GLOBAL NETWORK OF **INTERNET AND SOCIETY** RESEARCH CENTERS

NoC 2024
PROGRESS
REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

2024 was an invigorating and fruitful year for the Global Network of Internet & Society Research Centers (NoC). Our vibrant community of Centers has deepened collaborations and fostered connections across the globe, united in our shared purpose of building, studying, and critically assessing the evolving digital landscape to create a better future through the responsible development and use of technology. We are energized by the impact of these partnerships, as colleagues leverage existing strengths to address pressing challenges and seize emerging opportunities.

This year, the NoC proudly welcomed 11 new Centers, expanding our network to 134. Each Center brings unique expertise and perspectives, enriching our collective capacity to support public and private sector stakeholders navigating the complexities of Internet and society issues. The Secretariat, a dedicated team of forward-thinking individuals, remains committed to facilitating these collaborations and empowering the network to reach its full potential.

This Progress Report reflects the collective achievements of the NoC community. It aims to:

1. **Celebrate the diverse contributions of our Centers:** We showcase the impactful work undertaken by Centers across the globe, highlighting their initiatives and the positive change they are driving.
2. **Foster ongoing dialogue and mutual learning:** We encourage feedback and open communication to ensure the Secretariat and the NoC effectively serve the needs and aspirations of all Centers.

The NoC's strength lies in the collaborative spirit and shared commitment of its Centers. This report is a testament to that spirit, and we are excited to continue building on this momentum, fostering a global community that shapes a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable digital future.

Our Shared Vision: The 2024-2026 Roadmap
The NoC has been guided by the 2024-2026 Roadmap, a framework co-created with input from Centers across the network. This roadmap outlines three core objectives:

- **Amplify the NoC's collective voice:** Increase the visibility and influence of the NoC and its contributors in regional and international technology policy discussions.
- **Promote knowledge sharing and capacity building:** Bridge information gaps on emerging technologies (VR, AI, etc.) across public and private sectors.
- **Facilitate collaborative action:** Enhance multidisciplinary and multi-regional collaboration with decision-makers to address critical internet and society challenges.
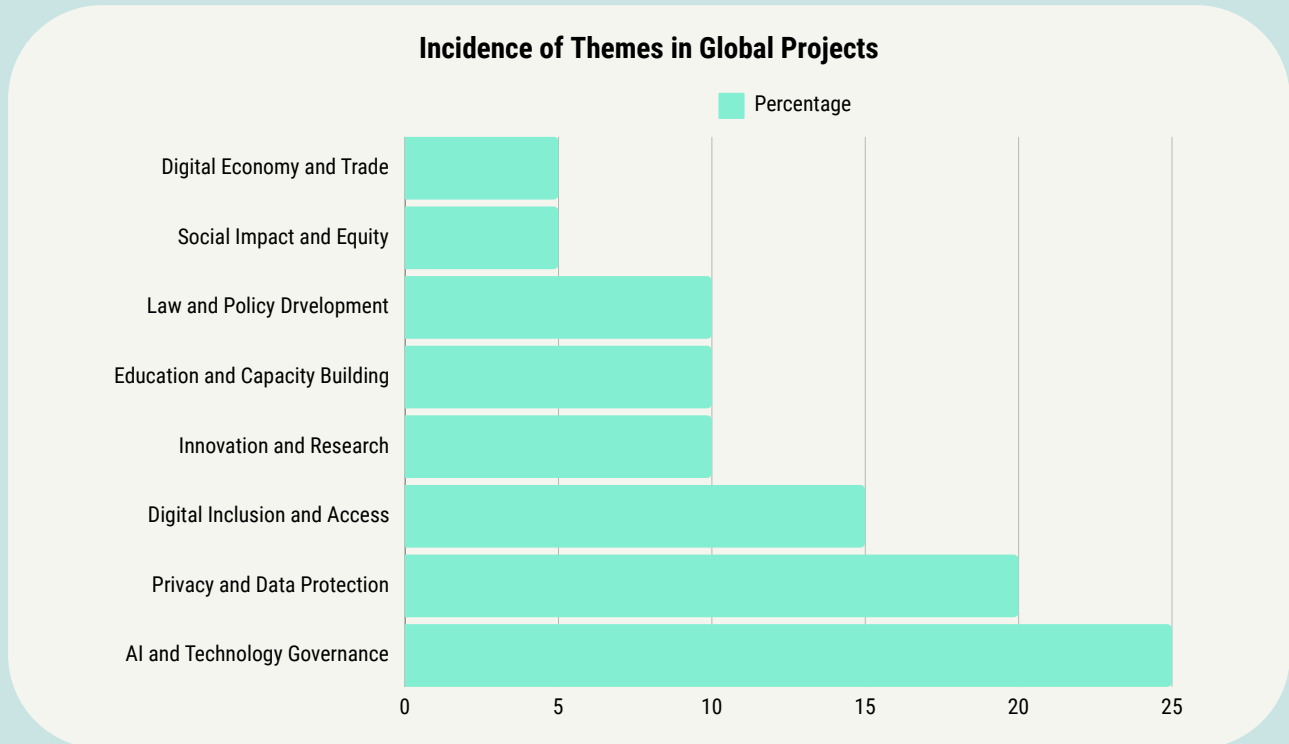
To achieve these goals, the Roadmap prioritizes five key areas of engagement:

- **Internal Collaboration and Engagement:** Strengthen communication and collaboration within the NoC community.
- **External Engagement:** Increase the NoC's visibility and impact in policy discussions and public discourse.
- **Shared Knowledge:** Facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building among Centers.
- **Research:** Promote collaborative research and analysis on critical internet and society issues.
- **Events:** Convene impactful events that foster learning, networking, and collaboration.

This report highlights projects led by NoC Centers and activities facilitated by the Secretariat within each area of engagement. It also outlines key priorities for the remainder of the 2024-2026 period, serving as a foundation for continued dialogue and collaboration as we shape the future of the NoC together.

NOC CENTERS OVERVIEW

Our colleagues at ITS Rio analyzed and summarized the activities of the Centers participating in the NoC Annual Meeting 2024. This section provides an overview of the main topics and themes that emerged from this analysis of NoC Centers. It also highlights examples of the work undertaken by each Center over the past year, showcasing the diverse range of activities they're engaged in.

Incidence of Themes in Global Projects

The analysis reveals a global emphasis on emerging digital technologies, with AI governance and privacy protection as prominent themes across continents. Regional variations are evident: Responding NoC Centers located in South America and Africa prioritize digital inclusion and data protection, while Centers in the United States and Europe focus on AI's societal impact, ethical frameworks, and platform governance. Centers in Asia emphasizes cybersecurity and platform regulation. These distinct priorities underscore the diverse ways societies are navigating the opportunities and challenges of technology.

- **AI and Technology Governance: 25%.** Many institutions focus on AI governance, responsible AI usage, and platform regulation, especially in academic and policy-making Centers.
- **Privacy and Data Protection: 20%.** A significant portion of the projects revolves around data protection, privacy laws, and surveillance.
- **Digital Inclusion and Access: 15%.** Initiatives around bridging the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to technology are prominent, especially in developing countries.
- **Innovation and Research: 10%.** Emerging technologies such as quantum computing, digital infrastructures, and fintech receive attention, mainly in research and innovation hubs.
- **Education and Capacity Building: 10%.** Many initiatives involve educational programs or capacity-building efforts, particularly concerning digital rights and cybersecurity.
- **Law and Policy Development: 10%.** Legal frameworks addressing technology-driven changes appear in multiple regions, with a focus on fintech and the digital economy.
- **Social Impact and Equity: 5%.** Social inclusion, climate justice, and gender-related technological implications are present but less frequent compared to other themes.
- **Digital Economy and Trade: 5%.** This includes projects supporting the digital economy, trade facilitation, and financial technology.

The distribution of main themes per region can be summarized as follows:

1. **South America:**
   - Focus: Digital rights, disinformation, privacy laws, and the social implications of AI.
   - Example: Brazil, through organizations like LAPIN, focuses on digital rights, disinformation, and AI ethics.

2. **North America:**
   - Focus: AI governance, social media platform regulation, the intersection of technology and democracy, cross-border dynamics in digital policy and trade, and privacy.
   - Example: Institutions like the Berkman Klein Center and Stanford Cyber Policy Center are deeply involved in AI and internet governance, social media challenges, and privacy concerns.

3. **Africa:**
   - Focus: Digital inclusion, data protection, law-tech harmonization, AI governance, digital infrastructure, and participation in open-source projects for the region.
   - Example: Rwanda and Ghana are advancing digital governance, privacy laws, and internet inclusion, focusing on practical legal frameworks and capacity building.

4. **Asia:**
   - Focus: AI development, AI and digital platform governance, data governance, cybersecurity, and AI research for digital government initiatives and digital integrity.
   - Example: South Korea and India emphasize AI development, cybersecurity, and platform governance, contributing to both regional and global discussions.

5. **Europe:**
   - Focus: Ethical AI, societal impact, and sustainable technologies.
   - Example: Germany's Humboldt Institute and Weizenbaum Institute focus on societal and ethical implications of AI, privacy, and digital sustainability.

SPOTLIGHTS FROM SELECTED CENTERS

A2K4D (Egypt)

The Access to Knowledge for Development Center (A2K4D) at the American University in Cairo's School of Business is focused on issues related to knowledge access, digital inclusion, and the socio-economic implications of technology in the MENA region. Some of their key initiatives include:

- **MENA Observatory on Responsible AI:** Launched to foster regional discourse on responsible data and AI usage, this platform aims to amplify MENA voices in global narratives on these topics.
- **Platform Work-MENA Network:** A2K4D is working to bring MENA's perspectives to the global discourse on the digital economy as it pertains to new forms of work, and to develop evidence-based research outputs to inform policies that promote inclusion and social protection.
- A2K4D is the **MENA hub of the F<a+i>r Hubs Network (Feminist AI Research Network)**, an initiative of the <A+> Alliance global coalition. A2K4D's activities involve knowledge creation and awareness raising about novel technologies and data for development.

Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University (USA)

Some of the main current projects of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University include:

- **Institute for Rebooting Social Media:** This project addresses urgent problems in social media, such as misinformation, privacy breaches, harassment, and content governance. The initiative aims to create healthier online ecosystems by collaborating with academia, industry, and the public.
- **Applied Social Media Lab (ASML):** This lab focuses on developing social media technology that serves the public interest. It integrates research and practical application by working across disciplines and aims to improve or revolutionize social media through public interest engineering, public policy, and standards setting.
- **Co-Designing Generative Futures:** This project explores the implications of generative AI technologies globally, focusing on empowering communities, advancing equity, and mitigating harm. The initiative includes workshops and discussions that involve various stakeholders to address both field-specific and cross-sectional challenges of generative AI.

Centre for Communication Governance at National Law University Delhi (CCG) (India)

Here's an overview of the projects and themes being worked on by the Centre for Communication Governance at National Law University Delhi:

- **Privacy Law Library:** An initiative to develop a global database summarizing privacy jurisprudence to aid researchers and stakeholders in understanding privacy regulations and case law developments worldwide.

- **Summer School on Platform Governance:** This annual event, part of a collaboration with international institutions like the Hans-Bredow Institut and the Institute for Technology and Society of Rio De Janeiro, focuses on critical issues in platform governance. The 2023 edition tackled topics such as content moderation, the impact of platforms on elections, and the oversight of digital services.
- **Research Reports on Data Governance and Surveillance Law:** CCG has produced significant reports, such as "Reconfiguring Data Governance: Insights from India and the EU" and "The Surveillance Law Landscape In India and The Impact of Puttaswamy," which provide in-depth analysis on data governance strategies and the implications of surveillance laws in India.

Centro de Estudios en Tecnología y Sociedad, Universidad de San Andrés, (CETyS) (Argentina)

CETyS has conducted research focused on five Research Areas: AI, Fintech, Internet Ecosystem, Digital Infrastructure Laboratory, and Digital Citizenship. Some of their research initiatives include:

- **GuIA Project:** GuIA was born with the objective of strengthening a regional space where researchers address discussions about the development and specific problems of Artificial Intelligence in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **Latin American Journal on Economics and Digital Society (RLESD):** The RLESD is an academic, online open-access journal aimed at disclosing original research on digital policies and the impact of digitalization in Latin America. It includes articles on some of the digital policy issues that can be observed in the current Latin American scenario, such as the digital divide, gender gap, digital skills, connectivity, and the shared use of infrastructures.

Center for Law and Innovation (Rwanda)

The Center for Law and Innovation in Rwanda has been focused on the intersection of law and technology, particularly in areas crucial for the sustainable development of legal frameworks in Africa. Here are some key initiatives and themes they've been working on:

- **African Law & Tech Network Summit:** This summit, a major event organized by the Center, brings together a diverse group of stakeholders including lawyers, policymakers, and technology experts to discuss critical issues like AI governance, digital trade, data protection, and the sustainability of startups in Africa. The discussions aim to foster collaboration and harmonization of policy across the continent, particularly in light of emerging technologies.

- **Training on Data Protection and Privacy Law:** The Center conducts specialized training aimed at enhancing understanding and implementation of data protection and privacy laws among legal professionals and stakeholders in Rwanda and Africa.
- **Digitalization and Fintech Initiatives:** These initiatives focus on exploring the implications of digital financial services and fintech innovations, providing policy recommendations and regulatory frameworks to support their ethical and equitable deployment.
- **Climate Justice Programs:** Addressing legal aspects related to climate change, the Center works on developing legal frameworks that support climate justice, ensuring that environmental policies consider the socio-economic impacts on vulnerable populations.
- **ALT Network Activities:** As the new home for the African Law & Tech Network, the Center facilitates discussions and collaborations that address the intersection of law and technology across Africa, aiming to create a harmonized legal landscape that supports technological innovation while ensuring justice and equity.

서울대학교 기술과 법 센터
Center for Law & Technology

Center for Law & Technology (South Korea)

The Center for Law & Technology in South Korea has been actively involved in a variety of projects and initiatives focusing on the integration of technological advancements with legal frameworks. Notable efforts include:

- **Digital Platform Government Initiative**: South Korea is working towards a "Digital Platform Government," aiming to provide integrated, personalized, and preemptive services to the public. This initiative seeks to break down the barriers among ministries and enhance the efficiency of government operations through digital transformation.

- **AI Week 2023 Collaboration with Google:** This event was a joint effort by the Ministry of Science and ICT and Google to globalize Korea's AI industry. It focused on expanding human resources development and AI R&D in Korea. The initiative aimed to support the growth of Korean talents to global levels through various programs, including Machine Learning Boot Camps and startup schools.

- **Investment in R&D:** South Korea plans to invest 24.7 trillion won in research and development for the next year, focusing on strategic technologies, carbon neutrality, and digital transformation. This investment will support key sectors such as semiconductors, next-generation nuclear energy, and artificial intelligence, emphasizing the country's commitment to maintaining its technological edge.

RICE UNIVERSITY'S
Baker Institute
for Public Policy

Center for the US & Mex / Baker Institute at Rice University (USA)

The Center for the United States and Mexico at Rice University's Baker Institute has been involved in several key projects focusing on immigration, diplomacy, and bilateral relations between the US and Mexico. Some of the notable projects include:

- **Migration Initiative:** This project is a collaborative effort involving multiple Centers at the Baker Institute, focusing on the economic, legal, health, social, and environmental aspects of migration. This initiative aims to provide comprehensive research and solutions to migration challenges.

- **U.S.-Mexico Forum:** The forum serves as a platform for individuals and corporations to support and engage with the policy research activities at the Center. It includes access to experts, policy briefs, and discussions on developments in the U.S.-Mexico relationship.

- **Annual Events and Briefings:** The Center hosts various events and briefings that delve into issues affecting US-Mexico relations. Topics covered in these events range from immigration policy and labor shortages to broader economic and security.

DIGITAL ASIA HUB

Digital Asia Hub (Hong Kong & Singapore)

The Digital Asia Hub in Hong Kong and Singapore has been actively engaged in various projects focusing on the intersection of technology, culture, and policy in the Asia-Pacific region. Here are some of their recent projects:

- **Chinese Internet Research Conference (CIRC):** This conference, titled "The Chinese Internet in the Global South: Flows, Frictions, and Futures," is set to explore the impact and dynamics of Chinese digital technologies in the Global South. It focuses on how these technologies are shaping various socio-economic landscapes outside China, particularly in Southeast and South Asia.

- **Future(s) of Work and Play:** This project investigates the evolving nature of work and leisure in the digital age, examining how technological advancements are reshaping these fundamental aspects of life in Asia.

- **Digital Infrastructures Project:** This initiative looks at the development and impact of digital infrastructures across Asia, exploring how they support or transform various sectors such as finance, healthcare, and education.

- **Ranking Digital Rights:** Aiming to hold corporations accountable, this project assesses major technology companies' policies and practices related to users' rights to freedom of expression and privacy on the internet.

DAH.th

Digital Asia Hub Thailand

The Digital Asia Hub Thailand (DAH.th) has organized several activities related to AI Governance in collaboration with the AI Governance Center (AIGC) by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA). The key initiatives are as follows:

- **AI Executive Program in Digital Healthcare: Navigating the Future of Healthcare with AI (AiX-2):** This program is strategically designed to provide executives with the latest strategies, guidelines, and best practices for leveraging AI in the future of healthcare.

- **Compilation of Academic Articles for Publication on AIGC's Platform:** In collaboration with AIGC's Fellow, DAH.th has coordinated with expert fellows from the government, private sectors, and leading universities in Thailand to gather and facilitate the publication of academic articles on the AIGC's platform.

- **International Policy Advisory Panel (IPAP) and AIGC Expert Fellow Meetings:** These meetings serve as brainstorming and knowledge-sharing sessions, bringing together experts from both Thailand and abroad. The goal is to develop AIGC's activities and missions to effectively address public needs for AI oversight, ensuring appropriate and effective governance of AI use in Thailand.

EGIGFA

E-Governance and Internet Governance Foundation for Africa (EGIGFA) (Ghana)

The E-Governance and Internet Governance Foundation for Africa (EGIGFA) in Ghana is actively involved in various projects aimed at enhancing e-governance and internet governance across Africa. Here are some of their key projects:

- **Internet Governance Clubs:** EGIGFA is setting up clubs across campuses to engage members more deeply in Internet governance issues. These clubs are part of their broader effort to foster a community of informed advocates for digital rights and policies.

- **Ghana School on Internet Governance (GhanaSIG):** This annual fellowship program is a significant initiative of EGIGFA, aimed at developing skills in Internet governance among participants from diverse sectors and backgrounds. This program includes discussions on Internet governance principles and practices and emphasizes the development of informed, skilled, and ethical Internet governance practitioners.

- **Research and Capacity Building:** EGIGFA conducts research and organizes capacity-building events such as workshops and conferences to advocate and enhance e-governance and internet governance practices. Their research focuses on various facets of Internet governance and aims to influence policy and practice across Africa.

- **Participation in International Forums:** EGIGFA actively participates in international forums like the Internet Governance Forum, contributing to global discussions on internet governance and advocating for the interests of African stakeholders in these platforms.

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT INSTITUT FÜR INTERNET UND GESELLSCHAFT

Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society (HIIG) (Germany)

The Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society (HIIG) in Germany has a diverse range of projects focused on the societal impacts of digital technology. Here are some of their key initiatives:

- **AI & Society Lab:** This lab serves as an interdisciplinary space that integrates societal issues into the development and analysis of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It acts as a bridge between academic research and practical applications involving industry and civil society.

- **The Evolving Digital Society Program:** This research program explores the transformations brought about by digitalization, looking at how digital technologies interact with societal concepts, discourses, and material realities. It includes specific projects on the societal implications of AI, the relationship between humans and machines, and the political and rhetorical aspects of military AI technologies.

- **Platform Governance and Data Governance:** These research areas focus on how online platforms can balance corporate goals with social values, and on developing robust data governance models to inform good policy practices.

- **Public Interest AI:** This research group is developing methods to define and operationalize the public interest in AI applications, aiming to ensure that AI development aligns with societal values and norms.

UIC barcelona

Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (Spain)

The Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC Barcelona) has been actively engaged in several projects and initiatives focusing on areas like artificial intelligence, new technologies, and sustainable development. Here's an overview of their key projects:

- **Observatory on Artificial Intelligence and New Technologies:** This initiative explores the implications and developments within AI and new technological trends, aiming to integrate these insights into academic and practical applications across various disciplines.
- **Sustainability and Social Commitment Projects:** UIC Barcelona emphasizes sustainability in its academic and operational activities, integrating principles of environmental consciousness and social responsibility across its curriculum and campus initiatives.
- **Research in Health and Science:** Through its research groups and health sciences programs, UIC Barcelona contributes to advancements in medical, healthcare, and scientific domains, focusing on innovative solutions and enhancements in patient care and medical treatment.

International Trade Centre

International Trade Centre of Ghana (ITC) (Ghana)

The International Trade Centre (ITC) in Ghana has been actively involved in several key projects aimed at enhancing trade capabilities and supporting the economic empowerment of women through trade:

- **SheTrades Hub:** This project focuses on empowering women entrepreneurs by providing them with access to training programs, resources, and business opportunities. The SheTrades Hub aims to help women unlock new markets and is part of a broader network that supports the business environment for women globally. The initiative includes workshops on digital branding, social media marketing, and visual content creation, tailored to enhance the skills and market presence of women entrepreneurs in Ghana.
- **Training for International Bidding:** ITC has launched a training program designed to equip Ghanaian companies with the skills necessary to bid effectively for international contracts. This initiative aims to open up more global opportunities for local businesses, with an emphasis on those that have not previously engaged in international bidding.
- **Digital Trade Shows and International Partnerships:** The ITC has facilitated participation in digital trade shows and helped establish international business partnerships, which are crucial for expanding the market reach of Ghanaian enterprises.

HCLT — The Haifa Center for Law & Technology

Haifa Center of Law and Technology (HCLT) (Israel)

The Haifa Center for Law and Technology (HCLT) at the University of Haifa, Israel, has been actively working on several key projects focusing on the intersection of law, technology, and intellectual property. Some of the center's significant initiatives include:

- **Cybersecurity and Cyber Law:** HCLT has been conducting research on cybersecurity innovation and the role of government policies in promoting innovation in the cyber domain. This includes legal frameworks for cyber warfare and cyber terrorism, addressing both national and international dimensions.
- **Algorithmic Accountability and Copyright:** One of their projects involves examining the accountability of algorithms in copyright enforcement, particularly the role of online intermediaries in filtering and blocking content.
- **Open Access and Digital Culture:** The center continues its work on open access, focusing on removing legal barriers to accessing scientific knowledge and exploring policies to support open science in Israel.
- **Creative Commons Israel:** HCLT plays a pivotal role in facilitating the Creative Commons movement in Israel, providing educational resources and promoting alternative licensing models to the traditional copyright regime.

LAPIN (Brazil)

The Laboratory of Public Policy and Internet (LAPIN) in Brazil has been actively engaged in several projects focusing on digital technologies' social, ethical, and judicial impacts. Key areas of their work include:

- **Digital Surveillance:** LAPIN explores the implications and governance of surveillance technologies, examining their impact on privacy and civil liberties.

- **Artificial Intelligence and New Technologies:** They investigate the ethical and regulatory challenges posed by AI and other emerging technologies.
- **Disinformation:** This involves studying the spread of disinformation and developing strategies to promote algorithmic transparency and combat misinformation effectively.
- **Data Governance and Digital Economy:** LAPIN works on issues related to data protection, privacy, and the broader implications of digital transformation on the economy.

Media Change & Innovation Division, IKMZ, University of Zurich (Switzerland)

The Media Change & Innovation Divison at the University of Zurich analyzes and teaches the characteristics and implications of media change, focusing on the co-evolution of technical, economic, political, and social innovations in the convergent communications sector. Some of their recent developments include:

- **Research on Digital Skills for Everyday Life:** This published article compares self-reported measures of digital skills and knowledge of datafication and algorithmization in everyday internet use and maps the evolution of their relevance for digital everyday life.

- **Content Creators' Belief Systems within the Social Media Ecosystem:** This project aims to empirically examine content creators and their belief systems within social media ecosystems to explore their sense-making mechanisms and related behaviors. Through this approach, the project also assesses whether creators' beliefs reflect religion-like functions considering the uncertainty that characterizes content creators' activities.
- **Artificial intelligence Applications: Use - Skills - Attitudes:** How do people in Switzerland use applications with artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT or Google Gemini in their everyday lives? Who uses them? How skilled is this use? For what purposes do they use them and how helpful are they? What are Swiss internet users' attitudes towards these AI applications and what do they think about their regulation? To answer these questions, the Division collaborated with the Swiss public broadcasting association (SRG) to collect nationally representative data on the use and implications of these AI applications.

Nexa Center for Internet & Society, Politecnico di Torino (Italy)

The Nexa Center devotes efforts in the fields of legal and technical standards for Open Data, network measurement, and privacy law and economics. Some recent highlights include:

- **Responsible AI:** from principles to practice: A study that aims to develop practical techniques and industrial practices for accountable Artificial Intelligence (AI) decision-making.

- **FAIR:** Future of Artificial Intelligence Research: An Italian national project that aims at addressing the research questions, methodologies, models, technologies, and even ethical and legal rules for building artificial intelligence systems of the future.
- **Generative AI and liability of developers, providers, and users:** A TIM-financed project that aims to address modern challenges related to the liability of different subjects in regard to the use and development of AI systems.
- **Biennale Tecnologia:** an extensive cultural event with a series of wide-ranging national and international appointments aimed at proposing a broad reflection on the relationship between technology and society and at strengthening the dialogue between universities and civil society.
- **The future of Online Freedom of expression:** A project aiming to study online content moderation by gathering numerous case studies that reflect the legal issues concerning the balance between freedom of expression and policies against disinformation and hate speech on the internet.

BI NORWEGIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Nordic Center for Internet and Society (Norway)

The Nordic Centre for Internet and Society (NCIS) at BI Norwegian Business School has been actively involved in a variety of projects focusing on the impact of digital technologies on society and the workplace. Key activities include:

- **Postdoctoral Fellowship Opportunities:** NCIS has invited researchers for a two-year EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Postdoctoral Fellowship. This fellowship aims to support research projects that explore the dynamics of digital teams and digital team management.

- **Co-Designing Generative Futures Workshop and Conference:** NCIS participated in this event hosted by the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University, focusing on responsible AI and how it can empower communities, advance equity, and mitigate harm. This event was part of the INTPART Triple Partnership for Responsible AI project, emphasizing collaboration among research institutions in Norway, the U.S., Brazil, and Germany.

- **Research on Digital Work and Society:** NCIS combines interdisciplinary research approaches to study how emerging Internet technologies influence work and societal structures. Their research spans various aspects of digitalization, including the ethical challenges and re-invention of working environments in a digital economy.

QUT Digital Media Research Centre

QUT Digital Media Research Centre (Australia)

The QUT Digital Media Research Centre in Australia is working on a variety of impactful projects focusing on the evolving role of digital media in society. Here are some key initiatives:

- **Amplifying Voices from the Royal Commission into Aged Care:** This project evaluates the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Aged Care, aiming to amplify the voices and concerns highlighted during the commission's proceedings.

- **Taking Humour Seriously for Online Safety:** This initiative explores the role of humor in online communications, particularly its impact on safety and the ways it can be used to foster positive online interactions.

- **Political Economy of Sex Tech:** This project investigates the economic and social dynamics within the sex tech industry, examining how digital technologies are transforming related markets and practices.

- **Digital Inclusion Programs in Community Contexts:** Focusing on enhancing digital access and literacy in diverse communities, this project aims to improve the inclusiveness of digital technology.

- **Digital Citizenship in Australian Primary Schools and Early Education Settings:** The project addresses the integration of digital citizenship concepts into the curriculum for young learners, promoting safe and responsible use of technology from an early age.

researchICTafrica.net

Research ICT Africa, University of Cape Town (South Africa)

Research ICT Africa, affiliated with the University of Cape Town, is actively involved in several projects focusing on ICT policy and regulation to address regional and continental needs in Africa. They aim to support sustainable and equitable network operations and development, contributing to the understanding and enhancement of digital infrastructure across the continent. Some of their recent initiatives include:

- **African digital infrastructures:** This project, funded by a consortium of foundations, investigates the participation of Africa in open-source development, aiming to improve understanding and increase African leadership in global open-source projects.

- **Enhancing Africa's participation in open-source development:** Supported by a significant research grant, this project delves into how African contributions to open-source digital infrastructures can be augmented, focusing on identifying catalysts and barriers to such contributions.

Stanford | Cyber Policy Center
Freeman Spogli Institute and Stanford Law School

Stanford Cyber Policy Center (United States)

The Stanford Cyber Policy Center is engaged in a variety of projects that explore the intersections of cybersecurity, governance, and the future of work. Their current initiatives include:

- **Global Digital Policy Incubator:** This project aims to inspire policy and governance innovations that strengthen democratic values, universal human rights, and the rule of law in the digital realm.

- **Governance of Emerging Technologies:** This program focuses on shaping future research and policymaking to assess the impacts of emerging technologies on democratic governance, the rule of law, and socioeconomic inequality.
- **Internet Observatory:** Dedicated to studying the abuse of the internet in real-time, providing insights into disinformation campaigns and cybersecurity threats.
- **Program on Democracy and the Internet:** This program investigates how the internet affects democracy, aiming to study and mitigate the negative impacts of digital technologies on the public sphere.

T
TUM THINK TANK

TUM Think Tank (Germany)

The TUM Think Tank in Germany is spearheading several projects focusing on the interplay between technology and societal impact:

- **Urban Digitainability Lab:** This project, funded by Stiftung Mercator, aims to create sustainable and digital urban environments by integrating education, network expansion, and collaborations between science and practical applications. It focuses on mobility, housing, and health to enhance urban life through sustainable practices.
- **Ethical Data Initiative:** This initiative focuses on fostering discussions about data ethics, improving data literacy, and building trust through transparency. It serves as a platform for exploring ethical issues surrounding data use and management.

- **Frontiers in Digital Child Safety:** In collaboration with Apple, this multi-stakeholder research initiative seeks to advance digital child safety, addressing online risks and promoting safer internet environments for children.
- **QuantWorld:** This project investigates the societal impacts of second-generation quantum technologies, like quantum computing and quantum internet, and their potential to revolutionize fields such as banking, medicine, and mobility.
- **Generative AI Task Force:** Established to provide guidance on managing the ethical and practical challenges of generative AI, this task force aims to develop regulatory proposals and facilitate discussions across various sectors including policy, administration, and business.
- **Quantum Social Lab:** Co-led by noted academics, this lab examines the ethical, legal, and societal implications of emerging quantum technologies. It collaborates with international institutions to address the potential risks and benefits of these technologies.
- **Audit.EU:** The aim of this project, led by the Civic Machines Lab, is to co-design an auditing framework under the EU Act.

UTEC
UNIVERSIDAD DE INGENIERÍA & TECNOLOGÍA

UTEC Peru (Peru)

The Universidad de Ingeniería & Tecnología (UTEC) in Peru is actively involved in a range of innovative research projects that span various fields of science and technology. Here are some of the key projects:

- **Developing Prototype Detectors for a Peruvian Neutrino Observatory in the Andes (TAMBO):** This project aims to create a neutrino observatory in the Peruvian Andes, with a focus on developing semi-autonomous detectors to detect tau-lepton-induced air showers. This effort involves collaboration with Harvard University and utilizes high-altitude electronics expertise to manage technological challenges posed by the environment.

- **Characterization of Materials in the Ransom Room of Atahualpa, Cajamarca, Peru:** This interdisciplinary project combines science, technology, archaeology, and conservation to study and preserve Inka stone architecture. It involves experts from UTEC, Harvard's SEAS, and the Department of Anthropology, aiming to disseminate their findings through workshops and specialized training.
- **Chicha: Where Ancient Traditions Meet Technology:** This research delves into the biological, chemical, and physical aspects of 'chicha', a traditional fermented beverage. The project is notable for its innovative use of novel sequencing techniques to explore microbial communities within chicha, enhancing understanding of this culturally significant beverage.

SPOTLIGHTS FROM
SELECTED CENTERS

uOttawa CLTS (Canada)

The Centre for Law, Technology and Society (CLTS) at the University of Ottawa has been active in various projects that delve into the complex intersections of law, ethics, and technology. Some of the notable projects and initiatives they've engaged in include:

- **Artificial Intelligence and Inequality in the Middle East:** This project explores the political economy of inclusion, particularly how AI technologies impact socio-economic structures in the Middle East.

- **Vulnerable: The Law, Policy, and Ethics of COVID-19:** This book examines the policy and legal responses to the pandemic, highlighting contributions from several faculty members.
- **Intermediary Liability in Canada and the United States:** This report analyzes the impact of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement on intermediary liability frameworks in North America.
- **Social Media and Democracy:** This project looks at the challenges social media poses to election law and administration in Canada, focusing on the dynamics of digital platforms in the democratic process.

Weizenbaum Institute (Germany)

The Weizenbaum Institute in Germany has been involved in a variety of research and development projects focusing on the intersection of technology, society, and sustainability. Key projects include:

- **AI-augmented Social Scientist:** This project explores the use of generative AI to enhance social science research methodologies, particularly in analyzing TikTok news content.
- **Digital Dashboards:** These tools are designed to make complex topics understandable for both experts and the general public, showcasing their utility in various public sectors.

- **Towards Informational Sustainability:** This initiative examines the interplay between digitalization and sustainability, aiming to uncover how these two domains can synergistically support each other.
- **Unveiling the AI Bias:** Focused on exploring public perceptions of generative AI in decision-making processes, this project seeks to address and mitigate biases inherent in AI technologies.
- **AI for Bad:** Investigates how AI-generated visual content is utilized in far-right political campaigns and other anti-democratic contexts.
- **Ethics of Data Work:** Aims to develop ethical guidelines and fair working conditions for data workers, enhancing the integrity of data-driven research.
- **Generative AI in the World of Work (GENKIA):** Studies the implications of AI applications in various business sectors, focusing on employee impacts and the overall quality of work.

Wee Kim Wee School of Comm & Info, NTU, Singapore (Singapore)

Their research initiatives cover a broad spectrum, reflecting a deep commitment to innovation and excellence.

- **Interdisciplinary Research:** Bridging multiple disciplines, WKWSCI's research spans across communication and information, engaging in high-impact projects that draw significant external funding.

- **Centers of Excellence:** WKWSCI hosts specialized research centers such as the Centre for Information Integrity and the Internet (IN-cube), which aims to promote integrity in online spaces, and the Centre for Healthy and Sustainable Cities (CHESS), focusing on human-centered approaches to health and environmental issues in Asia.
- **Cutting-Edge AI Research:** The school is advancing AI capabilities to solve complex societal problems, improve efficiency, and enhance the quality of life.

NoC SECRETARIAT

INTERNAL COLLABORATION
AND ENGAGEMENT

NoC thrives on the active participation of its Centers. By fostering a welcoming and supportive environment, we aim to cultivate a strong foundation for collaborative projects and initiatives. From onboarding new Centers to expanding communication channels, the Secretariat strives to facilitate meaningful engagement and knowledge sharing within the network. We believe that by reducing barriers to participation, we can empower NoC Centers to deepen their collaborations and generate impactful work.

NEW CENTERS

In 2024 NoC has welcomed 11 new Centers. The growth of the Network positively impacts its ability to foster truly diverse collaboration spaces, with representation from different parts of the world. The new NoC Centers include:
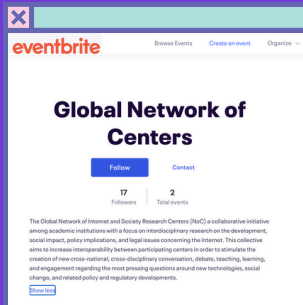
1. Institute for People and Technology (IPaT) at Georgia Tech, USA.
2. Safer Internet Lab, Indonesia.
3. Centre for Digital Culture, UK.
4. Centre for AI Social and Digital Innovations Brunel University London, UK.
5. Center for Law and Innovation at Certa Foundation, Rwanda.
6. Digital Age Research Center at Universität Klagenfurt, Austria.
7. Center for the U.S. and Mexico Center at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, USA.
8. Institut für Medien- und Informationsrecht at The University of Freiburg, Germany.
9. Centro-i para la Sociedad del Futuro, Mexico.
10. Datasphere Initiative, Switzerland and Brazil.
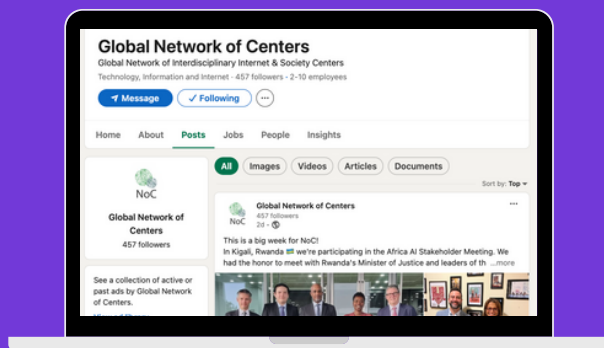11. Programa de Derecho, Ciencia y Tecnología UC, Chile.
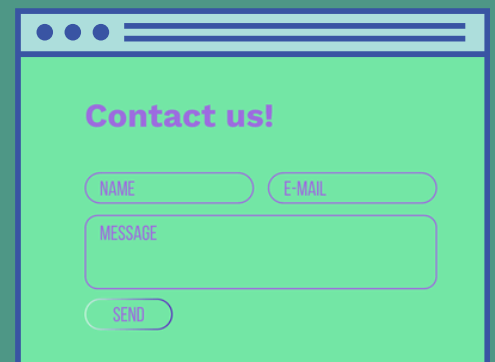
UPDATED ONLINE PRESENCE

Enhancing the accessibility of NoC-hosted events for both Centers and the public is a key aspect of revitalizing the NoC's online presence. The main objective of the Secretariat is to ensure that NoC events are easy to discover and attend. To achieve this, the Secretariat established an Eventbrite profile for the NoC, which facilitates the promotion of Learning Calls and other events. Eventbrite offers immense potential for sharing and promoting both online and in-person events in a user-friendly format, increasing the visibility and reach of NoC activities.

In addition, the NoC website is undergoing a complete redesign. The new site will feature a fresh, modern aesthetic that reflects the energy and dynamism of the NoC's work. With vibrant colors, engaging typography, and compelling visuals, the redesigned website will be user-friendly, informative, and focused on facilitating easy contact with the Secretariat. This will serve as a vital gateway for new Centers to discover the NoC and for potential partners to initiate collaborations.

A strong social media presence is also essential for sharing the NoC's work and engaging with civil society and potential collaborators. The NoC's LinkedIn page is a key resource for staying connected with the NoC network, with a growing follower count of 457 and high engagement on posts. NoC's Secretariat invites Centers and partners to actively participate in this online community and help us share information, foster connections, and amplify the impact of the NoC's work.

NEWSLETTER AND EMAIL LIST

The first issue of the NoC newsletter, *NoC Spotlight*, was released this past spring. It features updates from the Secretariat, news from the Centers, and a preview of upcoming events. NoC Spotlight serves as a platform to highlight initiatives from both the Secretariat and the Centers. As the Secretariat develops a publication calendar for the newsletter, Centers are encouraged to submit items for inclusion.

View this email in your browser

GLOBAL NETWORK OF INTERNET AND SOCIETY RESEARCH CENTERS

NoC Spotlight: Issue 1

Dear NoC Colleagues,

Welcome to our first edition of the NoC Spotlight, a newsletter where the Secretariat will be sharing important updates, news, and events. We hope you will find this an informative space to look forward to every couple of months.

To submit your newsletter item and be featured, please send your information to contact@networkofcenters.net.

BUDDY SYSTEMS

The Secretariat is facilitating a buddy system to connect Centers interested in developing joint research initiatives and exploring new areas of study through continuous knowledge sharing. Centers in various regions, including Africa and Asia, have expressed interest in this initiative. The Secretariat is eager to collaborate with Centers to advance this program and foster supportive relationships that will enable Centers to learn from and assist one another.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

The Secretariat & the Centers have broadened their engagement with external organizations and entities, from collaborating with policymakers on specific projects to cultivating region-specific initiatives through regional hubs. This section provides further details on these impactful initiatives.

POLICYMAKERS

NoC Centers and the Secretariat have actively engaged in projects aimed at increasing technology policy expertise and promoting digital inclusion in the majority world. This work has involved close collaboration with NoC partners and collaborators in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, resulting in significant progress on the following initiatives:

Americas:

- **US-Mexico AI Policy Project:** NoC centers have been collaborating with researchers in Mexico and at Rice University on an AI policy project that aims to strengthen the relationship between both countries and foster collaboration between U.S. researchers and policymakers in Latin America and the Caribbean
- **AI Index Development:** NoC colleagues are assisting in the technical design and data collection for the Latin American AI Index (ILIA) and the Global AI Index led by Tortoise
- **Supporting Supercomputing Projects in Latin America:** NoC colleagues have begun supporting the development of a supercomputing program aimed at improving the governance and ethical use of this infrastructure. They are helping to develop governance models for HPC centers in the Dominican Republic and Chile.
- **Inclusive AI Governance Initiative:** NoC supported the Congress of Costa Rica in reviewing their AI bill and drafting a new report used by several countries in the region. NoC colleagues participated in workshops with the Congress of Colombia and the Digital Transformation Secretariat of Peru. Additionally, NoC colleagues assisted Brazil's data protection authority in presenting regulatory sandboxes during G20 meetings. Also, colleagues supported Chile in resuming their regulatory sandbox project and hope to support Thailand in developing similar efforts.
- **AI Regulatory Sandbox in Brazil and Chile:** Brazil's data protection authority has asked NoC to support the development of the country's first regulatory sandbox on AI and data protection. The Chilean government is also seeking NoC's Secretariat assistance in developing a regulatory sandbox for maritime transportation and enhancing the country's competitiveness in these experimental regulatory spaces. NoC is helping both countries build their capacity to develop such innovative projects and is connecting local academic experts with the decision-makers responsible for these undertakings.
- **AI Governance in Mexico and Costa Rica:** NoC has supported lawmakers in these countries in reviewing their legislative projects for AI development to better align the protection of human rights with technological innovation.

African Continent:

- **Ghana:** NoC members partnered with EGIGFA on a buddy system project to enhance their e-governance fellowship, now with a stronger focus on emerging technologies and AI. This fellowship brought together individuals from civil society, government, and the entrepreneurial sector in Ghana in July 2024.
- **Mauritania:** Invited by the local Ministry of Digital Transformation, Innovation and Modernization of Administration and the international development organization GIZ, NoC members supported the development of the country's first national AI strategy in collaboration with the TUM Think Tank, which was published in July 2024.
- **Nigeria:** The NoC is supporting the establishment of a new academic center for AI in agriculture at the University of Port Harcourt. This center will focus on promoting the use of AI to enhance agricultural practices and food security, training communities, particularly women farmers, to understand AI applications and their benefits, and examining the impact of AI in agriculture to ensure its responsible and inclusive implementation. The university is eager to collaborate with the NoC on this initiative, recognizing the NoC's expertise in developing similar centers and programs. Furthermore, the university is keen to connect with other NoC Centers worldwide that are engaged in AI and agriculture research, such as those in Brazil, Germany, and the U.S.
- **Egypt:** NoC supported the launch of the The MENA Observatory on Responsible AI led by NoC Centers such as A2K4D. This initiative is an interdisciplinary platform connecting policy-oriented researchers and innovators, aimed at fostering collaboration and building capacity for responsible data and AI practices.

Majority World Countries:

- **AI Incident Monitoring Project:** NoC Centers have begun working with the OECD AI Working Group to monitor incidents and generate regulatory evidence in majority world countries.

REGIONAL HUBS

Existing Hubs:

- **Digital Hub in Thailand:** NoC contributed to the development and incubation of a new digital center in Thailand, which has been instrumental in building Thailand's AI Governance Clinic (featured by UNESCO earlier this year) and enhancing policy and research capacity in the region. The Annual Meeting is organized in partnership with the Hub.

New Hubs and Nodes:

- **HEMISPHERES Initiative in Latin America:** The HEMISPHERES Initiative brings together representatives from key stakeholder groups, including government bodies, academic institutions, the tech and innovation community, civil society, and industry leaders. This Digital Futures-focused initiative, designed for Latin America, will address critical gaps in technology policy research, amplify the impact of academic and policy contributions, and foster a more informed and interconnected global community. The project is led by the Technical University of Munich (TUM) in collaboration with 13 partner institutions from Europe and Latin America. Representatives of NoC Centers made significant strides toward the launch of this initiative at the Erasmus+ Cluster Meeting in Montevideo.
- **Africa Hub:** Invited by NoC colleagues in Africa, the Secretariat has joined a Pan-African effort to establish a new Africa Hub in Rwanda, following the outcomes of the AI in Africa Stakeholders meeting held in Kigal in October 2024i. The meeting concluded that it is necessary to focus on fostering interdisciplinary research hubs related to the development, social impact, policy implications, and legal issues concerning AI, in order to build the support networks that the region needs most.
- **MENA Hub:** in collaboration with the Access to Knowledge for Development Center (A2K4D) at the American University in Cairo, the Secretariat is supporting the creation of a MENA Hub. A2K4D is a regional center for scholarship, research, and policy analysis on intellectual property and human development in Egypt and the Arab world.
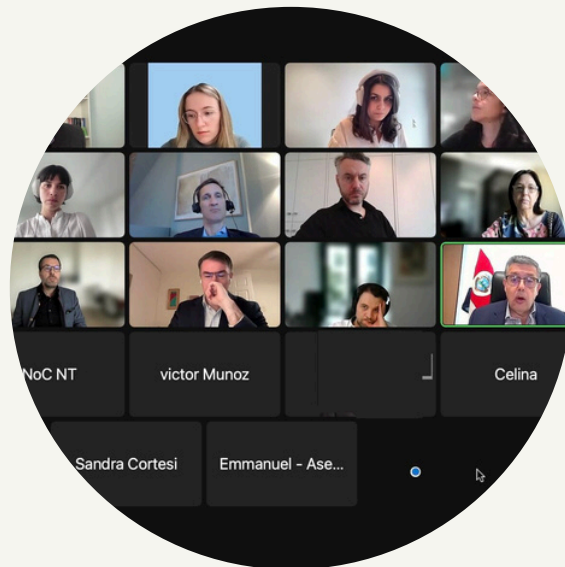
SHARED
KNOWLEDGE

As a network dedicated to mutual learning and collective growth, the NoC recognizes that shared knowledge is essential to building a better world. Through initiatives like Learning Calls, the NoC strives to facilitate the exchange of information between Centers and stakeholders. This year, we have made progress in fostering knowledge sharing across the network, but we acknowledge that there is always more to learn and new ways to connect. We remain committed to deepening these efforts and creating even more opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning in the future.

SKILL SHARES AND LEARNING CALLS 🔔

NoC Centers, with support from the Secretariat, organized and conducted learning calls throughout the year, including:

- "Dr. ChatGPT: The use of LLMs in academia" hosted by the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society.
- "The State of AI Regulation Across the Globe" with the Berkman Klein Center at Harvard University.
- "The Wikimedia Model: An Antidote to Disinformation" with the Wikimedia Foundation.
- "AI in Africa: Preparing the Path for Regional Conversations," a preamble to the AI Africa Stakeholder Meeting."Quantum Computing: Societal issues of a new technology," hosted by the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society.
- "Focus topic Digital Services Act (DSA)," hosted by the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society.
- "Understanding the Role of Generative AI in Elections," a series of learning calls hosted by the TUM Think Tank.

Each Learning Call has provided a valuable opportunity for exchanging knowledge and fostering collaboration. The Secretariat is eager to support Centers in developing more of these NoC-led initiatives. It encourages Centers to explore new ideas for future Learning Calls and other collaborative knowledge-sharing formats.

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

The NoC Secretariat fostered valuable connections with educational institutions worldwide, creating opportunities for colleagues to engage with educators from diverse backgrounds, understand their perspectives, and collaboratively develop strategies to address contemporary challenges. These collaborative efforts have led to a range of educational initiatives that NoC Centers and representatives have participated in and led, including:

- Discussion spaces with Professor Alondra Nelson at the Technical University of Munich with several colleagues of NoC from Africa and Latin America.

- Start the incubation of new tech and society centers in Jamaica with the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech).

- Design of a call for contributions to host a Trust & Safety (T&S) in the Majority World Virtual Workshop, facilitated by the Institute for Rebooting Social Media at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

- Participation in the event on AI in Academia, held by the Rector of Universidad de los Andes in Bogota, Colombia.

SUMMER SCHOOLS

- **Summer School on Platform Governance:**

In addition to the Summer School on Platform Governance led by the Centre for Communication Governance in India, the University of Geneva hosted the Digital Law Summer School from June 17th to 28th, 2024, which included participation from academics at the Berkman Klein Center. The program explored a wide range of topics including cybersecurity, big data, digital privacy, AI, online surveillance, and freedom of expression. This comprehensive study of digital law provided students with a unique opportunity to engage with leading academics, practitioners, policymakers, international organizations, and prominent institutions.

- **The Geneva Digital Law Research Colloquium:**

The Geneva Digital Law Research Colloquium, hosted by the and the Digital Law Center (NoC Center) in partnership with institutions and other NoC Centers such as Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet & Society, CRIDES at UCL, Renmin University, ITS Rio, and the Geneva Graduate Institute, offered a valuable platform for researchers in Digital Law. It enabled participants to present their work-in-progress to experienced experts, engage in in-depth discussions, and receive constructive feedback. The colloquium is part of the renowned Geneva Digital Law Summer School, providing an opportunity to explore key issues like AI, cybersecurity, and online privacy. Participants were also able to present their work to the summer school attendees, which includes academics, practitioners, and policymakers. Faculty members include top scholars from institutions like Harvard, Geneva, and Renmin University, among others.

RESEARCH

Research is a core activity of the NoC, enabling Centers and the Secretariat to collaborate and contribute to initiatives with other stakeholders. This year, the NoC has pursued several significant research opportunities at both global and regional levels.

GLOBAL RESEARCH AND COMMENTARY

- **EU-LAC Tech Policy Forum Clinic:** Together with 15 research Centers from Europe and Latin America, NoC is designing a tech policy forum and clinic to strengthen knowledge exchange among these entities. Centers and colleagues in Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia are coming together to develop a common framework and establish a tech policy forum to act as a platform for representatives from these countries to have a greater voice in these discussions.
- **Green Digital Transformation in Latin America:** NoC and the Secretariat are developing a new research proposal focused on establishing a green tech agenda in the region, with the goal of increasing sustainability and protecting local ecosystems. The Secretariat anticipates collaborating with Centers involved in the aforementioned tech policy forum, as well as relevant stakeholders in the energy sector, to advance this important initiative.
- **Frontiers in Digital Child Safety Initiative:** Facilitated by representatives of Centers in the U.S. and Europe, NoC Centers are invited to collaborate on a new initiative focused on advancing child safety online. Through a series of open-source materials, including research briefs, issue spotters, and technical descriptions, this initiative aims to contribute to ongoing debates and provide valuable resources for policymakers and practitioners. It complements existing and emerging child protection efforts, and fosters collaboration among scholars at TUM, Harvard University, and the University of Zurich, while also welcoming contributions from the NoC's global research community.

RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING

- **AI Policy Research in Africa:** The Secretariat has joined a pan-African effort, collaborating with Centers and stakeholders to strengthen the capacity of colleagues in Africa who are addressing AI policy issues. In Ghana, the Secretariat is partnering with EGIGFA on a buddy system project to enhance its e-governance fellowship, increasing its focus on emerging technologies and AI topics. This fellowship brings together individuals from civil society, government, and the entrepreneurial sector in Ghana. In Rwanda, the Secretariat co-organized the AI Stakeholders Meeting with the Center for Law and Innovation, convening various decision-makers from across sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, a report is being prepared to present the main conclusions of the AI in Africa Stakeholders meeting and the main research topics to prioritize in the next months regarding AI governance in Africa.
- **High-Performance Computing (HPC) Centers in Latin America and the Caribbean:** The Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) is working to develop a governance model for High Performance Computing (HPC) Centers in Latin America and the Caribbean. This initiative, supported by the Secretariat, aims to position the region for success in leveraging the opportunities presented by HPC technologies.

EVENTS

Events provide an effective platform for the NoC to connect with Centers and external stakeholders, significantly advancing projects. Through a variety of formats—including regional satellite meetings and smaller themed events—the NoC has fostered engagement through both in-person and virtual multi-day meetings worldwide.

NOC ANNUAL MEETING

- The 2024 NoC Annual Meeting was titled **'The World at a Digital Crossroads: Navigating Uncertainty, Seizing Opportunity',** and was organized by Digital Asia Hub Thailand (DAH.th) and NoC's Secretariat. This event provided an opportunity to connect with NoC colleagues and new Centers while generating a new research and impact agenda. A total of 30 Centers participated in person, and 35 Centers participated remotely.

SATELLITE MEETINGS AND THEMED EVENTS

- **AI Stakeholder Meeting on Innovative Governance (Kigali, October 3-4, 2024):** Organized by the Center for Law and Innovation in partnership with organizations like Smart Africa and GIZ, this event convened African policymakers, civil society representatives, and academic experts in AI. The meeting aimed to establish a collaborative roadmap for AI governance across the continent, bringing together colleagues from Rwanda, Ghana, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, and the African Union, among others. Key conclusions from the meeting included encouraging AI Research Centers and Hubs to prioritize interdisciplinary research; establishing an African AI Knowledge and Data Repository; engaging youth as partners in AI efforts; promoting prototyping and regulatory sandboxes for AI governance; and establishing AI literacy programs. The NoC will focus on supporting these efforts in the coming months.

- **Global GDPI Summit in Cairo:** Representatives from NoC Centers and the Secretariat met with stakeholders in the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) ecosystem to discuss the adoption and implementation of DPI principles in different countries. The Secretariat is working to facilitate partnerships and collaborations on a global scale.

- **Regulatory Sandboxes as Alternative and Innovative Policy and Regulatory Mechanisms in the Digital Age Roundtable:** Representatives from NoC Centers participated in this discussion organized by Mexico's Instituto Federal de Comunicaciones within the APEC framework. The conversation highlighted the importance of regulatory sandboxes and initiatives like the Global Sandbox Forum from the Datasphere Initiative, a NoC Center. Participants also provided specific recommendations for the Mexican government to strengthen the implementation of AI sandboxes.

- **Latin American Antitrust Authorities and Public Procurement Conference:** Team members from the Secretariat participated in this event, which focused on public procurement and artificial intelligence. The event was held in Honduras and organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

- **Roundtable on the Future of Governance:** On the margins of the UN Summit for the Future, representatives from NoC Centers participated in this roundtable conversation, which explored the context and drivers of change affecting governance systems now and in the future. The discussion focused on developing capacities for anticipatory governance, as well as the mindsets, capacities, and competencies needed to navigate the future of governance. The roundtable was part of the events organized by the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs and was co-organized by CLAD (Centro Latinoamericano de Administración para el Desarrollo). It emphasized strategic foresight and mindset shifts in digital governance for the Caribbean and Small Island Developing States.

SATELLITE MEETINGS AND THEMED EVENTS

- **Side Event at the UN Summit for the Future:** Team members of the NoC Secretariat took part in the Wikimedia-organized event 'The Power of the Commons: Digital Public Goods for a More Secure, Inclusive and Resilient World.' Participants explored the transformative potential of Digital Public Goods (DPGs) such as Wikipedia and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPIs) in fostering sustainable development worldwide. The conversation sparked from the notion of protecting these open, decentralized, community-driven digital spaces. This notion served as a key thread throughout the discussion on DPG) and DPIs, where participants explored how these tools could shape a more resilient and inclusive future. A representative from ITS Rio signaled examples from Latin America that pioneered open and inclusive infrastructures and that can serve as models for global digital governance. Building on this, the TUM Think Tank perspective stressed that academic institutions have long been a bedrock of the digital commons. The conversation concluded that by connecting DPGs across policies like climate action and AI solutions, and by involving actors from diverse backgrounds, we can create a more inclusive and resilient digital future.
- **Global Sandboxes Forum:** The Secretariat supported the development of the first global forum on regulatory sandboxes, held in Rio de Janeiro and organized by the Datasphere Initiative.

CONCLUSION

2024 was an incredibly fruitful year for NoC Centers as well as the Secretariat, characterized by reinvigorated energy and deeply impactful activities, as highlighted in this report. In all five areas of focus, there is still significant work to be done. The NoC has come a long way, thanks to the hard work, passion, and creativity of the Centers, many of which were represented at the Annual Meeting. After reviewing the current state of the NoC's work and the Secretariat's efforts, it is important to reflect: Where does the NoC go from here? What do the collaborations created during the Annual Meeting need to grow? How is the NoC constructing a better world, and what blind spots could be present in the research plan?

The challenges and opportunities brought forth by disruptive technologies such as AI and quantum tech are, in many ways, new to the world. The NoC Centers and the Secretariat are evidently working together on key issues, such as closing the digital divide between countries, creating policies that safeguard human rights, and leveraging these technologies to address challenges like hunger. Nonetheless, in a rapidly changing world, the colleagues that make up the NoC need to be at the forefront, ready to adapt and face the unexpected. With this in mind, it is time to think beyond what has been accomplished and plan for the future of the NoC.

THANK
YOU!