



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

NoC Learning Call on Navigating Uncertainty: Key Insights and Priorities for Upcoming NoC Activities

On April 29, 2026 The Network of Centers (NoC) held a learning call, *Navigating Uncertainty in a Technology-Driven World: Comparative Perspectives from Across the Globe*, to address the profound uncertainty generated by technological acceleration, political unrest, and environmental pressures around the globe. This conversation offered an opportunity to reflect on diverse regional perspectives while identifying shared priorities and concrete avenues for collaboration. The session convened regional experts from Chile, Switzerland, Rwanda, France, and the United States to explore how local contexts and cross-border collaboration can mitigate power asymmetries in digital governance.

Recommendations from the Panel and Attendees

Below you will find a complete summary of the Learning Call. The following are some of the participants' principal observations and reflections:

David Levine argued that many academics lack the skills to inform policymaking and that organizations like the NOC should help channel academic expertise to policymakers. He hoped that scholars within the NoC will translate academic expertise into actionable policy recommendations and help bridge silos between academia and policymakers. Melanie Dulong de Rosnay recommended expanding engagement beyond policymakers to include the public, journalists, artists, designers, and students to cultivate inclusive innovation and career pipelines. Lionel Brossi emphasized treating young people as agents and co-creators in research and policy processes and recommended existing methodologies to include youth in governance discussions. To accomplish the goals described by the panelists, Yaniv Benhamou urged avoiding academic jargon and using legal design and interdisciplinary collaboration to make knowledge accessible and empower public engagement. He highlighted the need to address a potential skills gap for entry-level workers in an AI-transformed labor market and affirmed research's role in imagining new digital futures. Fabiola Uwera shared a recent South African episode where a national AI policy was withdrawn amid accusations of AI-generated citations, raising concerns about intellectual honesty and trust in research informing policy. She also highlighted Rwanda's lack of formal data-protection, privacy, and cybersecurity curricula in law schools and stressed the need for digital-rights education and capacity building. Mayte Schomberg offered to connect NOC with colleagues experienced in bringing civil-society and academic input into EU legislation processes and volunteered to assist with future NOC activities.

Considerations for the Global Network of Centers’ Next Activities

With consideration of the 2024–2026 Roadmap and based on this call, the following next steps can be considered. Most broadly, the Network’s efforts to translate academic expertise into actionable policy recommendations is more critical than ever. To best engage the public, the network should ensure that our language is accessible, avoiding unnecessary academic jargon or legalese and broaden our approaches to engagement including more visually-oriented, video or artistic forms of communication strategies.

Some concrete avenues for action worth considering, and discussed during the call, include:

- Leverage offers from members (e.g., Mayte Schomburg) to connect academic research directly to inform, where appropriate, legislative processes in the EU and elsewhere
- Lead the shift from unconditional sharing to community-governed data models that protect digital autonomy.
- Build educational models to ensure the next generation remains competitive and capable as AI automates entry-level tasks and skills gaps emerge for junior staff.

- Develop digital rights and cybersecurity law curricula in universities to address knowledge gaps identified in regions like Rwanda and South Africa.
- Increase efforts to expand the Network’s audience, particularly at the entry level, to inspire diverse career pipelines in responsible innovation
- Pilot the “field hearing” model within member centers to expand community-driven evidence-gathering for policy advocacy
- Prioritize the Roadmap’s proposed buddy system to link established centers with those in the Global South to co-design AI research agendas

Conclusion

All of these reflections and proposals demonstrate that the work of the NoC is more important now than ever. In a context marked by accelerating technological change, geopolitical fragmentation, institutional uncertainty, and growing asymmetries in digital governance, the Network’s role as a space for collaborative learning, interdisciplinary exchange, and globally connected yet locally grounded policy engagement becomes increasingly critical. The ideas emerging from this conversation should therefore not only reinforce the NoC’s mission, but also help guide discussions toward the design of a renewed roadmap for the next two years ahead, a

period that will undoubtedly be both highly challenging and deeply pivotal for the future of technology governance worldwide.

Summary of the Call

Moderator Elisabeth Sylvan (USA) framed the session as a vital touchpoint for cross-disciplinary and cross national engagement. She emphasized that effective action in a rapidly changing technological landscape requires a deep understanding of diverse regional perspectives and the dynamics of power that shape them. **Lionel Brossi (Chile)** Professor Brossi emphasized that power asymmetries are built into technology design and that those most affected — particularly youth — often lack voice in dominant public narratives.. He noted that global standards like the EU’s “Brussels effect” can unintentionally harm Latin American societies if local economic contexts are ignored. He also warned that rapid moves toward AI without robust local frameworks can produce technocratic decisions that reinforce rather than reduce inequalities and argued that power asymmetries are designed into technologies and that affected communities often lack voice in public narratives. Professor Brossi advocated for treating youth as co-creators in governance rather than just vulnerable users. **Yaniv Benhamou (Switzerland)** described the Brussels effect as GDPR’s extraterritorial and normative influence on other jurisdictions and industry practices. He cautioned that AI regulation differs from GDPR because it is risk-based, complex, and being pursued by many jurisdictions, which may prevent a single global standard. Yaniv

described Switzerland's alternative: a flexible, sector-specific, rights-centered regulatory mix emphasizing transparency, human oversight, risk management, and measures to support innovation and digital autonomy. He argued that AI regulation is likely to fragment globally and will be harder to standardize than GDPR because it is risk-based and complex and recommended balancing protection and innovation and pursuing digital sovereignty measures such as supplier diversification and controlled public data sharing. **Fabiola Uwera (Rwanda)** shared Rwanda's "philosophical posture" as prioritizing action over waiting for perfect solutions. Rwanda adopts an iterative approach: deploy innovation to meet needs, observe outcomes, then legislate based on evidence. She highlighted the importance of allowing technologies like Zipline to operate in order to address healthcare delivery gaps, and then developing regulation informed by the practices and lessons observed during implementation. Fabiola also detailed the e-government platform transition, the subsequent 2021 data protection law, and complementary measures for affordability, language accessibility, and gender inclusion such as Coding Academy and Girls in ICT. **Melanie Dulong de Rosnay (France)** cited the "paradox of openness," whereby open licensing enabled large-scale data extraction by big technology companies without sharing value with the original communities. She advocated for the development of technical and legal tools that would allow communities to "open and close" access in order to exercise control over their data. Finally, **David Levine (USA)** assessed the institutional stresses in the U.S., noting challenges like

gerrymandering and rapid deployment of AI by private firms without public input. He suggested that while AI can amplify noise, it can also help citizens articulate their policy views more effectively to regulators and recommended practical measures such as local field hearings to surface community impacts.

PANELISTS

Yaniv Benhamou is a Professor of Digital and Information Law at the Faculty of Law, Director of the Digital Law Center, University of Geneva, as well as attorney-at-law in Technology Law. His research focuses mainly on creative industries (e.g., remuneration of artists and internet users in the streaming and AI-era), AI regulation (as appointed expert for the Swiss Confederation on AI Regulation and Digital Sovereignty) and open licensing (e.g., open source AI).

Lionel Brossi is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Communication and Image at the University of Chile and Director of the Artificial Intelligence and Society Research Hub and LabFractal a laboratory on AI and Creativity. His work focuses on the intersections of artificial intelligence, education, youth, mental health, and digital inclusion. He is also a Faculty Associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society.

Mélanie Dulong de Rosnay is a Research professor at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), and co-founder of the Center for Internet and Society of CNRS which she directed from 2019 to 2024. Since 2020, she has also led the CNRS Internet, AI and Society research network. Her research focuses on digital commons, regulation by technology, information law and policy.

David Levine is a Professor of Law at Elon University School of Law; an Affiliate Scholar at the Center for Internet and Society at Stanford Law School; and a Fellow at University of North Carolina's Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life, and University of Milan's Information Society Law Center. His work has been recognized and influenced policymakers in the United States and throughout the globe.

Fabiola Uwera is an Associate Director at the CERTA Foundation. She is a Rwandan lawyer working at the intersection of Intellectual Property law, emerging technologies governance, and gender justice. Her research interests include the effects of human-computer interaction on creativity, mental health, culture, and language. Fabiola holds an LL.M. in Technology Law and Policy from Georgetown University Law Center, Washington D.C. and was a 2024 Fellow in both the Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa (LAWA) and Women's Law and Public Policy (WLPP) Fellowship Programs at Georgetown University.

MODERATOR

Elisabeth Sylvan is an Associate Professor of Sociotechnical Systems at Olin College of Engineering, where she serves on the AI Steering Committee and her teaching and research includes generative AI, design, and Human Computer Interaction. She has held lecturer-type faculty roles at Brown University, the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and the Technical University of Munich (TUM), and is the former Managing Director of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

***Note:** A summary of the transcript of this learning call that was generated by AI served as an initial basis for this write up.*