

Workshop report from IGF 2012 in Baku

Workshop #195: “Citizenship in the digital era - meeting the challenges, empowering children”

A brief substantive summary and the main issues that were raised:

The five youth panelists started with presentations on their views on what being a citizen in a digital era means to them. They had different opinions on whether or not there is a difference between who you are and how you behave when you are online or offline. The theme of parental control was touched upon and it was expressed that there is a significant difference in dealing with children online when they are very young and when they are teenagers. The Azerbaijani youth delegate explained about the situation in the Azerbaijani society where there is a big difference between the rural and the urban areas as to how children use the Internet and how parents are prepared to teach their children about it.

After having opened the discussion to the floor, the adult panelists did their presentations. Sevinj Muradova presented the situation in Azerbaijan pointing out the groups of vulnerable children that are not easily reached by the usual initiatives and educative approaches. She explained about her organization’s projects producing sustainable and comprehensive educational material. Finally she pointed out that children need to be heard when making policies concerning them.

Larry Magid from Connect Safely had two points: to stop patronizing children and to stop giving misinformation. He pointed out that education per se is not what is needed. Education needs to be accurate and up-to-date. He presented an idea to how Internet safety could be managed by using the American health model with primary, secondary and tertiary levels of protection.

Susie Hendrie represented the mobile phone industry and gave examples of how they see that innovation comes from children. She stressed the importance the mobile phone plays today as the mobile is empowering social engagement system, mentioning the Arab spring. Susie Hendrie explained how they have done a lot of research around the world outside of the developed countries. The findings are that kids are using smartphones there too and that it is not just about privileged kids who have access to this technology. This technology is impacting children in all parts of the world. Furthermore she stressed how they, in order to take responsibility, have developed guidelines for apps' developers. Developing an app for an adult shouldn't be the same as for a child. They have given guidance for a default off location and using different language and taking age verification into account as well.

John Carr from eNACSO stressed that there might be fewer cases of assaults, suicides and bullying, but the consequences when these things are happening on the Internet are

immeasurable. They become global. The point is that even though the gran majority of children online don't experience inappropriate things, the 2% that do is still a lot of children. On the Internet little percentages matter.

Conclusions and further comments:

To children and youth the Internet is a source of information, communication, education and a great deal of fun. The vast majority never encounters any problems when online. But on the Internet small percentages matter, so if 2% are being harrassed or assaulted measures must be taken into use in order to prevent and stop that. Therefore, the main conclusion of the workshop was that "one size doesn't fit all".

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- Moderator: Anjan Bose, ECPAT International, (Thailand)

Speakers:

- John Carr, eNACSO
- Susie Hendrie, GSMA, (UK),
- Sevinj Muradova, NUR Children and Youth Public Union (Azerbaijan)
- Fidan Karimli, NUR youth participant, (Azerbaijan)
- Luca Kylesbeck, eNACSO youth participant (Denmark)
- Olivia Bang Brinck, eNACSO youth participant (Denmark)
- Larry Magid, Connect Safely (USA)
- Matthew Jackman, Youth Delegate, Member of the UK Youth IGF Project (UK)
- Rebecca Cawthorne, Youth Delegate, Member of the UK Youth IGF Project (UK)

