Submitted by Janna Anderson, Elon University's Imagining the Internet Center  
**IGF Consultations:   
IGF 2016 Taking Stock and Looking to IGF 2017**

**A) Taking Stock of 2016 programming, preparatory process, community intersessional activities and the 11th annual IGF: What worked well? What worked not so well?**

**> What worked well**

- Scheduling, Content, Outputs and Other Post-IGF Reports

* There were many lively sessions that featured excellent contributions from a widely representative set of stakeholders.
* Following recommendations from CSTD, there is more visible effort toward creating and disseminating post-IGF tangible outputs from various IGF collaborations. During IGF it is impossible to keep up with all that is going on, whether you are on site or participating remotely; post-event summaries (that are well-vetted in a collaboration between best-informed event participants in order to assure accuracy) are crucial to moving forward for the best future. The more attention paid to doing this right, the better; if outputs do not fully reflect the discussions they lose their value or even misinform.
* During IGF, the daily reports by the Global Internet Platform's Digital Watch were somewhat useful as a way to summarize events.
* The live video from events was well produced and highly accessible.
* The archiving of the full video and full transcripts from *as many sessions as possible in a prominent online location that is extremely findable now and in years to come* is of the highest value. This important documentation informs policy decisions and is simultaneously of great historic significance.

- IGF Village and Host Country Logistics:

* The Village is an important meeting place in which participants can make new connections to create new collaborations as well as reconnecting with previous contacts. It deserves a great deal of attention in the planning of every IGF.
* Communication about the 2016 IGF Village was better than in the past few years. Contact between the IGF Secretariat and Village participants was the best ever, and email updates on the facilities and options were regularly provided. Everyone knew going in what to expect and why things were arranged the way they were.
* During the IGF events the host country was quite welcoming and attentive to everyone's needs in a visible and highly beneficial way. The venue was large and there was a

**> What did not work so well**

- Scheduling, Content, Outputs and Other Post-IGF Reports

* Too many related sessions were scheduled simultaneously. It's tough to do, but better attention has to be paid to organizing things in such a way that workshops with similar topics do not run in parallel.
* There are too many workshops and other sessions that are replications of the same conversations held annually at IGF. Move beyond the known to advance.
* Governments and major technology businesses did not participate in the conversations to the level they should be in order to understand how IGF collaborations and outputs can help build a better future; their full buy-in is necessary for IGF have the most significant impact moving forward.
* It is clear from a number of post-IGF email list conversations about the writing of post-IGF reports that some groups struggle to find enough people who can take the time to really seriously compile excellent and highly representative reports about their events/activities. Sometimes the participants who have to create the reports also had to be actively moderating or speaking at the events they are writing about.

- IGF Village and Host Country Logistics:

* The IGF Village should be contiguous with the activity spaces in the conference venue. The location outside the conference facilities at IGF 2016 was not as effective as it could have been if it were located within the primary conference environment.
* IGF planners and host country seem to never be able to get their act together to provide important details ***at least four months in advance*** for planning purposes for groups who need information to budget, select participants to travel to IGF and get them credentialed and make travel arrangements. In Mexico in 2016 everyone experienced many of the same difficulties with the same logistical problems as with every other IGF. The key issues annually are: **visas; conference location; ground transportation and hotels**.
* Every year of IGF finding an affordable hotel for my particular IGF team of six to 12 people near the conference has been difficult, so when the 2016 IGF was announced to be at Hospicio in Guadalajara we were thrilled to find an affordable hotel within walking distance of the conference venue and we booked and pre-paid for a half-dozen rooms; we did not budget for any ground transportation because we could walk to the conference site. Then the host country changed the venue to a location (miles and miles away from any hotels) that was a 30-to-40-minute bus ride away from the hotel we had booked and it did not post the bus routes until shortly before IGF; it also did not offer a bus route to the hotel zone near the original site until a MAG member and the Secretariat insisted just days before IGF that a bus route be added. Our group of a dozen people wasted up to 90 minutes a day of what would have been productive time instead riding back and forth in rush-hour traffic. There was no free food catered at the IGF venue at lunch.

**B) Suggestions for improvements in 2017? (programming, preparatory processes, community intersessional activities and improvements for 12th annual meeting)**

- Scheduling, Content, Outputs and Other Post-IGF Reports

* The scheduling of IGF 2017 at the end of December might preclude our group of young people ages 19-21 (and probably many others) from participating; it is too close to major holidays that are an important time for families in our culture.
* Too many related sessions are being scheduled simultaneously. It's tough to do, but better attention has to be paid to organizing things in such a way that workshops with similar topics do not run in parallel.
* Organizers should try to work an element into the vetting of workshop proposals that helps filter out any proposal likely to allow for redundant conversations – no need for a privacy panel to repeat in 2017 what was already covered thoroughly in 2016 (and perhaps 2015, 2014, etc.) Maybe request that organizers submit a briefing document along with their proposal that lays out the already known and current conditions along with a promise that they will move beyond that and a plan for how they intend to do so. Organizers could tweet, email and/or print and disseminate copies of the backgrounder at their event and then only concentrate on what lies beyond it.
* Don't expect that newcomers can arrive a day or two before IGF begins. Most of them are probably people who cannot afford to attend IGF for more than a few days. Perhaps a Newcomers Session could take place the morning of the first day or there could be one on Day Zero and one on Day One.
* Post-IGF accurate transcripts are THE most important documentation, so continued work on improving accuracy of these is vital. Few people have time to sit through entire videos to catch up with sessions they did not attend or to do post-IGF research on the topics covered in sessions, and it is still easiest to search transcripts for content post-event for relevant details. Machine learning isn't quite there in searching video for keywords.

- IGF Village and Host Country Logistics:

* Host countries for IGF should expect to provide visas on arrival as a regular practice; the host and IGF should make the details of this clear online at least four months prior to IGF.
* Geneva is beautiful and easy to find flights to, however it is prohibitively expensive for any group of travelers in regard to hotels and food. There are very few affordable hotels anywhere near Geneva's event venues and there's no one centrally located hotel hotbed that can house thousands affordably within walking distance or even a short drive to conference facilities. If you are not going to change the host city you have to work to assist people in coping with this.
* At any of the IGFs with this situation, people who are forced to stay in a remotely located hotel usually have to take anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes to travel back and forth to an IGF venue daily; they lose a lot of valuable time in which they could have been connecting to others and/or working on creating IGF outputs. If you can't put IGF in a venue near afforable hotels, at least open the conference center facilities and free high-speed WiFi an hour or two earlier each day and keep the conference facility open for an hour or two after events conclude in order that people can stay and do work and leave a bit later in the evening so if they have to cross town they do not have to do it during rush hour traffic. Also be sure that they have safe and reliable transportation back and forth to the hotel zone at the earlier and later hours.
* For those struggling to get things together to even be able to participate in IGF the key issues are always visas, conference location, transportation and hotels. The Secretariat and any others with influence must insist that the host country *not change the venue* after it has been announced. Recognize that some organizations sending a group of participants to IGF have to handle the travel arrangements for anywhere from five to 10 attendees. These organizations usually have to go through a grueling, months-long process to: acquire visas for their group; try to arrange for a large block of hotel rooms all in the same hopefully affordable hotel as close as possible to the conference center; and find a hotel that is on the IGF bus route or a hotel located in a zone that allows for affordable and swift transportation for their large group between the hotel and the conference center if the conference is not in a hotel zone (and IGF is almost never in a hotel zone, ever, and the host country almost never posts a bus route early enough for people to choose hotels that are on a route). *Please remember the people who have very little funding or influence, those who are not on the MAG and don't travel the Internet policy circuit regularly, and plan with their needs in mind.* Without them, where would we be?
* Please announce and make it quite clear in advance of every IGF what times of day snacks or meals will be available at the conference venue and whether the food is available for free or at cost (and estimate a price range). We were never informed prior to IGF 2016 that lunch would not be free; our group of a dozen people did not have money budgeted to pay for daily meals. The remote locations of the typical conference venues for IGF – often a new development out in the countryside somewhere miles away from food and lodging – make it extremely difficult for people who are not paid professional policy people to be able to afford to participate in IGF.