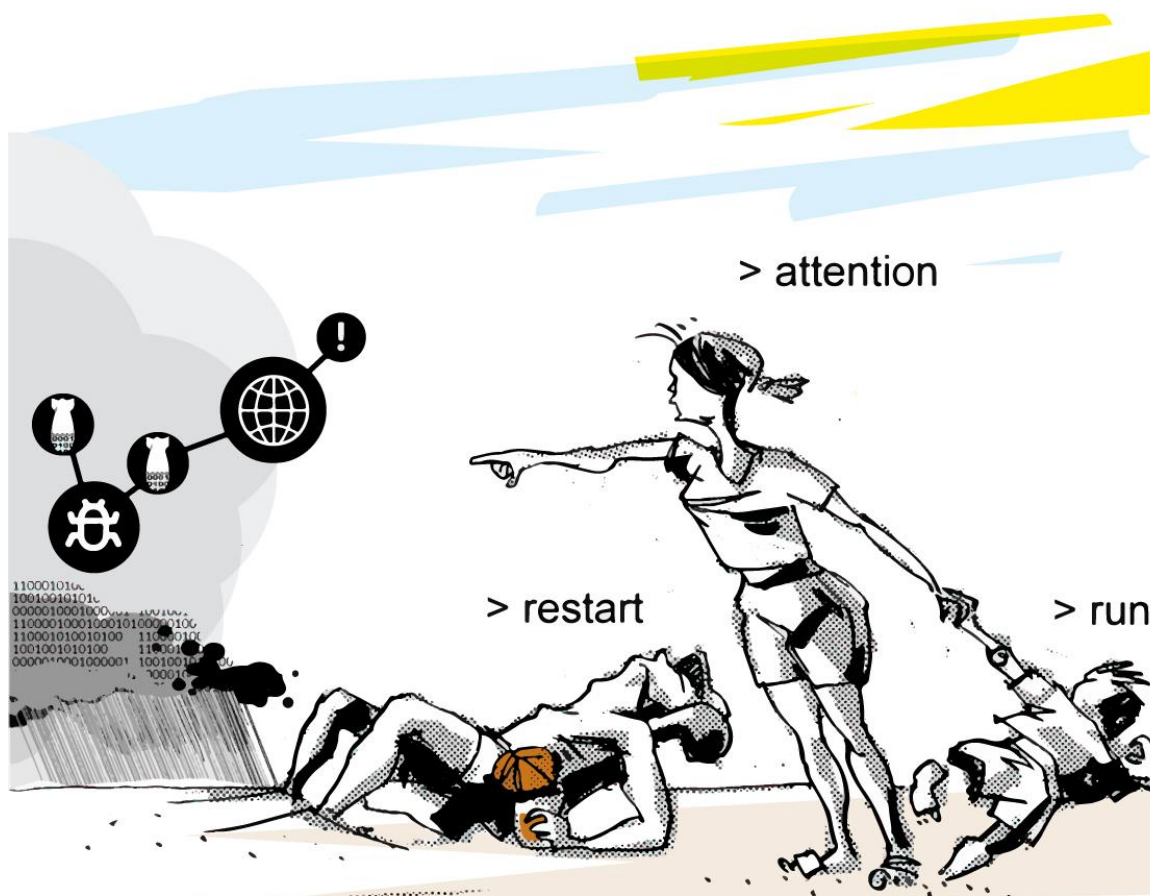


NEWSLETTER

Issue 72, **September 2022**



A quiet digital summer

Promising geopolitical signal or calm before the storm?

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TRENDING

Digital geopolitics and diplomacy, cybersecurity, economy, child safety, and governance were the trending topics of summer 2022.

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GENEVA

Many policy discussions take place in Geneva every month. We bring you a roundup of the latest news from International Geneva.

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UPCOMING

We bring you an overview of the most important events in September. Mark your calendars for an eventful start of autumn.

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OPPORTUNITY

Diplo is pleased to announce its new call for the 2022 Digital Watch Knowledge Fellows (DW Knowledge Fellow).

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A quiet digital summer

Digital summer of 2022 was quiet! Fortunately, we had more diplomacy and negotiations than conflicts in the digital realm.

Is there hope that digital spaces can bring more diplomacy at the time of war and conflict? Or is this quiet summer the calm before a geopolitical storm, which will affect digital spaces worldwide?

We focus on these questions in the 72nd issue of the Digital Watch (DW) Newsletter with the latest updates about major trends and events in digital geopolitics and diplomacy, cybersecurity, economy, child safety, and governance.

Follow the [GIP Digital Watch Observatory](#) for specially curated just-in-time and in-depth coverage of technical, geopolitical, economic, and legal aspects of digital trends.

This autumn will be especially interesting because [Diplo is celebrating its 20th birthday](#) by looking ahead and reflecting on the past. We will look at history to try and see our way forward. Join us in this journey through a series of Diplo's 20th anniversary events!

Visit [our dedicated page](#) to learn more about our story and Diplo@20 activities!



1. Digital geopolitics

From cables and satellites to data flows and internet services, countries worldwide are preparing for turbulent times ahead. The two main actors are of course China and the USA with the most dynamic digital industry and developments.

Other countries with median digital powers such as the EU, India, South Africa, Brazil, and Russia are trying to position themselves in all layers of digital geopolitics. Some, like the EU, are advanced service economies. Others, like India, are the sources of the biggest collection of data, a key resource of the digital era.

All countries are searching for the right balance between preserving the benefits of digital interdependence for society and the economy while dealing with vulnerabilities and protecting their sovereignty in the digital realm.

2. Digital diplomacy



Congressional hearing of Nathaniel Fick, US Ambassador for Digital Policy and Cyberspace

During summer, a holistic approach toward digital diplomacy has gained momentum through [the EU digital diplomacy communique](#) and [the appointment of the US ambassador for cyberspace and digital policy](#). Other countries are developing digital foreign policy strategies and creating institutional structures to deal with digital diplomacy challenges. More and more countries will join this trend.

Follow digital diplomacy developments [here](#).

3. Digital at the UN

After a slow start, Tech Envoy activities are gaining momentum. The newly appointed UN Secretary-General's (SG) Tech Envoy Ambassador Amandeep Gill had a fast take-off, meeting with ambassadors, business people,

academics, and tech activists. His main task will be to prepare, together with other stakeholders, the Global Digital Compact (GDC) till the UN Summit of Future in September 2023.



The first hints about a possible scope of topic coverage of the Global Digital Compact were given by the UN SG [at the UN GA Consultations on 'Our Common Agenda'](#):

'This could include connecting the unconnected; the equitable use of digital public goods; avoiding the fragmentation of the internet; providing people with options for how their data is used; safeguarding human rights in digital spaces; introducing accountability for disinformation and misleading content; and aligning the regulation of AI with our universally shared values.'

Negotiations on the UN Global Digital Compact will be impacted by overall concerns that the negotiations of the UN Pact for Future and the Summit in September 2023 will further stretch the already strained negotiating capacities of countries, in particular small and developing countries (see: [comments of the G77 on Modalities of the UN Summit on Future](#)).

4. Cyber at the UN

Cybersecurity in the first committee of the UN General Assembly (GA) and cybercrime in the third UNGA committee have dominated the past two months.

The OEWG 2021-2025. The second iteration of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) continues its long journey till 2025. The main battle this summer was on the list of stakeholders that are allowed to participate in the OEWG, as states had the possibility to veto the participation of stakeholders that do not have UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) consultancy status. Non-state stakeholder inputs have relevance to all issues the OEWG is discussing, yet [32 stakeholders were blocked from participating](#) - certain organisations from Russia were blocked by Ukraine for being 'clearly state affiliated entities',

and Russia reminded that countries are not obliged to inform the chair of the reasons for their veto. While this was very disappointing for member states, [modalities of stakeholder participation](#) that will allow member states to veto stakeholders in the future were adopted. The good news is that the OEWG July session ended with a consensus on the [Annual Progress Report](#), which will provide a roadmap for the group's future work. Among issues and questions discussed in New York were:

- How exhaustive should the list of threats in the report be, with many countries suggesting threats they would like to see listed. The biggest surprise was ransomware not being mentioned in the annual progress report.
- Whether the OEWG should focus on implementing existing voluntary norms of responsible state behaviour, development of new norms or both.
- Are voluntary norms enough or are new legally binding obligations/a new legally binding instrument needed? How should international humanitarian law (IHL) apply to cyberspace?
- The creation of a global directory of ICT points of contacts
- The importance of cyber capacity building and the role the OEWG should play in it
- Whether a Programme of Action (PoA) should be established or not, and what its purpose would be

For more details about the third session of the OEWG and the annual progress report adopted, keep an eye out for [our blog post](#), out soon. For continuous coverage of cybersecurity negotiations at the UN, [follow the dedicated OEWG page on Digital Watch](#).

Ad Hoc Cybercrime Committee. Cybercrime negotiations are gaining momentum. The third session of the Ad hoc Committee negotiating a new convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communication Technologies for Criminal Purposes started on 29 August and will wrap up on 9 September. So far there have been ten meetings where states and multi-stakeholders presented their views on general comments, criminalisation, criminal proceedings and law enforcement, international cooperation, technical assistance, and preventive measures of the convention.

Trends

International cooperation. States discussed the creation of a 24/7 contact platform, following the creation of such a platform [under the Budapest Convention](#). Additionally, member states emphasised that dual criminality should be fulfilled when a request is made for mutual legal assistance - yet there are different positions on exceptions and whether the concept should be more flexibly interpreted in the cyber environment. A number of states suggested that procedural frameworks - from investigation to trial - should be in line with the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition, many states reiterated their respect for sovereignty. Regarding technical assistance, member states stressed the importance of assisting developing states in improving their frameworks to combat cybercrime. Preventive measures should include the implementation of educational platforms to raise awareness on the impact of cybercrime, and programmes that provide victim support. Lastly, member states stated that they should agree on specific mechanisms that would facilitate the implementation of the convention and review its effectiveness. Eight more meetings will take place until the end of the third session, and a draft report on this session is expected to be adopted.

Follow the [dedicated page for the Ad hoc Committee on Digital Watch](#) for continuous coverage of UN cybercrime negotiations.



5. Standardisation

Most digital governance is ex ante as society reacts to new legal and policy challenges. Here is an example of an ex post - a precautionary or anticipatory - move by the US National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) on quantum and crypto protection.

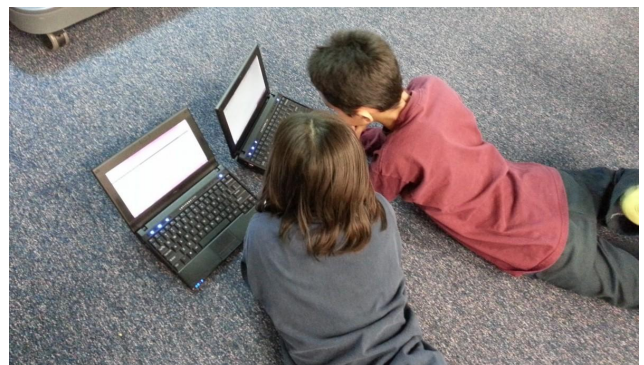
On 5 July NIST selected a candidate proposal to become standard for Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC). The new PQC standard should prevent the risk that powerful quantum computing will pose to existing cryptography and encryption of digital traffic. It is a precautionary standard that should prevent the risk of quantum computing being used for cracking encrypted communication.

See more here at [NIST page](#).

6. Children online

The private sector is under increasing pressure to tackle the spread of child sexual abuse content. One of the biggest overhauls in regulation is coming from the EU. Its proposed regulation, published in May 2022, wants to impose obligations on companies to detect and remove abusive imagery. The regulation will have to appease the concerns of data protection authorities in the EU who want to ensure that user privacy rights remain protected. Similarly, Australia is mounting pressure on companies to [report on the steps they are taking to prevent the spread of illegal content](#).

In other updates, the US Senate has [introduced stricter measures to protect children's privacy](#), while France's privacy regulator has issued [guidelines for companies to ensure they know the age of their users](#). At the Council of Europe, work has begun on [implementing a new strategy on the rights of the child](#), which has parts dedicated to ensuring children's access and safe use of technology.



7. Digital economy

There are fundamental shifts happening in digital economy. Google's dominance of the search market [is challenged by Instagram and](#)

[TikTok](#). More and more young people search for information via these two services.

The tech industry is preparing for the risk of fragmentation and a splinternet. This is not only the case with US-based Meta, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Alphabet (MAMAA), but also companies in other countries. Chinese Tencent, as a major investor in the gaming industry worldwide, could be affected by disintegrated global networks. In order to position itself in new sanctions and internal pressures from the government, Yandex has [sold its news services](#).

In the USA, there are more and more calls to contain the increasing popularity of Chinese owned TikTok.

The landscape of free trade agreements is also changing. Issues related to the digital economy are being increasingly negotiated in standalone agreements, such as the Digital Economy Partnership agreement (DEPA), currently in force between Singapore, New Zealand, and Chile. In August, China's request to join DEPA [took another step forward](#) when the Joint Committee of DEPA decided to formally start the accession process. Although China's membership would [significantly enlarge DEPA](#), strengthening its regulatory influence, it is unclear whether Chinese cybersecurity and data protection requirements will be [regarded compatible](#) with the agreement. DEPA focuses on data flows, e-payments, e-invoicing, and emerging technologies like AI and fintech. It is seen as a flexible instrument, and is the first digital economy agreement open to the participation of any member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Under the auspices of the WTO, the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on e-commerce will enter a new phase in the negotiations, [as announced in July](#). According to the JSI co-conveners - Japan, Singapore, and Australia - the JSI will revise its ways of working to help the initiative build the spirit of compromise needed to achieve a high-quality outcome, which would include the data flow issues. Three more rounds of in-person talks will be held in 2022 to achieve a timely conclusion of negotiations, a goal set by JSI's [statement](#) at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference. In parallel, the pace of regulatory measures concerning data flows and data localisation has accelerated. In the second quarter of 2022, a new high of 26 binding

transfer conditions or localisation measures have come under deliberation or have been adopted according to the [Digital Policy Alert](#).

[Subscribe to the Digital Watch](#) to receive updates on how the digital industry worldwide will adjust to new geopolitics and risks of splinternet.

Language observatory

Should we use diplomacy with tech, digital, online, or cyber?

When referring to digital technology and its impact on international relations and diplomacy, the use of different prefixes can bear different meanings. Diplomacy is frequently mentioned in global debates with all variations and prefixes such as cyber/digital/tech. Ultimately, it boils down to creating a smart interplay between various aspects of diplomacy - cyber, digital, data, tech. For instance, one can tell a difference between digital diplomacy and cyber diplomacy with the latter having a security connotation. Find more insights on how to reduce the terminological confusion around the digitalisation of diplomacy in the Diplo blog '[Different prefixes, same meaning: cyber, digital, net, online, virtual, e](#)'.

Should data be singular or plural?

Sometimes even using the singular or the plural form of a term can make a difference. [The Economist](#) on whether data should be singular or plural, referring to a debate in English grammar on a correct use of the term 'data'. According to the Economist, singular use of data is allowed in cases when data is considered as a concept (e.g. data is the new oil), as well as when it is considered as a mass (e.g. the data on the mobile phone plan). However, the plural should also be used, specifically in cases when data points are considered as a group of pieces of information (e.g. data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration indicate the hottest summer of all time).

Policy updates from International Geneva

Numerous policy discussions take place in Geneva every month. The following updates cover the main events in July and August. For event reports, visit the [Past Events section on the GIP Digital Watch observatory](#).

[Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO: Sixty-Third Series of Meetings](#) | 14-22 July 2022

The meeting covered the report of the Director General, [reports of WIPO Committees](#), and [program and budgetary issues](#). Member states finally adopted [the Summary Report](#) prepared by the secretariat.

Apart from official meetings, several side events covered important digital issues: The panel discussion on the 'Use of TRIPS Flexibilities for Access to Medical Technologies' organised by South Centre facilitated exchange of practices and potential South-South collaboration opportunities among intellectual property (IP) offices. The WIPO

Secretariat organised an open discussion and dialogue with member states on 'IP, Frontier Technologies and AI: What's next?' ([watch webcast here](#)). Participants presented and discussed 'Initiatives and Good Practices to Support Community Entrepreneurship in the Digital Economy' ([watch webcast here](#)). Finally, experts of the global innovation landscape presented on the post-pandemic shock to the world's major economies in the side event 'Resilience and Ingenuity: Global Innovation Responses to Covid-19' ([watch webcast here](#)).

[Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons – Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems](#) | 25-29 July 2022

The 2022 Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC) was held under the theme 'A movement for purpose'. Among the outcomes of the council is an adopted [Resolution on Safeguarding Humanitarian Data](#). The resolution calls on states and other actors to respect and protect impartial humanitarian organisations both online and offline and safeguard them from harmful cyber and information operations of any kind.

The resolution also notes that humanitarian organisations should only process humanitarian

data for purposes that are compatible with their mandate, and comply with applicable laws and data protection frameworks and principles. It further encourages the research, development, and acquisition of tools and measures to protect a neutral, independent, and impartial humanitarian space in the digital sphere, and to ensure the protection and security of humanitarian data.

It encourages the ICRC to look into developing a digital emblem to identify the data and digital infrastructure of humanitarian and medical actors, which enjoy specific protection under international humanitarian law.

[ITU Workshop on Security for 5G and beyond](#) | 28 August

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) hosted a workshop on 'Security for 5G and beyond' to explore the existing security gaps in 5G and potential directions for 6G. The workshop facilitated knowledge exchanges on the ongoing 5G security activities among

relevant ITU study groups, such as [ITU-T SG2, 3, 13](#) and [17](#), [ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC27](#), [ETSI](#), [3GPP](#), and [GSMA](#), to develop a common understanding of the security threats in the 6G landscape. Watch [the recording here](#).

What to watch for: Global digital policy events in September

13–27 September, [UN General Assembly 77th session](#) (New York, USA)

The 77th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 77) will be held on 13–27 September 2022, at the UN headquarters in New York. During the high-level General Debate, which will start on 20 September, member state representatives (largely heads of states, heads of governments, or ministers of foreign affairs) will share their views and priorities on global issues, from climate change and sustainable development, to peace and security.

Bookmark our [dedicated page on the Digital Watch observatory](#) and follow our just-in-time reporting, as we will be covering ‘who said what’ through the prism of each country’s digital priorities in data, cybersecurity, AI, online inclusion, the governance of digital public goods and commons, and more.

15–16 September, [Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit](#) (Samarkand, Uzbekistan)

The 2022 meeting of the Council of Heads of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States will be held on 15–16 September in Samarkand. Uzbekistan took over the chairmanship of the organisation from Tajikistan in September 2021, outlined several priorities which are expected to feature on the meeting’s agenda: peace and stability, poverty reduction, food security, and interregional trade. The Samarkand Declaration, to be issued at the end of the meeting, will highlight the SCO’s main concerns and focus areas for the coming period.

17–22 September, [ICANN75 - Annual General Meeting](#) (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and online)

The annual general meeting of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) will be held between 17 and 22 September in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and online. The meeting will give various ICANN supporting organisations and advisory committees an opportunity to advance their work on a wide range of issues related to the organisation’s mission, from generic top-level domains (gTLDs) and universal acceptance, to Domain Name Systems Security Extensions (DNSSEC) and DNS abuse.

26 September – 14 October, [ITU Plenipotentiary Conference](#) (Bucharest, Romania and online)

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) – the organisation’s supreme governing body – will convene between 26 September and 14 October in Bucharest, Romania. The conference will focus on three main issues: elections for key leadership roles (from the ITU Secretary-General to members of the ITU Council); adoption of ITU’s four-year strategic and financial plans; and discussions and decisions on a wide range of resolutions related to ITU work in areas such as broadband networks, digital standards, information security, child safety online, outer space, and much more. The event is open to ITU member states, observers which participate in an advisory capacity, and observers which do not participate in an advisory capacity.

Opportunity: Become a Digital Watch Knowledge Fellow

DiploFoundation is pleased to announce its new call for the Digital Watch Knowledge Fellow (DW Knowledge Fellow) in 2022. If you are keen on digital topics because of personal interest, academic studies, or policy research, join a vibrant international team of knowledge fellows. Follow an issue of your interest, for example e-waste, blockchain, online education, cybersecurity and health, and many others within digital policy and internet governance framework. You will learn from our experts how to use various digital tools, network effectively and gain skills in writing, among many others.

Expectations

The Knowledge Fellows' tasks are to curate, on a daily basis, one or more [topics/processes/trends](#) (TPTs) on the Digital Watch observatory ([dig.watch](#)). Curation includes:

- Analysing the latest developments;
- Researching and developing timelines, maps, and other research artefacts;
- Keeping assigned pages in good health.

Knowledge Fellows are also invited to share their expertise through Diplo's knowledge ecology (contributions towards Diplo courses, involvement in debates, etc).

Requirements and how to apply

Professionals from a wide range of communities – from young gamers to retired diplomats, from tech specialists to philosophers, from scientists to artists – are invited to apply.

Applicants should have:

- A solid command of English and basic skills for web and social media
- Expertise in at least one digital policy area
- Availability to work 5–8 hours per week

Submit your expression of interest [here](#) no later than 15 September 2022. Selected applicants will be contacted by a staff member on a rolling basis.

Benefits

DW Knowledge Fellows will benefit from:

- training on covering digital policy developments,
- training on how to use WordPress,
- remuneration,
- visibility of their work among DW audience (diplomatic communities in Geneva and other diplomatic centres, professionals from across all stakeholder groups dealing with digital topics)
- the possibility of promoting their digital policy-related research via DW/Diplo networks
- access to/being part of a global network of experts and professionals working on various digital policy topics

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On the cover: *A quiet digital summer: Promising geopolitical signal or calm before the storm?*

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