

IGF 2016 Workshop Report Template

Session Title	Children's Rights to Privacy, Safety and Freedom of Expression
Date	Friday, Dec. 9th, 2016
Time	12.00 – 1.30 p.m.
Session Organizer	Jutta Croll
Chair/Moderator	Jutta Croll
Rapporteur/Notetaker	Janosch Rolf (remotely)
List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations	Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics Abhilash Nair, Centre for Internet Law & Policy at University of Strathclyde Ellen Blackler, The Walt Disney Company Arda Gerkens, INHOPE / EOKM Arsène Tungali, Rudi International, Democratic Republic of Congo and Youth IGF Marie-Laure Lemineur, ECPAT International
Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):	Status quo of children's and youths' Internet usage Status quo of their digital literacy and ability to cope with risks Provisions of the UN-Charter on the Rights of the Child towards privacy, safety, freedom of information and freedom of expression. The role of parents and the rights of the child: What is the adequate age of consent for using social media platforms? Infringement of children's rights either by the devices and services they use or by their parents and other adults Gender inequalities in access to the Internet and assertion of the above mentioned rights Ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth by enforcement of children's rights
If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each Presentation	Introduction by the moderator Jutta Croll: As of 2015 one in three Internet users worldwide was aged under 18, and in many developing countries it is one in two. The UN Charter on the Rights of the Child addresses in Art. 12 to 17 and 19 the rights of children to freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy, and their right to be safeguarded and protected from violence. When the UNCRC was elaborated media did play a role in children's life but none that is comparable to the Internet of today. Nowadays the Internet has an enormous impact on children's lives. Therefore Internet Governance must take into account this impact and address the assertion of children's rights to privacy, safety and freedom of expression. Achievement of the IGF goal of connecting the next billion of Internet users will obviously mean a lot more young people online considering the demographic structure of the population in countries not yet fully connected. In order to benefit from the Internet's potential to strengthen democracy and social participation children need both physical access and digital literacy education in order to avail themselves to the rights they are given by the UNCRC.

<p>Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session: (3 paragraphs)</p>	<p>Discussions evolved around the Internet being a platform for children – anyone under the age of 18 as set by the UN-CRC – to express themselves and to have access to information. By using the internet children are able to exercise the rights dedicated to them by the UN-CRC. But at the same time the usage of the Internet also puts them at risk of infringement of their rights, i. e. their right to privacy as laid down in Art. 16.</p> <p>In regard of the upcoming European General Data Protection Regulation the threshold for using Social Media Platforms without prior consent of their parents was discussed. So far the age as defined by US COPPA is 13 years, but the GDPR sets 16 with national governments being allowed to set a different age threshold between 13 and 16. Young participants to the workshop declared that many children – even under the age of 10 – are telling lies about their age in order to get access and some of them might not be aware of the risks coming along with cheating. It was explained that f. e. facebook and other social media platforms have special safety measures in place for children under eighteen, but these would only work if the children have set their profile with the correct age. Age thresholds were seen by many participants as not an adequate instrument to protect children.</p> <p>The main purpose of the age threshold in COPPA and GDPR is to prevent the exploitation of children’s data by companies. The debate addressed this issue thoroughly. Young participants asked what problem could probably arise from children giving their data away and why on the other hand companies could not just provide their services without gathering data from their users. Then it was explained that younger children would not be able to comprehend how, when, why and what for their data are collected and that not gathering data would affect the companies’ business model. When user data from different types of platforms and services including searches for content are synthesized and analyzed this results in an algorithmic identity, a so-called “shadow us” that constitutes the currency in the Internet and is of enormous value for companies. The Internet of Things and even toys for small children – as discussed in the session of the Dynamic Coalition on Child Online Safety on Thursday – were seen as an additional critical source of data collection.</p>
<p>Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways: (3 paragraphs)</p>	<p>For a better understanding of children’s needs it was suggested to erase the perception of so called “Digital natives”. With regard to critical information and privacy people of all ages lack the necessary knowledge. Children are somehow aware of the risks, but they are not increasingly savvy, as the Global Kids online study reveals. All Internet users must become aware of their “shadow identity”, digital literacy is crucial. While managing children’s offline life’s requires different kinds of adults in various roles so far norms are lacking for the virtual space due to the fast development of the Internet.</p>

Protection against risks and threats on the Internet cannot be achieved by solely setting an “Age of consent” for the use of social media. Parents would rather like to have guidelines and criteria to help them assess whether their children are able to cope with social media.

Providing that children of any age use their services companies have a major role to play in ensuring children’s privacy and protection and they become more important with the physicalisation of the virtual space driven by the Internet of Things. Incentives for companies were suggested as an instrument to design safe spaces for kids who are not yet able to comprehend the various aspects of privacy. In addition companies should either be forced by regulation to refrain from monetizing the data of children under a certain age or requested to do so voluntarily based on self-regulation.

The Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly on Sept. 25th, 2015 mentions children and youth as a vulnerable group whose needs to be empowered are reflected in the measures to be undertaken. Children’s right to access of information, to privacy and safety online need to be enforced in order to achieve the SDGs. Attention needs to be given to gender inequalities especially in developing countries.