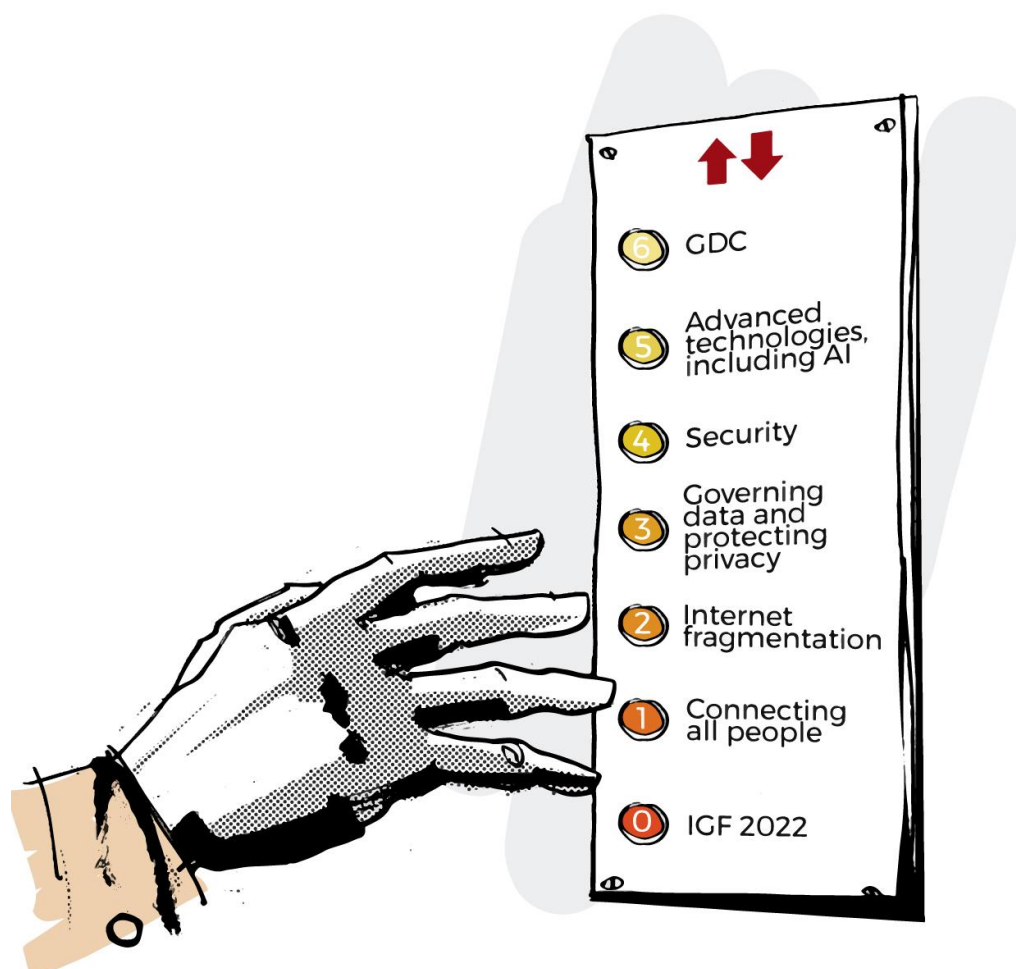


NEWSLETTER

Issue 75, **December 2022**



IGF 2022: Towards the Global Digital Compact

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Digital policy developments that made global headlines

The digital policy landscape changes daily, so here are all the main developments from November. There's more detail in each update on the Digital Watch Observatory.



Increasing relevance

Global digital governance architecture

The [G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration](#) pledged to advance digital transformation, the development of digital skills and digital literacy, digitalisation for the economy, and access to digital technologies.

The 17th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in Addis Ababa from 28 November to 2 November 2022. Read our reflections on page 4.

The [third meeting of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council](#) (TTC) resulted in agreement on an early warning system for semiconductor shortages, as well as pledging cooperation on emerging technologies, using digitalisation to ease transatlantic trade, and fostering digital skills.



Low relevance

Sustainable development

China [pledged](#) to use big data, biotech, and AI to resolve environmental problems including pollution, climate change, and the destruction of ecosystems.



Increasing relevance

Security

The First Committee of the UNGA has adopted a [resolution which will establish a programme of action \(PoA\) on cybersecurity](#) as a permanent, inclusive, action-oriented mechanism after the [OEWG 2021–2025](#) concludes.

The Asia-Pacific Cybercrime Capacity-Building Hub [has been established](#).

The Cybercrime Ad Hoc Committee has published a [consolidated negotiating document](#).

Following a surge in cyberattacks on the country in October, [Australia initiated a counter-ransomware task force](#) to hunt down hackers and disrupt their networks.

The European Parliament [approved legislation to improve the security of critical digital infrastructure in the EU](#) by harmonising the definition of critical infrastructure, creating stricter risk assessment rules, and reporting for critical actors.

The White House hosted the [second Counter Ransomware Initiative Summit](#), where members reaffirmed commitment to cooperate against ransomware.



Increasing relevance

E-commerce and the internet economy

Crypto exchange [FTX collapsed](#), severely affecting the broader crypto market.

China significantly [reduced fines for a range of online ride-hailing service violations](#).



Same relevance

Infrastructure

US telecom regulator [FCC will launch a new space bureau](#) to address the growing number of satellite launches.

The EU Council and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement to [deploy an EU satellite constellation](#).



Same relevance

Digital rights

Hackers [released data stolen from Australian insurer Medibank customers](#) in waves.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has published research [highlighting trends in growing online violence against women journalists](#).



Increased relevance

Content policy

The EU's Digital Services Act [entered into force](#) on 16 November.

In Vietnam, social media platforms will have to [remove misinformation and false news within 24 hours of requests](#) being lodged by national authorities.

Jurisdiction and legal issues

Google will pay a [record-breaking privacy settlement](#) of US\$391.5 million in the USA for its misleading location tracking practices. The Court of Justice of the EU ruled that Google must [remove data from online search results if users can prove it is inaccurate](#).

A US court ruled Intel must pay VLSI \$948.8 million for [infringing a VLSI patent for computer chips](#).

New technologies

Italy [prohibited the use of facial recognition technologies](#) unless they are used for fighting crime or judicial investigations.

Tuvalu began to [replicate itself in the metaverse](#) to preserve its history and culture as it faces rising sea levels.

Switzerland and the UK signed an agreement to [strengthen cooperation in deep tech, including quantum computing and AI](#).



Increased relevance

Let's talk IGF 2022

For many internet and digital enthusiasts, the annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is the highlight of the year. With a total of 5,210 participants in situ and online, IGF 2022 (held in Addis Ababa from 28 November to 2 December 2022) was indeed one of the main events this year. But since numbers tell only half the story, here's why we think IGF 2022 made the top list.

The topics

Nothing could have been more appropriate than structuring IGF 2022 following the main focus areas from the [UN Secretary-General's Global Digital Compact](#).

The compact was indeed the 'new kid on the block', not least since the IGF discussions will feed into it as part of the ongoing open consultations facilitated by the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.

In topics that repeatedly resonated across sessions, some discussions showed strong signs of maturity. Data governance discussions moved from the generic notion of 'data' to specificities of personal, corporate, and public data, and how these require dedicated governance solutions.

Meaningful connectivity goes beyond cables and satellites and requires addressing the digital skills divide and inclusive measures that embrace women and girls, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Privacy and security, often pitted against each other, are strongly considered a false dichotomy. Many of these discussions articulated a thriving development agenda.

As for issues that render the online space unsafe, experts repeated a few harsh warnings: Gender-based violence is particularly worrisome, in some regions experiencing a surge; child sexual abuse material circulating online is increasing; the protection of human rights is eroding, particularly among the younger generation of internet users.

And yet, although discussions were plentiful, IGF 2022 saw little in terms of new solutions and dynamics – except for the discussions on the Declaration for the Future of the Internet (which drew a fair share of criticism over the lack of consultation in the lead-up to its current format) and the vivid debates between parliamentarians during their dedicated track.

The process

The most noteworthy development in IGF 2022's process was the active participation of members of parliament. This is a direct result of the IGF's outreach, which aimed at engaging parliamentarians more effectively in the IGF discussions.

As a result, this track has gone from strength to strength since its first major attempt in 2019, with parliamentarians from developing countries contributing quite significantly this year.

Three strong calls reverberated throughout the discussions:

- Parliaments should contribute to strengthening national multistakeholder dialogues on internet and digital policy issues and ensuring that national interests and priorities are reflected in international processes.
- More efforts are needed to strengthen the capacity of parliamentarians to work on digital policy issues, including through training and skills building. This will help ensure that they engage in meaningful debates before passing legislation affecting the digital space.
- Parliaments should have their own seat at the table in regional and global processes dealing with digital issues.

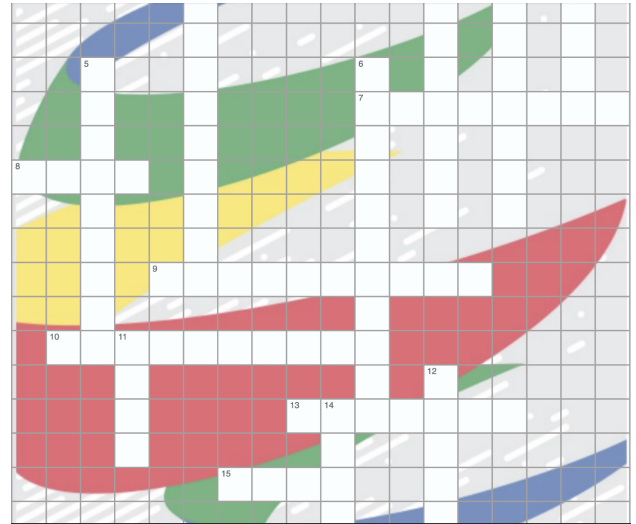
Other tracks at IGF 2022 included those dedicated to high-level leaders, youth, and intersessional work.

The format

Held in Addis Ababa and online, IGF 2022 was empowered by the dynamism of the African digital community. The event hosted 5,210 participants in situ and online, participating in over 300 sessions.

In focus

The hybrid format is maturing at the IGF, building on the forum's long tradition of remote participation since IGF 2007 in Brazil, with a strong impetus from Diplo's Remote Participation Working Group. The IGF can become a hybrid meeting lab if it addresses some relatively well-known issues. These include: reducing the occurrence of tech glitches, enabling more straightforward, user-friendly navigation of the forum site, and providing more training in hybrid meeting techniques for session moderators.



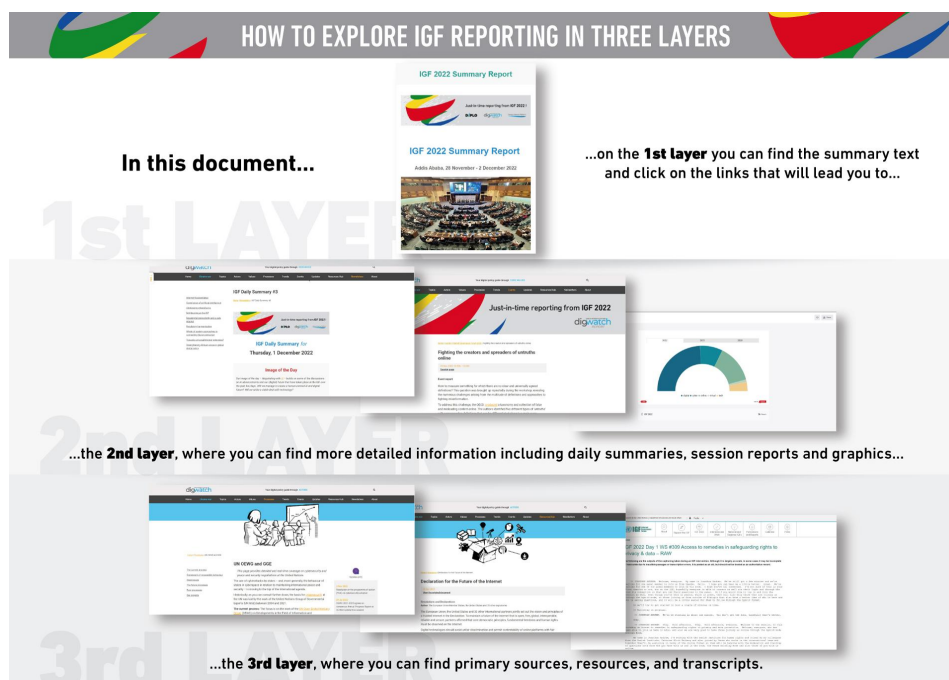
[Test your knowledge](#) of all things IGF.

For the 8th consecutive year, the Geneva Internet Platform Digital Watch Observatory provided just-in-time reporting from IGF 2022.

Explore Diplo's IGF reporting approach in three layers, starting with the first layer – the [IGF 2022 Summary Report](#).

You can then navigate to the second layer, consisting of summaries of sessions and data analyses of the corpus text of IGF 2022.

On the third layer, you will find detailed information on topics from [AI](#) to cybersecurity, as well as main actors from the UN, the private sector, academia, and civil society. This holistic reporting provides comprehensive coverage of the key topics, actors, and trends during and beyond IGF 2022 as a single event.



The diplomacy of everything digital

November's [Summit on Digital Diplomacy and Governance](#) took stock of recent developments in digital governance and reflected on how we should navigate our digital future. Although the digital world evolves at incredible speed, much of what was discussed will remain significant for a long time. Here are some of the main takeaways from the summit.

Digital is everywhere

What was once a discussion about the internet and the technology behind it has now expanded to include almost every facet of everyday life. It's not only about cables anymore. The internet impacts our social lives, our health, our economies, and the environment. The benefits of digital technology are indisputable and pervasive. Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok own our very souls.

But as with other global commons, the digital commons is falling prey to the tragedy of the commons. The online space is rife with misuse, risks, security issues, data breaches, and cyberweapons. The costs can quickly outweigh the benefits.

The UN Secretary-General's Global Digital Compact initiative – including an open consultation during the summit – will outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all.

Enter digital foreign policy

From the initial days of the availability of the internet, it was clear that diplomacy would be greatly impacted by this advance in communications. The internet and technology would introduce new topics to diplomatic agendas; they would shape the environment in which diplomacy is conducted; and they would change the essence of how diplomacy is practised. (This three-track methodology sums up Diplo's approach to digital diplomacy and was the underlying framework for the summit's thematic discussions.)

Digital has also entered foreign policy – in some cases, through a dedicated digital foreign policy.

A vital role for digital diplomats

As key stakeholders, governments should act confidently in protecting the interests of their citizens, communities, and companies in the

digital realm, and act cautiously in using their power to control the digital realm. Diplomats, and especially digital diplomats – a new breed of diplomatic officials – can help achieve this delicate balance.

Diplomats will therefore need to acquire new skills in digital governance: An understanding of the new geopolitics and geo-economic landscape, knowledge of the technology fuelling these developments, and the skills to engage with other actors, including tech companies, academia, and civil society.

Strengthening weaker voices

The voices of small and developing countries are quite weak in digital negotiations – more so as the rest of the world jumps on the bandwagon of AI and other frontier technologies. This can change through sustainable institutional capacity building and acquiring the specific digital skills needed to overcome financial and institutional limitations to actively participate in global negotiations.



Participants at the Malta Summit listening to an address by Malta's Prime Minister

The summit was organised by Diplo, operator of the Geneva Internet Platform, in cooperation with its founding partners, the Governments of Malta and Switzerland. Read the [key messages and our in-depth report](#), and [view the recordings](#).

Policy updates from International Geneva

Numerous policy discussions take place in Geneva every month. The following updates cover the main events in November. For event reports, visit the Past Events section on the GIP Digital Watch Observatory.

[Geneva Peace Week 2022](#) | 31 October – 4 November

The [2022 Geneva Peace Week \(GPW\)](#), titled 'Peace is Possible', took place at the Maison de la Paix during the first week of November. As the annual flagship event of the [Geneva Peacebuilding Platform](#), the GPW leads trending discussions among the international peacebuilding community in Geneva and their overseas partners to promote sharing knowledge and best practices. The 2022 edition offered four main thematic tracks to guide conversations, one of which focused on

[digital peace](#). From the new challenges that the emergence of social media platforms poses in the field of mediation to the various digital tools that could be used to monitor, surveil, and predict civilian behaviours in turbulent times, policymakers and peace practitioners convened to share lessons learned on the ground and discussed proposals for the way forward. [Multimedia coverage of the event by the Digital Series](#).

[Towards a digital emblem? Benefits, risks and possible solutions](#) | 3 November

The [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#) launched its report titled [Digitalising the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Crystal Emblems: Benefits, Risks and Possible Solutions](#). An ICRC emblem is traditionally used in a conflict to signify that the person or object wearing such an emblem falls under humanitarian operations and should not be

targeted. Particularly relevant in the context of hybrid warfare, is the concept of developing a 'digital emblem', which would prevent the digital infrastructures or tools used by humanitarian organisations and medical facilities from being targets of malicious cyber operations. [Watch the launch event and expert discussions](#).

[11th UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#) | 28–30 November

Since 2011, the annual [UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#) has gathered thousands of participants from governments, international organisations, businesses, trade unions, civil society, legal experts, and academia from around the world. Based on the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights \(UNGPs\)](#), the forum is a multistakeholder platform where participants can jointly discuss challenges and review the implementation of the UNGPs. The theme of the 11th Forum was

'Rights holders at the centre: Strengthening accountability to advance business respect for people and planet in the next decade'. Specific focus was placed on accountability and remedy mechanisms, as well as the stocktaking of efforts accomplished. A special session, titled [Mandating Responsible Business Conduct in the Technology Sector – Advancing the UNGPs in Regulatory Debates](#) was held on 29 November. [Watch the recording of all sessions](#).

What to watch for: Global digital policy events in December and January

8 December, [Partner2Connect Annual Meeting](#) (Geneva, Switzerland)

The Partner2Connect Digital Coalition (P2C) is a multistakeholder alliance to mobilise resources, partnerships, and commitments to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity. After its formation in 2021 by ITU, the UN Secretary General's Digital Roadmap project and the Envoy on Technology, the coalition has achieved significant milestones in 2022. The annual meeting, which will take place at ITU Headquarters in Geneva, will discuss the successes and challenges of the coalition so far, as well as plans for connecting the unconnected across the globe.

16 December, [International Conference on the Geopolitics of Internet Routing and Infrastructures](#) (Paris, France)

The international conference 'The Journey, not the Destination, Matters: The Geopolitics of Internet Routes' is set to take place in Paris, France on 16 December. Referring to the global events of the year, including the war in Ukraine and the threat of internet fragmentation, the conference will address the geopolitical challenges of critical internet infrastructure and routing. Besides past and present challenges, panellists will consider the future of the internet and question different possibilities for the evolution of the internet under the prisms of architecture and governance.

15–18 January, [PTC '23](#) (Honolulu, Hawaii)

The Pacific Telecommunication Council (PTC) Annual Conference will gather from 15 to 18 January 2023 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Pacific telecommunications community will have a chance to interact through panels and lighting talks but also in a novel format – Digital Infra Speed Dating – meant for the up-and-coming owners of fibre, data centre, edge computing, or cell tower real estate assets to introduce themselves to institutional investors and private equity firms. Some of the event's topics include regulation, policy and ethics, enabling technologies, and development in the Pacific region.

16–20 January, [WEF Annual Meeting 2023](#) (Davos, Switzerland)

The 2023 World Economic Forum Annual Meeting will be held under the theme 'Cooperation in a Fragmented World' from 16 to 20 January. The 53rd Annual Meeting is returning to Davos, Switzerland after hosting its previous edition online. Heads of state and government, business leaders, international organisations, and civil society will come together to reaffirm the WEF values and the imperative of dialogue and public-private cooperation.

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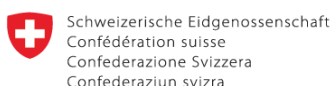
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