



KENYA YOUTH INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

Report by:

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Theme: Building our Multistakeholder Digital Future.

Where is Kenya today with internet governance?

Kenya is currently experiencing a situation reminiscent of the Arab Spring, a series of youth-led, anti-government protests that swept across the Arab world years ago. The youth are leading a revolution to stop bad governance that's been happening in Kenya. They want accountability and they want good governance. This turmoil unfolded when there was a new law introduced to increase tax on already the hard-economic conditions that the country is facing. This new law angered the youths and managed to bring disengaged youth back into the fold of active politics. However, the most surprising bit of this protest is the use of the internet to shape what the youth want. The protest started heavily on social media sites such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (now known as X). These sites were largely used for protests and also as a means to co-ordinate the protests.

Nonetheless like most African and dictatorial countries the government wanted to stop the protest thus went ahead and did the unimaginable at least for Kenya and went ahead to shut down the internet. Even after giving the country an assurance that would not happen. However, that did not stop the young people as the protest continued to go to the streets.

Kenya's tax protests are a testament to the power of social media and the influential role of Gen Z in modern activism. TikTok and other platforms have not only provided a space for young people to voice their concerns but have also empowered them to organize and lead significant political movements and this is why the internet governance forum (IGF) is very useful to us the youth and the general public. IGF gives us a platform to discuss with all the stakeholders on what's best for Kenya in terms of internet governance. The world is changing to a digital world and we should embrace it.

Internet and Activism

Dr. Grace Githiga

The internet has revolutionized activism by providing new tools and platforms for organizing, mobilizing, and spreading messages. This digital transformation has empowered individuals and groups to advocate for change more effectively, as seen in the recent Kenyan protests. Social media platforms like Twitter allow activists to communicate rapidly and coordinate actions in real-time, a capability demonstrated in the Twitter spaces during the protests.

One significant impact was that even people in remote areas like Turkana and other rural regions were able to join the conversation, bridging the digital divide and ensuring broader participation. This inclusivity is a huge step forward in digital equity.

Additionally, the spread of awareness has been marked by the dissemination of accurate information, which has been a positive development. However, it is crucial for the government to allow Kenya to maintain its reputation as a Silicon Valley of Africa by ensuring internet freedom.

Despite these advancements, challenges such as censorship, misinformation, and digital security must be navigated carefully to ensure the effectiveness and safety of online activism.

Action points

- As youth, we possess a wealth of information, and it is crucial to share it widely to raise awareness. We can achieve this by attending forums and engaging in writing, such as contributing to mailing lists. By disseminating information to as many people as possible and involving each other in our respective areas of expertise, we can ensure broad participation and make a significant impact.

Role of government on internet governance

Hon. Robert Alai- Member of county assembly (MCA) Kileleshwa ward

Before Robert Alai was elected to office, he worked as a tech blogger. This background makes the intersection of the internet and governance both clear and important to him. The active participation of Gen Z in discussions about the finance bill demonstrates their determination for change. The youth demand accountability, and one way to achieve this is by implementing transparent measures, such as digitizing most government affairs.

Currently, the government's most complex tool is Excel spreadsheets, a basic tool even a fourth grader can use. Despite this, the government resists digitization, possibly fearing exposure. For example, the finance building in Nairobi still relies on hardcopy filing systems, with bundles of files in rooms that make document retrieval difficult.

This is a call to youths in the tech space to explore opportunities in local government positions to drive change. The national assembly cannot be solely accountable, which is why devolution exists. We need to focus on digitizing our wards before addressing national levels.

This effort should extend beyond government to include all local businesses, especially informal sectors like Jua Kali. Digitization would make operations more efficient and allow the government to diversify its tax base, reducing the burden on white-collar jobs. Take for instance the founder of E-Citizen who digit

Furthermore, digitization would create more job opportunities for the youth, reducing the reliance on jobs like boda boda riding, which many youths turn to after dropping out of school for quick money. Embracing these opportunities in devolution and technology can significantly benefit the youth and the country.

Challenges being faced

- **Illiteracy**

This at both levels whether digitally or education. For instance for people in upcountry for them to vote for you they need to remember your face hence one bit change on your physical appearance and you are a different person entirely. Thus Digital Literacy and ways to make the people aware would suffice.

- **Lack of Local platforms**

There are no local platforms to use which is a challenge for us in terms of language and the general use of some platforms. Looking at countries like China and Russia regardless of them using the famous platforms they also have their own local platforms. I.E China has Weibo. For Africans we use all external platforms.

- **Exploitation of external platforms**

With lack of local platforms, we left at the mercies of external apps which at times they have unfair treatment. For instance, they push for bad policies. For instance, electric motor bicycles and yet we still have no infrastructure for that.

- **Misinformation from big stakeholders to protect their interest**

During the protest Safaricom a large stakeholder told the people there was something wrong with the fibre networks on the sea and the truth of the matter was that the government switch of the internet.

Action points

- Informal sector should be introduced to digital literacy and include them in the digital sector. Mechanics, Mama Mboga.
- Working with local government instead of national government
- Turned primary schools into digital hubs.
- Diversification of skills youth should not just focus on National governments and private entities but also focus on local levels for your own ward/constituency
- Public participation should also be hold virtually to accommodate everyone

Children IGF

Lilian Kariuki

We need to ensure continuity of the digital community hence involving children at this early age ensures this. Moreover, children are also involved in this space thus their opinion also matters. The Children IGF this year was held this year in Nanyuki. The student said that the internet they want should be:

- WIFI should be stable
- Create apps according to ages
- Spam software damage
- Using closed networks
- Taking down mean comments automatically
- All parents have a link to childrens account
- Policies and cookies for certain apps
- Laws on tiktok and IG
- Safe Internet

The road Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Anja gengo

IGF is divided into National and Regional initiatives. Thus you have a Kenyan IGF, followed by an East African IGF which this year will be held in Uganda, then there is an African IGF which is yet to be confirmed where and when which leads up to the global IGF. Just like last years global youth IGF was held in Tokyo Japan. This year the global youth IGF will be held in Riyadh , Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There are a lot of opportunities for the youth to be engaged. These opportunities include:

-leadership panel- Organizes the annual global IGF

-There is also being part of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG)- In charge of creating the Agenda

-Organisers of remote hubs- For more information to do this the website can support you.

<https://www.intgovforum.org/en>

- There is also Travels support to assist those who need travel support.

- Moreover, you can participate in session proposals

The IGF is a bottom up approach hence the ideas come from the stakeholders. The Themes of this year include:

- Harnessing innovation and balancing risks in digital space
- Enhancing the digital contribution to peace, development, and sustainability
- Advancing human rights and inclusion in the digital age
- Improving digital governance for the Internet We Want

ROUND TABLE

Cybersecurity and Trust

By Victor

Article 31 of the Kenyan Constitution states that everyone has the right to privacy, including the privacy of their communications. However, the National Service Act allows for the interception of this right in cases of hate speech, supported by the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act.

This conversation gained prominence when the phone numbers of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Kenya were leaked. The debate centred on whether it was appropriate to leak the phone numbers of MPs, who hold public office, compared to leaking the numbers of their family members. There is a clear need to draw a line between public and private information.

The leakage of personal information can happen to anyone, and it is crucial to take steps to prevent this. One effective measure is using subscription-based VPNs, as free VPNs often lack robust security. Additionally, being mindful of your digital footprint and metadata is essential. Avoid posting everything you do on social media and be cautious about clicking on unknown links. Turning off your location services can also protect you from being easily hacked. As users, it is our responsibility to protect our privacy and stay vigilant in the digital world.

CIA triad represents a foundation principle in cybersecurity. The importance of the security model speaks for itself: Confidentiality, integrity and availability. Under confidentiality we are looking at how to safeguard important data. A good example of this is that there is data encryption and also safe passwords and user IDs. However sometimes the government allegedly colludes with providers who have our data to gain our data. Which we should speak against. Them using this information to abduct people is not acceptable. Upholding integrity means that measures are taken to ensure that data is kept accurate and up to date. The integrity of your data impacts how trustworthy and conscientious your organisation is. Its part of the data protection act .Lastly availability means guaranteeing reliable access to information by authorised personnel. The Internet has become a right and a need since it has become embedded in our day to day lives.

Action points

Working around internet shutdowns

- Having satellites
- Hackthon. i.e Anonymous
- Having VPNS and Watch out on Meta Data
- Be mindful of free VPN meaning you have exchanged your data for the free VPN
- Having competition on internet. Having more on one service providers i.e Safaricom, Zuku

Working on Government Surveillance

- Not leaving digital footprints. Post something after two, three days
- Covering up phone signals

Artificial Intelligence and Data Ethics

Epanitius Sirengo

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that historically required human intelligence, such as recognizing speech, making decisions, and identifying patterns. AI is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide variety of technologies, including machine learning, deep learning and natural language processing. AI brings with it significant promises that have the potential of transforming Africa. At the heart of it, AI can solve Africa's most pervasive problems such as poverty, education, diseases, healthcare, and food supply. In Kenya, AI is applied across several sectors such as agriculture, health, education, fintech, transport, among others. We have seen great development including the development of the Chat GPT. We have also seen this technology evolve and even being used for governance purposes for instances such as understating the recent proposed finance bill to make people understand it in a more simplified way. We can see the innovation of the young people using technology however people are concerned and have a lot of worries concerning this thus regulation has started by discussion on the AI regulatory act.

However, developers are saying how can we regulate something that we have not even fully grasped its idea yet, that regulations hinder innovation. The question is still unanswered what do we do regulate first or finish innovation first. The answers according to Epanitius is the race between the respective stakeholders. Nonetheless the truth still remains that the AI ecosystem of Africa is far from where we want it to be. We don't have data sets or even instructions in our own language. We also don't have our own services located in our own countries and the sheer amount of data used in AI is a lot. Thus, we need to create a healthy ecosystem for AI to thrive regardless of the regulations placed.

Action point

- Let's have more development on tools that can help us govern better for example having tools to simplify our Laws and the constitution in a way we can understand, e.t.c

Data ethics

While using artificial intelligence as earlier stated a lot of data is required to be collected thus there needs to be guidance on how this is used. Ethics should be on the fore front. What is ethics? Data ethics refers to the principles behind how organizations gather, protect, and use data. It's a field of ethics that focuses on the moral obligations that entities have (or should have) when collecting and disseminating information about us. It's essential to remember that AI and machine learning are still relatively new technologies—they're not going away any time soon, but neither are they in their final form now. This is why there is urgency regarding questions about how these technologies should be used to ensure that they remain a benefit to society.

In the collection of data there are key stakeholders that is the data collector and the data processor and the user. A data collector determines the purposes for which and the means by which personal data is processed. The data processor processes personal data only. Few guiding principles in data collection:

- Consent from the user

This should be clearly put across and should be the first thing that should be put across and should be articulated very clearly not hidden as a footer. It should be also asked at the end of every stage. Moreover, it should also be allowed to be withdrawn.

- Password and data encryptions

Password should be changed regularly.

- Privacy by design

In the General Data Protection GDPR The term “Privacy by Design” means nothing more than “data protection through technology design.” Behind this is the thought that data protection in data processing procedures is best adhered to when it is already integrated in the technology when created

- Ethical Hacking

Hacking is divided into three: Black hats, Gray Hats and white hats. Black hats have no values on hacking. They hack to satisfy their selfish desires. Grey hats go with where their interest lies and white hats are guided worth their values.

Action points

- Putting bug bounties to stop loopholes in the systems. An example of a bug bounty is when Safaricom says anyone is able to hack their system will receive a certain amount of money. Same as Tesla. Thus, if Banks and governments put bug bounties they may cover for loopholes in their system.

Conclusion

As the youth of Kenya we have seen what technology can do to change the country. Lets keep the momentum and ensure we use this opportunity to grow both in terms of technology and governance. We will also remember those who fought and dies in their protests their names will be remembered years to come.

THE END