

# Nepal IGF 2019

One World, One Net, One Vision.

## NEPAL INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM 2019

27-28 September 2019  
Kathmandu, Nepal

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Nepal Internet  
Foundation

# Nepal IGF 2019 Summary Report



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Third edition of Nepal Internet Governance Forum; a space for inclusive, productive discussions on Internet-related public policy issues from a multi-stakeholder perspective, has been started in Kathmandu. Mahendra Man Gurung, Secretary of Ministry of Information and Communications inaugurated the program as the Chief Guest of inauguration session he also delivered his lightning talk on Internet accessibility, reliable internet, internet security, affordability and the role of citizens in digital governance in Nepal. APrIGF Chair Rajnesh Singh and Ms. Lyn St. Amor from UN MAG Chair expressed their vote of thanks and solidarity to Nepal IGF 2019 via video message.

### Session One: High Level Panel - Connecting Unconnected: Foundation Of Digital Nepal

The high-level panel on the topic connecting unconnected: Foundation of Digital Nepal started with the distinguished chief guest Mr. Mahendra Man Gurung, Secretary of Ministry of Information and Communications, Special guests Mr. Ganesh Shah, former Minister for Environment, Science and Technology, Manohar Kumar Bhattarai, Former Vice-Chairman, the then High-Level Commission for IT/Chairman, Internet Governance Institute, Ms. Sunainana Ghimire Pandey, Vice President, Federation of Computer Association Nepal, Min Prasad Aryal, spokesperson for Nepal Telecommunication Authority and Subash Dhakal, Member Secretary, MSG. In the panel all guests shared their perspective on the current scenario, prospect and challenges associated with the digital Nepal framework.

It was mentioned that despite improving

accessibility and connectivity situation significantly over a decade, with an exponential increase in access to mobile services and Internet penetration, meaningful connectivity and affordability are still major concerns in Nepal. Panelists agreed that digital Nepal is the responsibility of all citizens and collaboration among the government, private sectors, academic institutions, and local communities is a pre-condition to achieving the goal of connecting the unconnected in Nepal.

Lack of digital literacy, lack of locally relevant vernacular content, limited availability, coverage and high cost of broadband services and ensuring safety and security in digital space were acknowledged as pertinent challenges of achieving digital Nepal. The panel was facilitated by Mr. Rom Kant Pandey, acting chair of ISOC Nepal.





## Session Two: Impact of Social Media on Journalistic Practices

Panel discussion on Impact of Social Media on journalistic Practices with panelists: Mr. Kishor Nepal, Mr. Umesh Shrestha and Mr. Prabesh Subedi moderated by Mr. KP Dhungana started with sharing of experiences of the panelists with print, online and social networks. Discussion was focused on current print media practices, status of Newly emerged online media and usage of Social Media to reach the public vs Use of social media by public as a news source. During the discussion the major concern was monopoly of Facebook Media as most popular social media today and Impact of sponsored content vs organic content reach; they perceived social media as a double-edged sword. Panelists also raised an opinion that we are not being able to create interesting contents that people are being engaged with any content that has been source of entertainment also focused that we need to create impactful and engaging content to bypass the monopolies rather than promoting it also it is needed to provide digital awareness. Some concerns over the promotion of net neutrality was also raised linking with the case of free Facebook access via Ncell network in Nepal a couple of years ago. The participants afterwards raised some queries like “who decides what content is right?”, “Diverse people have diverse interests we can’t judge about how people get entertained or how they use internet”.





### Session Three: Intersectionality in Internet: Diversity and Representation

Session on Intersectionality in Internet: Diversity and Representation was started with panelists Ms. Sarita Lamichhane, Shubha Kayastha, Deekha Dahal, And Dia Yonjan moderated by Ms. Rita Baramu discussed on the Intersectionality of gender, internet, and technology, digital rights from the lens of LGBTI and disability perspectives. Panelists discussed harassment insecurities and threats experienced faced by LGBTI, disabled and other persons in both offline and online platforms. The discussion was focused how the people with disabilities and LGBTI community use internet as a platform to get new information, to meet people from their community or share their feelings with. The further emphasized on accessibility and affordability of the internet by both LGBTI and disabled people, and how could we make internet and the services accessed through internet disabled-friendly as well as safe medium to express the feelings via any user community.



## Day 2

As formal opening of the day II, Adv. Baburam Aryal (Nepal IGF MSG Vice-Chair) summarized the major discussion of day one and highlighted the agendas of day two.



### Session Four: Inclusion of Youth in IT related Policy Discourses

The high-level panel on the topic conA- gendas of inclusion of Youth in IT-related policy discourses was the theme of this panel and speakers emphasized inclusion of youth in IT discourse from diverse backgrounds including Law, Engineering, Information Technology, Health, and Social Sciences.

Ms. Dikshya Raut and Adv. Surendra Tiwari Moderated the session. The session was divided into two sub sessions. The first session was moderated by Mr. Surendra Tiwari where Siwa Karmacharya, Udeep Baral, Ananda Gautam, Lipasha Shrestha and Bibek Silwal shared about their involvement in IT-related discourses along with their journey in the sector of Internet Governance. They also discussed about the significance of IT policy, major impacts and major values along with how youth can incorporate their voices in policy forums at the national and global forums.

The second session was open discussion

forum moderated by Ms. Dikshya Raut. The open discussion was focused in the upcoming IT bill, in this session participants were divided into four different tables and each table was given with a topic from the sections of IT bill where participants were supposed to discuss about the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed IT bill in accordance to the provided topic. After the discussion 1 member from each table shared the gist of the group discussion to all the participants. The discussions were based in the topics such as Regulation of social media, Privacy issues, sovereignty and national security.





## Session Five: Data Governance-Challenges for Nepal

As a moderator, the panel was led by Hem Pal Shrestha. The discussion started with a brief presentation related to data governance in third world countries like Nepal. On behalf of Speaker Vivek Rana, Mr. Hempal Shrestha shared the presentation on the conceptual overview of data governance. Dr. Manish Pokharel, Asuthosh Mani Dixit, Bimal P. Shah and Ramesh Pokharel were invited as the panelists. Panelists discussed about the shift of society from knowledge-driven society to a data-driven society, the importance of underlying factors like accuracy, availability, privacy and reliability of data as well. Need of policy and acts for data protection and governance in terms of Nepal. The panelists also emphasized on the quality of data for evidence-based decision making process. Talking about the challenges the major concerns raised were while billions of devices are connected to the internet, terabytes of data is being generated each second, we need better human resource to get insights over those data, to maintain privacy and security of data. As counterpart cryptography techniques, algorithms, network safety nets and quality network devices shall be used. Mr. Vivek Rana

presented his views remotely where he emphasized about the importance of data for the state, market, individuals and policymakers. He also explained about the phases of data from data to information to knowledge to wisdom. He also put his opinion that operational and management level discussions are taking place, but the discourse of governance is missing.

From the floor, Sarita Lamichhane, Rita Baramu, Ananda Gautam and Diya Basu raised their concern relating to government data protection standards, the inclusion of women and disability in the overall data governance system and data privacy and security issues along with the role of civil society organization in data protection.





## Session Six: Inclusive ICT for Persons with Disability

This panel was facilitated by Mukunda Dahal where Ananda Raj Khanal, Rom Kant Pandey, Sarita Lamichhane and Sushmeera Aryal were invited as Panelist. The whole session was focused on the use of ICT and disability issues. Ms. Aryal shared about the categories of disability defined by government of Nepal, lack of awareness among the disabled people themselves about their abilities to use the internet. She also emphasized that consideration of different disability friendly options while designing any applications or ICT based implications.

Sarita Lamichhane raised her concern that if any disabled people were involved while organizing the event (NepalIGF) itself. She also shared that without involvement of disabled people their opinions/perspective might be missing while organizing the event or developing an app or creating a ICT product i.e. we should make the whole process inclusive from planning to implementation.

Rom Kant Pandey gave a quick overview of how Academic and Research institutions are working on disability issues. He explained about the efforts made by internet Society and other organizations in Nepal to make the technology more inclusive in terms of both policy and deployment. In the mean time he also shared that researches have shown that person with disability are still out of the range, to address this need there is need of special education at bachelor and master level. Finally he added that the inclusiveness of disabled people is not only agenda of the community of disability but common agenda of all people.





## Session Seven: Protecting Child Online: Experience from Nepal

The session was moderated by Shishir Kumar Yadav; He briefly presented the statistics about: who is a child and who are children in a national and international context. Further, in accordance with Children Act 2018, he defined a person who is below the age of 18 is called child in Nepal. Also, he expressed Nepal's commitment to the international forum regarding child rights protection. Afterwards some of the children were invited in panel and were asked about their usage on internet where they shared that Quite often they watch YouTube and use other applications related to cartoons and other learning purposes which showed that they are directly exposed to internet in their daily lives.

Amrita Khakurel – Senior Engineer at NTA, Anil Raghubanshi, founder of Child Safe Net, Kamala Adhikari, SP. Nabindra Aryal –CCB and Shurthi Moghe from Facebook were invited as panelists. The panelists shared their experiences on how parents can protect the children in the online world. In the discussion it was shared that children are already exposed to online world in this scenario, parents can create enabling environment for children to utilize the uses of ICT. The need and

importance of awareness campaigns to parents was shared as one of the best practice to protect the children while being online. The statistics of online abuse cases were also shared by joint director of Cyber Bureau, he mentioned that among the 236 registered online abuse cases 11 cases were related to children, as the mobile is taken a means to engage children online safety for children has become more important than ever. Shurthi Moghe from Facebook represented the panel remotely and shared about the fakebook's child protection policy, community standards and fakebook's engagement with government and security agencies in South Asia to ensure Facebook safe and secure. Some of the features included Restriction for a certain age of people, location sharing, a consistent indicator.

The gist of the discussion was that parents should be aware to make child online protection effective and should be using parental control tools at the same time for senior age children's we should be thinking about better means and implications.







### **Session Eight: “Seeing the future in the Present: Is the internet changing the way we think”**

Four experts from the background of teaching, research and entrepreneurship in the areas of law, anthropology, and health represented the panel of this session i.e Chiranjibi Bhandari, Gaurav K.c., Dr. Bishal Dhakal and Adv. Prithivi Nath Rai this session was moderated by The session was moderated by Adv. Roshan Pokharel, Academician teaching digital philosophies in university.

Panelists discussed about both opportunity and challenges that comes bundled with internet and presumed to be a double-edged sword. It was also emphasized that with the evolution of internet, people are being helped to travel in digital thinking culture. The positive benefits of the internet in health at home programs and other health entrepreneurship in Nepal and global contexts are increasing. In this age of Information technology people need to be ready to become captive of social media and the internet in modern days. Putting some lights on legal framework it was discussed that it is needed to discuss on the regulation of the internet and social media in modern days. It was also raised that the way we are thinking in present day, will be completely different in future days and the internet will not only be medium of data transfer but also means of cultural and values transfer from one community to another community and one nation to another nation.

### **Session Nine: Merging Online and Offline world: Internet for Pleasure**

This session was focused on the pleasure of the internet as well as the similarities and contrasts on the experiences of people in online and offline worlds. This session was moderated by Kabita Rai where, Shripa Pradhan, Jyotshna Maskey were representing the panel. In the discussion Internet was masked as the agency to the people to express their inner feelings. The various apps in social media were also discussed where being online was portrayed as a private space—which is being instrumental to create discourse among the people and even to explore the dating apps different partners in the consent. The avenues of the people who are getting loneliness in the offline, internet has provided a breakthrough to get connected with people in the online world. Also the chances for the people from the minorities group to get connected with similar kind of people or with the broad community. It was also discussed that talking about pleasure is not always negative and the narrowed concept should be broadened.



## Closing Session

In the closing session; Nepal IGF MSG Chair Birendra Kumar Mishra; Vice Chair Bikram Shrestha, MSG Member Secretary- Subash Dhakal, Amar Raj Bhandari, IGI Director Shishir Yadav, ISOC Nepal Program officer Udip Baral, and IGI Program Officer Ananda Gautam were invited in the Dais.

On behalf of the organizer, Mr. Pandey acting president of ISOC Nepal clarified the process of organizing IGF in Nepal. He also expressed vote of thanks to all the respected guests, speakers in different panels, participants, partner organizations for their financial and moral support as well as conveyed the same hope for APrIGF



									
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