

IGF BERLIN 2019.

Workshop proposal: Kids Online: what we know and can do to keep them safe.

Cetic.br/NIC.br

CONCEPT NOTE

PRESENTATION

This panel offers a unique multi-stakeholder approach to child safety and participation online grounded on research and children's voice. Five panelists from four continents and four different stakeholder sectors will discuss **recent data** on children's participation online, comprising risks and opportunities, and will reflect on **what needs to be done** in terms of Internet governance and capacity building. Concrete examples of successful multi-stakeholder collaboration experiences, of which the panelists themselves make part, will be analyzed as examples of **how it needs to be done** for achieving global child safety online. These examples will illustrate the importance of stakeholder collaboration for responding to the growing range of threats to child Internet users, as well as for harnessing the potential benefits of online participation.

RELEVANCE

According to a recent UNICEF report, youth (ages 15–24) is the most connected age group. Worldwide, 71% of them are online, compared to 48% of the total population. Complementarily, a growing body of evidence points that children are accessing the Internet at increasingly younger ages. In some countries, children under 15 are as likely to use the internet as adults over 25 (UNICEF, 2017). With children making up for an estimated one third of Internet users worldwide, it is unavoidable to consider this specific age group in Internet policies and regulations, as well as capacity building actions, rather than adopting an age-blind approach (Livingstone et al, 2016). This not merely because children represent a substantial percentage of Internet users, but also because they play an important part in shaping the Internet (Global Kids Online, n/d).

In terms of the Sustainable Development Agenda of the United Nations, the proposed panel is linked to SDG 4, since it deals with guaranteeing opportunities for digital inclusion and lifelong learning, something that cannot be achieved without gender equity and without meeting the gender-specific challenges faced by child internet users, as expressed in SDG 5. Moreover, keeping children safe and healthy, as expressed in SDG 3, is among the most important goals for children in the Agenda, and it entails considering the threats and opportunities posed by the online environment as well. Finally, ending violence against children by 2030, includes ending harassment and hate speech both offline and online, something that is key to achieving peaceful and inclusive societies, as expressed by SDG 16.

PROPOSED APPROACH

The conceptual basis for the proposed approach of this panel is summarized in the publication *One in Three: Internet Governance and Children's Rights*, by UNICEF (2016), authored by Livingstone, S., Carr, J. and Byrne, J.

As introduced before, assumptions about Internet users as if they were a whole (for example, when referring to users' awareness, understanding, abilities, needs or rights) tends to normalize an adult-centric approach, failing to address the specific needs and characteristics of children. In contrast, the proposed approach to this panel strongly advocates for adopting an age-specific standpoint, informed by children's rights frameworks and focused on their characteristics and needs.

In this context, the acknowledgment of children's rights within the activities, policies and structures of Internet governance is of utmost importance. The proposed approach also entails bearing in mind that children's rights certainly encompasses protection, but they should not be limited to safety concerns: a balance with provision and participation rights is necessary. The full array of children's rights, as set out in the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989), also apply online, including the potential conflicts between some of these rights, for example the tension between protection efforts and the rights to free expression and participation. The policy questions proposed to organize the discussion in this workshop will specifically address those tensions.

While states bear the primary responsibility to ensure the realization of children's rights through the creation of legal, regulatory and policy frameworks, there are other crucial actors involved, including international governance organizations, educators, and the private sector. Moreover, parents and children should be recognized and included as significant stakeholders as well. The proposed panel also takes this point into account and proposes specific policy questions to be answered in this respect.

Understanding how children's rights are affected by Internet design, provision and governance must be continually updated and informed by reliable research targeting children. Household surveys are usually insufficient for this purpose, given that they usually cover older users and that, even if they ask about children's use of the Internet, it is frequently adults who answer on their behalf. As stated in the abovementioned reference publication, Internet governance organizations should ensure that important information about children's Internet access and use is collected, so that more precise data about this age group is available. The proposed panel is based on this kind of specific research on children, answered by children and their parents, and complemented with a qualitative approach in which children's voices are at the center.

SOURCES OF DATA

As introduced earlier, most of the data that will inform the discussions is based on the Kids Online framework. Global Kids Online is an international research project that aims to generate and sustain a rigorous cross-national evidence base around children's use of the internet by creating a global network of researchers and experts. The project developed a global research toolkit that enables academics, governments, the civil society and other actors to carry out reliable and standardised national research with children and their parents on the opportunities, risks and protective factors of children's Internet use.

Global Kids Online was developed as a collaborative initiative between the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and the EU Kids Online network. Supported by the WeProtect Global Alliance (2015 – 2016), the project aims to connect evidence with the ongoing international dialogue regarding policy and practical solutions for children's well-being and rights in the digital age, especially in the global

South. Research results are currently available from most European countries, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Ghana, South Africa, the Philippines and New Zealand, and fieldwork is underway in Albania, Canada and China. For further information, please visit <http://globalkidsonline.net/>

ABOUT THE PROPOSING ORGANIZATION, CETIC.br/NIC.br

The **Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society – Cetic.br**, is a department of the Brazilian Network Information Center (NIC.br), linked to the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br), the multi-stakeholder organ responsible for the Internet governance in Brazil. Since 2012, Cetic.br works under the auspices of the UNESCO, being the first Category II UNESCO center focused on the information society.

Cetic.br has consolidated its position as a reference research center on information and communication technologies (ICT), particularly the Internet. It publishes statistics and periodic specialized reports on the use of ICT by several segments of society, which are critical to monitor and assess the social and economic impacts of ICT. One of the characteristics of Cetic.br's work is the ongoing involvement of diverse stakeholders in the different stages of its work.

As a regional center, its work covers the region of Latin America and the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. The Centre's action lines comprise activities designed to contribute to a more informed debate on the importance of ICT for public policy and to the exchange of experiences among key actors engaged in researching the intersection between society and technology topics, and their implications for building a knowledge society. The work of the Center is focused on four action lines.

Capacity Building. Training and workshops on research methodology designed for public managers and researchers engaged in planning, implementing and monitoring ICT policies.

Knowledge Center. Dissemination of data and knowledge, including survey methodologies, indicators, analyses, and thematic publications.

Laboratory of Ideas. Debates, lectures, and discussion panels with experts to explore emerging issues related to the social impacts of ICT.

Culture and Ethics on the Internet. Research on the intersection of topics related to culture, ethics, and the Internet.

For further information, please visit www.cetic.br

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS' PROFILE AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE PANEL

Alejandra Erramuspe (Agesic, Uruguay) is the Senior Advisor on Internet Governance at the Agency for E-Government and the Information and Knowledge Society (AGESIC), the Uruguayan presidential agency aimed at promoting the development of e-Government and the Information Society. She is the representative of Uruguay to the ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and member of the Group of Government Experts that advises the UN Secretary-General on behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. Between 2016 and 2018, she was a MAG-IGF member, and has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Latin American IGF in different periods.

Her unique contribution to the panel is linked to the participation of Agestic in the “Kids Online” survey recently carried out in Uruguay, in the framework of a partnership between Agestic, Plan Ceibal, UNICEF, UNESCO and the Catholic University. The results of this study provide an overview of the digital inclusion of Uruguayan children, as well as the main challenges facing that population, and is informing debates and contributing to strengthening the local digital inclusion and Internet governance policies.

Alexandre Barbosa (Cetic.br at NIC.br, Brazil) is Head of the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br), a UNESCO Category II Center for the development of information society based in São Paulo, Brazil. He is in responsible for several nationwide ICT Survey projects in Brazil aimed at the production of ICT-related statistics and indicators. Alexandre holds a PhD in Business Administration from Getulio Vargas Foundation, a Master’s in Business Administration from Bradford University, and one in Computer Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. He has conducted postdoctoral research at HEC Montreal in Canada.

His unique contribution to the panel is based on having led the first wave of Kids Online survey in Latin America, where Brazil is, to date, the only Latin American country that counts on a series of six waves of the survey. In addition, from Cetic.br, he fostered the creation of the Latin America KO Network and collaborated with other countries in the region undertaking the survey.

Amanda Third (University of Western Sydney, Australia) is Associate Professor and Principal Research Fellow in Digital Social and Cultural Research in the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney, Australia, and Research Program Leader for the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre. Her research focuses on the socio-cultural dimensions of young people’s technology use, with emphases on the intergenerational dynamics shaping technology practice, and vulnerable young people’s technological engagements. Since 2010, she has led the Research Program: ‘Connected and Creative’, of the Young and Well CRC, which focuses on how to better connect vulnerable young people with their communities by enhancing and leveraging their technology practices and their creative engagements.

Her unique contribution to the panel stems from her permanent focus on enabling children to participate in the decision making that influences their digital practices, having coordinated two studies with UNICEF in which children from a total of 39 countries participated. Overall, her work has a strong emphasis on a rights-based approach, seeking to balance children’s protection, provision and participation rights, as well as online and offline children’s rights, perspective that she will bring to the panel, along with research findings based on the children’s consultation that she is currently coordinating.

Cristina Ponte (New University of Lisbon, Portugal) is Associate Professor in Communication and Journalism Studies and the Executive Coordinator of the Department of Communication at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, New University of Lisbon (NOVA FCSH). Among her main interests are media and generations, with a focus on children

and the Internet. She has published extensively on the topic. She was vice-chair of the Working Group of Children, Youth and Media, at ECREA. Additionally, she coordinated the study Growing up among screens (ERC, 2017). Among her most recent publications is the co-edited book Digital Parenting. The Challenges for Families in the Digital Age.

Her unique contribution to the panel comes from her experience in being responsible for Dissemination and Global Cooperation in the EU Kids Online network, and liaison with the Latin American Kids Online network, as well as her recent research.

Su Wenying (UNICEF, China) leads the legal and policy advocacy, justice for children, as well as child online protection at UNICEF China in Beijing, since 2014. Before that, she was the National Lead of Child Protection at Save the Children's Beijing Office. Wenying brings her legal background and expertise on child rights and protection to the rapidly developing area of child online safety. She has developed partnership with key regulatory bodies, think tanks, academia and leading Internet companies in China to facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach and more concerted efforts on different fronts in order to build a more child-friendly cyberspace.

Her unique contribution to the panel, will be based on that UNICEF China is currently conducting a large-scale study on children's internet use, relying on the contextualized Global Kids Online methodology and questionnaire. There are about 169 million children online in China, amounting to 93.7% of the total child population. While the opportunities and challenges children encounter on the internet are beyond borders, the sheer size of internet users and rapid growth of the tech industry in China presents unique experiences and practices, which cultivates a cyber-culture and regulatory environment with Chinese characteristics. UNICEF China has been working closely with the government, academic institutions, and leading tech companies such as Tencent to promote a policy framework with child rights perspective, more child-friendly designs and services in the tech sector, as well as internet literacy as a part of family and school education.

ABOUT THE MODERATOR OF THE PANEL

Guilherme Canela (UNESCO, Montevideo Regional Office) holds a B.A. in International Relations from the University of Brasília (UnB) and a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of São Paulo (USP). He coordinates the programmatic area of the Communication and Information Sector of the UNESCO Montevideo Regional Office. He coordinated the media and journalism research area of the News Agency for Children's Rights (ANDI) for 8 years. During this period, he was responsible for several surveys that evaluated the news media's coverage on issues related to children, such as education, violence, health, sexual abuse, human and social development, drugs, participatory democracy, entrepreneurial social responsibility and human rights, among others. He is the co-author of 10 books published by ANDI about these topics and several brochures, magazines and discussion texts. He was a research consultant for the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

Literature of reference

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Websites

Cetic.br/NIC.br <https://www.cetic.br/>

European Kids Online website <http://globalkidsonline.net/eu-kids-online/>

Global Kids Online website <http://globalkidsonline.net/>