

Russian IGF Annual Report - 2014

The 5th Russian Internet Governance Forum (RIGF-2014) was held in Moscow on 7 April 2014. The event was co-sponsored by the Coordination Center for the Russian ccTLDs .RU/.РФ, the RF Ministry of Telecommunications and Mass Media, the Technical Center of Internet, the Russian Association for Electronic Communications (RAEC), and ICANN. The Forum drew over 800 participants, including 50 ones for overseas. Traditionally, the Forum got together industry representatives and Internet activists from across the former Soviet space, including, in particular, Ukrainian representatives – yet another evidence of the unifying force of the Internet.

The overarching theme of the Forum was: *Internet Governance at a Crossroads between Freedom and Relevance*, - to mirror the increasingly challenging environment and search for a broader consensus over key issues in the IG area.

The holding of the Forum coincided in time with the 20th anniversary of Russia's ccTLD .RU, and Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's Prime Minister, addressed the Forum participants with a congratulatory video message.

In their subsequent remarks, Andrey Kolesnikov, the Coordination Center's CEO and Marina Nikerova, First Deputy CEO of the TCI, shared with the audience their recollections from the onset of the RUnet and offered their vision of future developments.

Speaking at the opening, Ruslan Gattarov, Deputy Governor of the Chelyabinsk Region, Axel Pawlik, Managing Director of RIPE NCC, Fahik Farmanov, Director of the National Registry of the .AZ domain (Azerbaijan) and Li Nam Trung, Deputy Director of the National Registry of .VN (Vietnam) offered their congratulations and highlighted on common values and principles underpinning the Internet's developments.

In his address, Petr Sikh, the head of the Council of Europe Programme Office in the Russian Federation, focused on the Council of Europe's unshaken commitment to universal values, such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, on the Internet in particular. He argued that the Internet cannot be controlled by a single country or group of people, but rather by a diverse stakeholder community.

Following what has emerged a long-standing tradition, the Coordination Center presented its unique *Virtuti Interneti* award to Olaf Kolkman, the then Director of NLnet Labs and the former Chair of the Internet Architecture Board. The tradition also requires that the recipient of the award delivers a special presentation. The industry veteran, Olaf Kolkman spoke about Internet Architecture as the Basis of Future Innovation.

Following the opening session, a panel on *Tips and Tricks of the Internet Economy* was held. Led by Sergey Plugotarenko, RAEC's CEO, a multistakeholder panel consisting of government, business and civil society representatives, as well as Mikhail Yakushev, the newly appointed ICANN Vice President, Global Stakeholder Engagement – Russia/CIS/Eastern Europe, discussed an impressive growth of the ICT and Internet sector in

Russia, its contribution to the nation's socio-economic development as well as the urgent need to promote online trust and security as a basis of a robust development of the industry.

The panel was followed by a press-conference with participation of Alexey Volin, Deputy Minister of Telecommunications, Andrey Kolesnikov (Coordination Center for TLD .RU/.РФ), Mikhail Yakushev (ICANN), Marina Nikerova (Technical Center of Internet), Alexey Platonov (Technical Center of Internet), Alexey Basov (Rostelecom), Kirill Varlamov (Internet Development Fund Initiatives), Irina Danelia (the Registry for IDN TLD .ДЕТИ) and Alexander Panov (RU-CENTER).

Traditionally, the one-day event provides for two rounds of concurrently running panel discussions and the 5th RIGF was no exception in this respect.

The *Face the Domain Space* panel discussed prospects for the emerging new gTLDs in Russia. While they can be counted on the fingers of one hand, the then to-be-delegated Russian new gTLDs suggest ample opportunities for *RUnetizens* in particular, as IDN TLD .ДЕТИ is poised to create a safe Internet environment for children and teenagers; .TATAR and another IDN TLD, .РУС, are designed to unite global communities that share a common cultural code; geodomain twins .МОСКВА and .МОСКОВ should become home to local and international businesses to thrive and efficiently market in Russia's capital, while .УКР, the Ukrainian IDN TLD, has added colors to the already existing Cyrillic TLD community.

Quite understandably, the *Fear/no/ Pardon. Privacy on the Net* panel centered on protecting personal data on the net. An international, multistakeholder expert panel deliberated upon every angle of the matter and tried to find a proper balance between the government's right to know personal data, businesses' eagerness to capitalize on those, and the fundamental human right to retain privacy.

The temperature in the room literally was up at almost the highest level at the *...and Justice for All* panel. A versatile group of experts that included a Dutch liberal-minded domain industry representative, a Federation Council staffer, a civil rights activist, a RIPE NCC executive and a prominent academic offered their poignant perspectives on the matter and engaged the audience in what ultimately proved a high-pitched argument over anonymity, the rule of law and the right to know on the Internet.

Meanwhile, in the adjoining room, another multistakeholder international expert team braved the issue of *Cybersecurity – Liquidity vs. Solidity*, which from their perspective has for long blocked a robust international cooperation, that, as they unanimously agreed, forms a major prerequisite for promotion of best cybersecurity practices and an efficient means of confronting cybercrime.

The event was covered by nearly a hundred-strong printed and electronic media representatives, and it was crowned by a gargantuan Gala Night for 5,000-plus members of the multistakeholder community to celebrate the milestone anniversary of .RU.

For videos and more from the Forum, go to <http://2014.rigf.ru/en/>