made aware; and for other systems that pose minimal risks it is proposed that they can be developed without additional legal obligations.

Reacting to the report the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) has urged for a [ban on Facial recognition in Europe](#) as its "deep and non-democratic intrusion" into people's private lives.

Will this framework become a benchmark for all nations, are the compliance obligations on companies too burdensome, will it stifle innovation in EU, we will have to wait and watch.

Meanwhile, in the US the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) has warned](#), that it will take action against biased, deceptive and non-transparent AI systems.

US statement on the SolarWinds Attack

This month the US issued a formal [statement](#) pointing that Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) was behind the [SolarWinds cyberattack](#), that affected several US federal agencies, companies and countries last year. [NATO](#), UK, Australia and EU have supported the US formal statement that attributed the SolarWinds cyberattack to Russia.

Subsequently, the US government [imposed sanctions against 40 Russian individuals and companies](#) over their alleged involvement in the said cyberattacks. The Russian foreign ministry described the sanctions as hostile and could escalate confrontation. In retaliation Russia has [expelled 10 US diplomats](#).

Will these sanctions discourage states from such acts, will this lead to tension between the two nations, only time will tell.

US China trade war continues

The US, Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) this month [added seven Chinese supercomputing entities to its export control](#) or Entity List for conducting activities that supposedly pose a national security threat to the country.

China has [accused](#) the US of misusing phony security warnings to "maliciously suppress" Chinese industry and that such moves cannot stop the pace of its scientific and technological progress and that the country will be accelerating efforts to transform China into a self-reliant "technology power".

Issue based updates:

Content Policy

This month, Pakistan court [lifted its ban over TikTok](#) after Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) confirmed that the company is now blocking "immoral content".

The European Parliament [adopted a new law](#) that mandates online platforms to remove or disable access to terrorist content within one hour of being notified.

Some of the initiatives launched by platforms in April includes, Instagram [launching new features](#) to detect and tackle hate speech and abusive content; Twitch announcing that it will [ban users with severe misconduct](#) even if it is outside its platform; and Twitter [launching a new initiative to analyse](#) harmful impact of algorithms.

Further this month the mandate of Facebook's [oversight board has been expanded](#) and now users can appeal content to be taken down from Facebook and Instagram to the Oversight Board.

Anti Trust

In several countries big tech companies are being investigated for antitrust activities. This month the Australian Regulator has suggested that [regulation may be required to address the dominant market power of app stores](#) owned by Google or Apple if they do not take steps to address concerns. The European Commission in its [statement of objections](#) to Apple on App Store rules for music streaming providers has stated that Apple has abused its dominant position.

The Russian regulator has opened a case against [Internet giant Yandex](#) over allegations of violating competition law on its company's search engine and against [Google](#) for abusing its dominant position in search engine. UK's Competition and Markets Authority has launched an investigation into the [acquisition of Giphy](#) by Facebook.

[Associated Newspapers has sued Google](#) for anticompetitive search engine practices. German business groups has [filed an antitrust complaint](#) against Apple's [AppTrackingTransparency requirements](#). UK based software reseller ValueLicensing [sued Microsoft](#) for £270 million over alleged anticompetitive practices.

[Epic Games has filed antitrust complaints against Apple](#) in the UK. It may be mentioned that Epic Games has earlier filed a complaint against the Tech giant in the UK, which was dismissed over lack of jurisdiction. Epic Games has also filed cases against Apple in the USA, Europe and Australia.

Privacy and Data Protection

This month, in Australia, a federal court has ruled that [Google violated Australian law](#) over its location data collection policy. The US Supreme Court [issued its verdict](#) in favour of Google in the Google versus Oracle case stating that copying a portion of the Java SE computer program by Google is protected as 'fair use'. A German data protection regulator has [initiated proceedings](#) to prevent illegal exchange of data between Facebook and WhatsApp. Privacy group noyb has [filed](#) a complaint against Google's use of its Android Advertising ID. In the UK [Apple and Google blocked the National Health System \(NHS\) COVID-19 app](#) over privacy violations.

In terms of child rights and privacy, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers have [declared](#) the need to protect children's privacy in the digital environment. TikTok is being sued in the [UK over its collection practices and how it uses children's data](#). It may be mentioned that the company was fined in the US for mishandling children's data in 2019. [30 consumer and child protection associations have written to Mark Zuckerberg](#) demanding that Facebook scraps plan to create an Instagram for children. It may be mentioned that plans to create an Instagram for children was revealed from a [leaked internal memo](#).

Cyber security

This month Interpol announced [support to the Coalition Against Stalkerware](#) in its fight against online abuse, stalking, and harassment.

UK has [published](#) plans to regulate the cybersecurity of internet of things devices.

In terms of reported cyberattacks, several [EU institutions including the European Union were hit](#) by an "IT security incident in their IT infrastructure." Apple supplier Quanta Computer Inc. was [hit by a \\$50 million ransomware attack](#) from Revit. It is reported that [Vodafone India was behind a major BGP leak](#) that disrupted thousands of networks globally.

The [Turkish authorities fined Google USD \\$36.6 million](#) for abusing its dominant position in search engine services and complicating organic search results and placing ads on top.

Digital Taxation

In the [OECD Secretary-General Tax Report to G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors](#), the OECD has reconfirmed its commitment to meet the July 2021 deadline to reach a global solution for taxing the digital economy, a move [welcomed by G20 finance ministers](#).

The negotiations at OECD has made much progress with the USA removing its safe harbour proposal and now proposing a [global minimum tax for companies](#) including tech companies, and recommending that these companies pay taxes based on their sales in each country. These new proposals from US have been welcomed by several countries.

Quantum Technology

Canada in its proposed [budget](#) has outlined plans to allocate CAD\$360 million over a seven-year period to support the national quantum strategy. Other countries that have a national quantum strategy include [UK](#) and [France](#).

Finland [announced](#) plans to set up a quantum institute.

Other updates:

- Technology ministers of G7 countries have [agreed to cooperate](#) on issues such as supply chain, data flows, cooperation on digital competition, online safety.
- Brazil adopted a [national AI strategy](#).
- The UK has opened [investigation](#) into Nvidia's proposed acquisition of chip designer Arm on competition, national security and jurisdictional grounds.
- The People's Bank of China has announced that their cryptocurrency the "digital yuan" will allow [anonymous "small transactions"](#) where the users will only have to provide a phone number, as long as the transactions is below a certain amount.

Indian Context

This month, India's central bank The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) [increased the term deposit](#) for payments banks and limit of pre-paid instruments (PPI) to Rs 2 lakh per individual customer from the existing Rs 1 lakh. To boost IPv6 adoption in the country [MeitY has launched three new initiatives](#): IP Guru, [NIXI Academy](#), and NIXI-IP-Index.

Competition Commission of India (CCI) launched a [discussion paper on blockchain technology and competition](#).

In terms of content moderation, the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court has ruled that [WhatsApp group admin is not liable for objectionable posts by group members](#) while the Delhi High Court issued directions for [removal of offending content online](#).

The Indian FOSS community has filed a case in the Kerala High Court [against the IT Rules around traceability, proactive takedowns, and content removal](#).

The Delhi High Court has [dismissed petitions](#) by Facebook and WhatsApp challenging CCI order to probe the WhatsApp Privacy Policy.

ICANN Updates

In April, ICANN supported in organising the [seventh Middle East DNS Forum \(MEDNSF\)](#) from 5-7 April; the 2nd ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum (which is discussed later); [published](#) the [Second-level Reference Label Generation Rules](#) (LGRs) for the Arabic, Hebrew, Sinhala scripts and as well as the Hebrew language; [launched a new regional pilot event](#), the Africa Engagement Forum will be part of the [Africa Regional Plan](#), and held from 19- 20 May 2021; [launched](#) the [Operational Design Phase](#) (ODP) for the System for Standardized Access/Disclosure to Nonpublic Registration Data (SSAD) policy recommendations; published a new paper, [GE-007](#) “Country Focus Report Update: Russian Federation Internet-Related Laws and United Nations Deliberations”; [partnered with Latin American and Caribbean Islands Regional At-Large Organization \(LACRALO\)](#) to host a Universal Acceptance (UA) training series for the LAC community in the month of May; [Submitted feedback](#) on the proposed Digital Services Act ([DSA](#)) [highlighting](#) that the proposed DSA, in its current form, is not sufficiently specific with regard to the scope of applicability to DNS services; organised a webinar on Planning Prioritization and Finance Update; invited comments on the: [Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in All gTLDs Policy Development Process Phase 1 Final Recommendations](#) till 30 April; Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)’s New Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) Subsequent Procedures Final Outputs for ICANN Board Consideration by 1 June; the [fifth version of the Maximal Starting Repertoire \(MSR-5\)](#) by 8 June

From the Indian perspective [invoked](#) the [De-Accredited Registrar Transition Procedure](#) (DARTP) to enable the successful transition of domain names currently registered with Net 4 India Limited (IANA 1007) to an ICANN-accredited registrar that can appropriately serve registrants.

Besides, ICANN announced application for [NextGen@ICANN Application Round for ICANN72](#) till 24 May.

APAC Hub update

An ICANN70 Readout was organised by the ICANN APAC Hub on 1 April and was well attended.. Jia-Rong Low, Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement & Managing Director, ICANN APAC provided an overview of ICANN70; Stakeholder Perspectives were provided by Pua Hunter, GAC Vice Chair for GAC; Ai-Chin Lu, ccNSO Council Member for ccNSO; Maureen Hilyard, ALAC Chair for ALAC; Pam Little, GNSO Council Vice Chair for GNSO; Hiro Hotta, RSSAC Member for RSSAC. The youth perspective was shared by Manju Chen from Youth4IG. The open discussion was coordinated by Edmon Chung. For more detail view the [slide deck](#) and [session recording](#).

ISOC Updates

This month Internet Society organized the [InterCommunity event](#) themed around building, training and developing the Internet through communities, invited nominations to the [Internet Hall of Fame 2021](#), [Internet Society Chapter Management Essentials Course](#) and Beyond the Net Information Sessions.

The results of the 2021 elections and the IETF selections for the Board of Trustees has been [announced](#). From the Chapter election, Luis Martinez has been elected to a 3-year term as Trustee and runner up Muhammad Shabbir, has been offered a 1-year term by Board appointment. From the Organization Members election, Robert Pepper was re-elected for a second 3-year term and Paul Ebersman was elected for a 1-year term. The Internet Architecture Board has selected Brian Haberman and Jon Peterson on behalf of the IETF to serve on the Internet Society board for 3-year terms.

Internet Society Foundation has [launched a second round of grant funding](#) through the [Strengthening Communities, Improving Lives and Livelihoods \(SCILLS\)](#) programme. Grants of up to \$150,000 will be

awarded to eligible organizations in Bangladesh, Colombia and Senegal for projects lasting up to 24 months. Application period is open till 28 May.

The APAC bureau organized the Asia Pacific Regional Chapter Leaders Call.

APNIC Updates

In April APNIC, participated in several events including, [2nd ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum](#), [ARIN47](#), [BDSIG 2021](#); [PITA Business Forum and Exposition](#) which celebrated 25 years, [Philippine e-tech Show 2021](#).

APNIC DG Paul Wilson spoke at the inaugural session of the 2nd ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum. The other speakers at the forum from APNIC include Pablo Hinojosa, George Michaelson, Geoff Huston, Sheryl Hermosa, Adli Wahid and Jamie Gillespie, Sunny Chendi and George Kuo

For more updates on APNIC read the [APNIC Blog](#).

TRAI Updates

This month TRAI released the [Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicator Report for the Quarter ending December, 2020](#) that indicate that the number of telephone subscribers by 0.44% between end of September 20 to end of December 20 (1,168.66 million at the end of Sep-20 to 1,173.83 million at the end of Dec-20) , the number of broadband subscribers increased by 2.90% (from 726.32 million at the end of Sep-20 to 747.41 million at the end of Dec-20), however the number of narrowband Internet subscriber base declined by 4.72% (from 50.14 million at the end of Sep-20 to 47.77 million at the end of Dec-20)

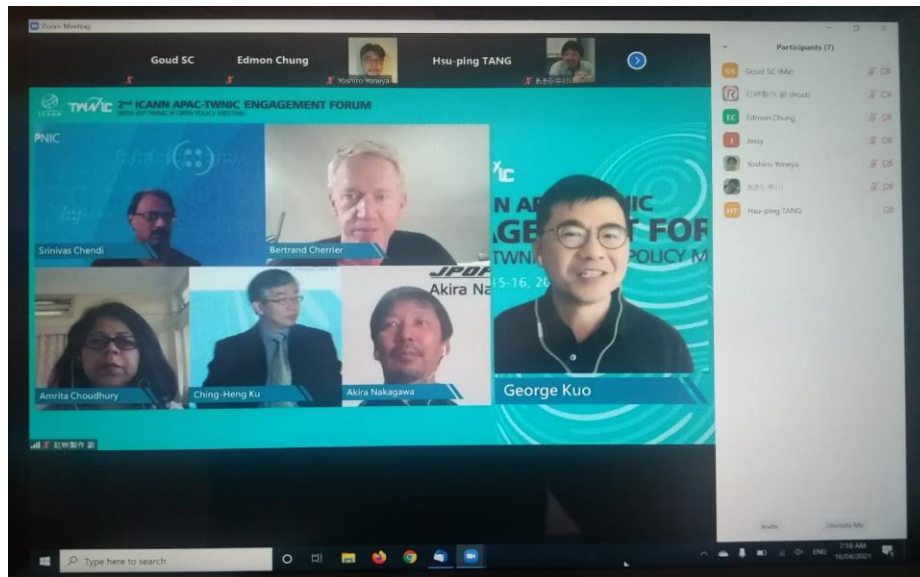
Further, the Regulator extended the comment period to [23 April and counter comments to 7 May](#) for the consultation paper on [Licensing Framework for Satellite-based connectivity for low bit rate applications](#)

Other Event Updates

Update on 2nd ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum

ICANN APAC Office partnered with Taiwan Network Information Center (TWNIC) to host the [2nd ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum](#) on 15-16 April. This meeting followed the hybrid format. Some of the topics discussed include: The state of cybersecurity, its challenges (including impacts from legislations/regulations), as well as incident response and management; Important technologies and their adoption, e.g. DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC), IPv6, Resource Public Key Infrastructure (RPKI), and DNS-over-HTTPS (DoH); Domain name abuse handling and prevention; Universal Acceptance implementation; how to participate in ICANN's multistakeholder community.

APNIC supported to organize the 35th TWNIC Internet Protocol Open Policy Meeting (IP OPM) during the forum. In the [session](#) on IP Addresses Plenary Policy Authoring and Participation, moderated by George Kuo. CCAOI Director Amrita Choudhury participated as a panelist along with Sunny Chendi, Bertrand Cherrie, Ching-Heng Ku and Akira Nakagawa.



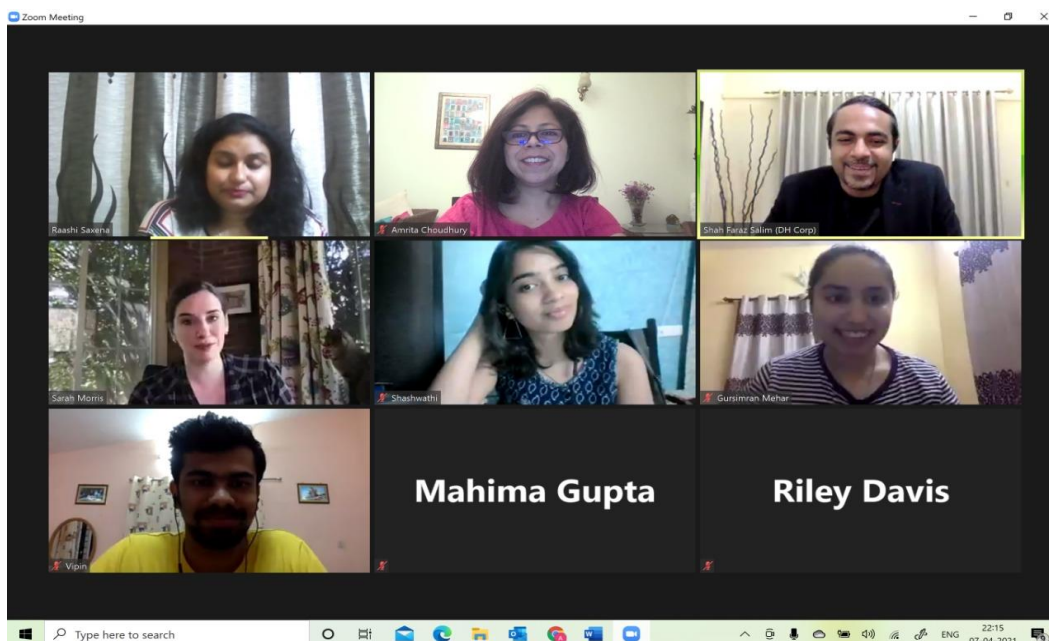
Update on BdSIG 2021

The [5th Bangladesh School of Internet Governance \(bdSIG\) 2021](#) was held between 9-10 April 2021 online. The topics discussed this year include Internet Governance, Artificial Intelligent Governance, Blockchain, Data Protection and Privacy, Internet of Things (IoT), Cyber Security, Digital Economy, 4th Industrial Revolution (4iR) etc. 85 fellows participated this year.

There were 11 sessions and 27 speakers. CCAOI Director Amrita Choudhury participated in the school and spoke on the topic Speaker of Effective Use of Digital Platforms During Pandemic.

Davos Lab Dialogue on Digital Equity

CCAOI Director Amrita Choudhury participated as a panelist in the Davos Lab Dialogue on Digital Equity's "Achieving Digital Equity in India, Pakistan, and Beyond" panel which was moderated by Raashi Saxena and the other panelist were Shah Faraz Salim, and Sarah Morris. The event was organised by [Future Tense](#) and [Open Technology Institute](#) and supported by [DCN Global](#) & [Network Capital](#).



BIF Cyber safety session for Senior citizens

Broadband India Forums Cyber Trust & Security Working Group organised a capacity building session for members of Dignity Foundation "Need of the Hour: Cyber Safety of Senior Citizens". The session was moderated by Vijay Pahwa, Dignity Foundation and the other speakers were Rajat Mukarji, DG, BIF, CCAOI Director Amrita Choudhury, Alok Gupta, Founder & CEO, Pyramid Cyber Security & Forensic, Ashutosh Kar, Managing Director, Cognyte Analytics and Debashish Bhattacharya, Sr. DDG, BIF. The session was well attended by nearly 174 members. The recording of the session can be viewed from [this link](#).



Other Updates

Articles & Reports:

- The [Inclusive Internet Index 2021](#) released by The Economist Intelligence Unit in partnership with Facebook indicate that the use of internet increased with the pandemic both in the developing and developed countries as the countries increased internet availability. The Index which ranks 120 countries globally has ranked India at 49th position globally in terms of internet inclusion and gender equality in accessing the internet.
- A [survey conducted by Learning Spiral](#) in India found that over 75% children reported to have faced several challenges (not having internet connection, unable to afford data cost, internet speed not adequate, etc) in accessing education digitally
- [Digitunity](#) has released a [landscape survey](#) of over 100 US digital inclusion practitioners “Findings from a Landscape Mapping Survey of Digital Inclusion Practitioners: Needs and Opportunities Within and Post-Pandemic” that confirms the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the digital inequity impacts across people in various geographies, sectors, and for a variety of reasons.

Events:

- The seventh [Middle East DNS Forum \(MEDNSF\)](#) was held from 5-7 April.
- INNOG organised a session “Docker for Network Operators” on 9th April from 4pm to 6pm covering concepts of docker, containerisation etc.
- The Dialogue organised a Virtual Stakeholder Consultation on ‘Content Moderation: Working Towards an Open Internet in India’ on 9 April
- 2nd [ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum](#) was organized with 35th TWNIC Open Policy Meeting from 15-16 April.

- MediaNama organised a discussion on the impact of India's Information Technology Rules 2021 on Intermediaries, Friday, April 23
- [High-level Thematic Debate on Digital Cooperation and Connectivity](#) was held on 27 April.
- The DNS Operations, Analysis, and Research Center ([DNS-OARC](#))'s [OARC 35](#) was organized on 6 and 7 May in APAC Time.

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

Upcoming Events

- The IGF Best Practice Forum on Gender & Digital Rights invites you to the introductory session on 18 May at 14:00UTC. The IGF 2021 Best Practice Forum on Gender and Digital Rights is exploring the concept of gendered disinformation. To attend register [here](#).
- [World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\) Forum 2021](#) final week will be held online from 17-21 May.
- [WEF Annual meeting](#) will be held in Lucerne-Bürgenstock, Switzerland between 18-21 May.
- [Final Substantive Session of the sixth UN GGE](#) will be held from 24-29 May.
- [ICANN 4th DNS Symposium \(IDS 2021\)](#) will be organised virtually from 25-27 May
- [RightsCon](#) will be organised from 7-11 June.
- [ICANN71 will be held as a Virtual Policy Forum](#) from 14-17 June.
- SANOG-37 will be hosted by LKNOG, SriLanka between 12 -19 July 2021. SANOG-37 will be a hybrid event with a local physical event (based on the pandemic situation) with online participation from the other countries.
- [IETF 111](#) will be organised online from 26- 30 July.
- [APrIGF2021](#) will be a hybrid conference held between 27-30 September.
- [IGF2021](#) will be hosted by the Government of Poland at the International Congress Center in Katowice from 6-10 December.

Opportunities

- The Global Partners Digital is providing [small grants opportunity](#) for Encryption related projects. Last date to apply is 18 May, 2021.
- The BPF on Gender & Digital Rights invited you to fill in a short survey, to help collect background information, identify specialists and relevant resources on the topic of gendered disinformation. [Survey questionnaire](#)
- The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) is looking for two part time or full time remote interns for a period of two months to help the foundation conduct further research into the affordability of internet-capable devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, in low- and middle-income countries with the ambition to publish world-leading datasets on affordability and make policy recommendations to governments and regulators on how to improve device affordability. To apply, [please read the full job description](#) and send your CV and cover letter to jobs@webfoundation.org by 23 May 2021.
- Application for [NextGen@ICANN Application Round for ICANN72](#) open till 24 May.
- The IGF2021 has announced the call for proposal open till 26 May. This year the IGF is following for the first time an "issue driven approach". There are two focus areas and four emerging and cross-cutting issue areas: The IGF 2021 main focus areas: (1) Economic and social inclusion and human rights (2) Universal access and meaningful connectivity. The IGF 2021 Emerging and cross-cutting issue areas are: Emerging regulation: market structure, content, data and consumer/users rights regulation; Environmental sustainability and climate change; Inclusive Internet governance ecosystems and digital cooperation and Trust, security, stability For more information please view this link: IGF 2021 [Call for session proposals | Internet Governance Forum \(intgovforum.org\)](#)
- There is a call for issues open for the NRIs. The NRIs coordinators are invited to consult with their multistakeholder organizing committees and [submit three top priority thematic issues on behalf of their](#)

[NRIs](#). These issues will help to define the thematic focus of all NRIs sessions at IGF 2021. Deadline to submit 26 May.

- AprIGF2021 Fellowship application is now open till 27 May. For more details visit: <https://ap.rigf.asia/fellowship/2021/aprigf-2021-fellowship-program-applications-open>
- Prostasia Foundation is seeking applications for its Microgrants program 2021, allocating a total of \$2000 to fund up to four small projects. These microgrants aim to support individuals and organizations working on gender and sexuality issues, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), human and civil rights, and sex positivity. Last date to apply 30 May, 2021. For more details visit [this link](#).
- AprIGF2021 has announced a call for proposal open till 8 June. Proposals are invited for the multidisciplinary sessions with fresh topics and emerging issues under the 3 thematic tracks: Inclusion, Sustainability & Trust from the community. For more details visit: <https://www.aprigf.asia/news/2021/call-for-2021-session-proposals.html>

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