

IGF 2016 Workshop Report Template

Session Title	Operational responses to online harassment
Date	4 December 2016
Time	09.00-10.00
Session Organizer	Andreas Reventlow, International Media Support
Chair/Moderator	Andreas Reventlow
Rapporteur/Notetaker	n/a
List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyra Basit, Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan • Ellery Roberts Biddle, Advocacy Director, Global Voices & Fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society, US • Marcel Leonardi, Senior Public Policy and Government Relations Counsel at Google Brazil • Jonathan McCully, Legal Officer at Media Legal Defence Initiative, UK • 'Gbenga Sesan, Executive Director at Paradigm Initiative Nigeria
Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community responses to online harassment • Harmful speech and counter speech • Balancing legal responses to harassment with the right to freedom of expression • The disproportionate harmful effect of harassment on individuals with weak networks • The harmful effect on the diversity of voices when journalists, bloggers and others are silenced through concerted harassment efforts
If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online harassment in Pakistan and a new harassment helpline launched by Digital Rights Foundation • Threats and risks that members of the Global Voices community face and what sort of responses there have been from a community perspective • The fine balance between free speech and harassment and the difficulties in addressing it without being over protective • Online harassment in Nigeria and responses from a civic and youth perspective that of youth and entrepreneurship • The situation in Brazil and how harassment and responses differ globally from Google's perspective
Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session: (3 paragraphs)	<p>Online harassment is pervasive and has a severely negative impact on the diversity and inclusivity of the internet. The problems are well-known, but how do we respond in realistic, constructive ways to mitigate, prevent and protect?</p> <p>In Pakistan, those targeted by online harassment often face victim-blaming or physical harm from friends and family them physically, because the person who was abused will “have to have done something to invite the attack.” Digital Rights Foundation recently launched an online harassment helpline that offers psychosocial support, legal advice and digital security assistance. In Nigeria, the prevalence of online harassment is effectively keeping many women off the internet entirely in under-served communities in Nigeria. Alarmingly, this holds true even</p>

	<p>when their education depends on access to internet. For journalists, bloggers and others whose work is meant to foster public debate, online harassment is no less pervasive and problematic. An area of particular concern is harassment by state-backed actors.</p> <p>From a legal point of view, there are a series of free expression implications when addressing the problem, because you risk being over-protective and censoring legitimate speech acts. In the United Kingdom, provisions in Communications Act seek to address the issue as well, but it goes hand in hand with specific, clear guidance on when individuals should or should not be prosecuted. As such it tries to strike the balance between banning actually harmful speech acts while at the same time being careful to not be overprotective.</p>
<p>Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways: (3 paragraphs)</p>	<p>As a complex socio-technological issue, online harassment requires a wide range of responses that can help mitigate, prevent and protect. One of the main takeaways from our session at this year's Internet Governance Forum is that the better, more resilient and diverse communities we have both online and offline, the better chance we have of supporting those who are harassed in a meaningful way.</p> <p>That does not take away the responsibility from authorities or intermediaries that have legal and policy-focused courses of action at their disposal, but it does mean that effective community-led responses need to be part and parcel of an integrated approach that addresses the problem from all sides.</p>