SDC Digital Watch Newsletter

Issue 4, November 2020

DiPLO

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Digital Watch SDC newsletter. As 2020 comes to an end, we provide an overview of some of the development-related updates that took place in the last three months. We also share glimpses from the 15th edition of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), data on the cost of mobile Internet, and how Geneva-based actors interact within a complex system and tackle digital policy.

In this issue, we include a round-up of recent tech developments at DiploFoundation and the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP).

We also look at whether humanitarian data during major crisis is complete or incomplete.

IGF 2020

Sustainable development issues at the core of discussions.

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TECH DEVELOPMENTS

Data and artificial intelligence (AI) tools at your fingertips.

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DIGITAL GENEVA ATLAS

Who are the digital policy actors and how are they linked?

More on page 4

The opportunities and shortfalls of digital

Gender equality

- A campaign aimed at the digital generation has been launched by Spain's Ministry of the Interior to combat 'digital gender violence'.
- A study titled State of the World's Girls Report, conducted in 22 countries by Plan International, found that 58% of respondents had faced online abuse on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok.

Climate action

- A recent study, conducted by PwC for Green Alliance, found that phone manufacturing emits 60 kg of CO2, which is 300 times the weight of the finished product.
- Facebook has partnered with Carnegie Mellon University in order to assist scientists use artificial intelligence (AI) tools in order to develop renewable energy and combat climate change.

Development

- Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), together with SMART Africa, has launched the online learning platform 'atingi' that aims to provide marginalised groups with better access to high-quality education.
- Israeli satellite operator Spacecom concluded an agreement with La Poste Senegal on the provision of high-quality Internet service in remote areas.

Digital health

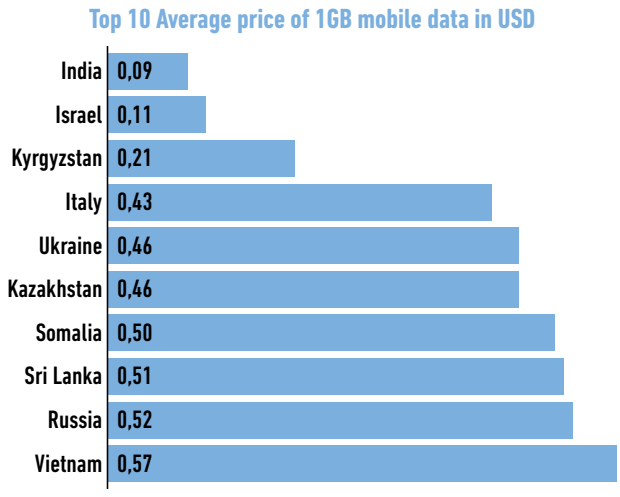
- Google Cloud has developed a healthcare AI tool intended to combat healthcare data challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Lufthansa, Swiss International Airlines, and several other air carriers will introduce 'CommonPass'- a digital health passport that will allow passengers with a negative COVID-19 test to travel without the need to self-isolate.

Food Security

- Bosch and BASF Digital Farming have concluded a joint venture agreement so as to market and sell smart-farming solutions worldwide from a single source.

Water management

- The Arab Ministerial Water Council called for cooperation between the Arab states and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) in order to create a digital database of water resources in their countries.



According to the research conducted in 2020 by Cable.co.uk, mobile data is the cheapest in India where the average price of 1 GB of Internet is USD$0.09. Israel comes in second place with the mean price of USD$0.11. Among European countries, Italy (USD$0.43), Ukraine (USD$0.46), and Russia (USD$0.52) have the lowest cost of mobile Internet coming in fourth, fifth, and ninth place respectively. Somalia, with an average cost of USD$0.50 per 1 GB of mobile data, is the only African country to feature in the top ten. Inversely, five of the bottom ten countries featured on the ranking are from Africa, with 1 GB of mobile data being the most expensive in Sao Tome and Principe (USD$28.26).

E-governance

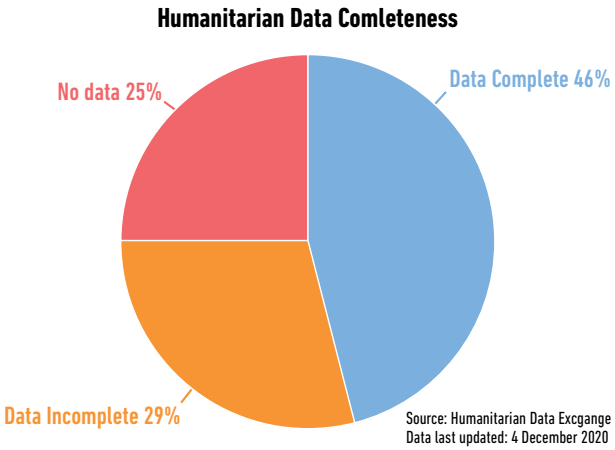
- Serbia's government has announced its plan to launch an e-governance system for regulatory procedures in the energy and mining sectors.
- Under the recently launched European Union project - EU4DigitalUA, the Estonian e-Governance Academy will assist with the development of digital government infrastructure in Ukraine.

Migration

- The UN special rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance warned against smart border control and discirimantory data collection.
- Nigeria's federal government has approved digital identity for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Humanitarian

- The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has called on social media platforms to use big data and artificial intelligence to help eliminate trafficking in women and girls.
- According to a report published by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 3 billion children aged 3 to 17 years old do not have Internet connection in their homes.



The Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) provides a global overview of humanitarian data completeness. In this context, it places the most important crisis data into six categories: Affected People, Coordination & Context, Food Security & Nutrition, Geography & Infrastructure, Health & Education, and Population & Socio-economy, and assesses if the data is complete, incomplete, or missing. The data is updated on a daily basis, with the opportunity to browse through country profiles and conduct in-depth analysis.

Different faces of digital development

#IGF2020: From Internet to digital governance?

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 15th IGF meeting was convened completely online. With over 250 sessions, this year's conference was dedicated to 4 thematic tracks: Data, Environment, Inclusion, and Trust, that, in addition to addressing some of the most pressing digital policy issues, also explored the interplay between digital technologies and sustainable development. According to the analysis conducted by Diplo's Data and AI team, the largest number of sessions was dedicated to sustainable development goal (SDG) 9 that tackles industry, innovation, and infrastructure, followed by SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).

When it comes to the most popular topics at IGF 2020, development and sociocultural issues came first. Along these lines, sustainable development and related topics, including access and capacity development, featured as the main topic in more than 25 panels and workshops addressing the Environment and Inclusion tracks. Sociocultural questions pertaining to issues such as disinformation, trust, and online learning were at large discussed in the context of the pandemic.

Looking at the most popular terms at this year's event, with more than 4000 appearances, 'data' was by far the most dominant term. It was mostly discussed in the context of privacy, environment, openness, and trustworthiness.

Our analysis has also shown a growing use of the prefix 'digital' that signals a widening of the narrow focus on Internet governance to include digital literacy, digital divide, digital inclusion, to name but a few.

To learn more about IGF 2020, please consult *Digital Watch*.

The Digital Geneva Atlas: Mapping actors and approaches

On 30 November, the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP) launched the Digital Geneva Atlas, a directory of more than 40 Geneva-based international organisations and actors involved in digital policy. As a living document, the Atlas provides a comprehensive overview of the Internet governance scene in Geneva. More specifically, as per the Internet governance taxonomy, it carefully explores the actors' scope of work in the domain of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital standards, data governance, and privacy, to name but a few.

The Atlas aims to make the connection between digital policy processes and actors involved, and ultimately help small and developing countries navigate the complex policy landscape in Geneva.

Explore the Atlas and identify how, among other things, humanitarian, human rights, and health organisations approach digital questions.

Recent tech developments at Diplo and the GIP

In order to assist researchers in data analysis and result interpretation, Diplo's Data and AI team has created the Data Sandbox. Developed as part of the Road to Bern process, and containing more than 700 datasets on 193 countries (such as GDP, CO2 emissions, number of hospital beds, and the rate of corruption), the Sandbox is part of the wider pilot Data Engine project. The tool allows users to compare datasets and spot variations in country ranking, and thus draw conclusions or trigger further research in order to understand potential discrepancies.

Diplo's Country–Company Comparison Tool allows for an evaluation of countries' GDP and how it measures to global tech companies.

Third in line of Diplo's tech developments, the Speech Generator, smartly combines human and artificial intelligence to generate diplomatic statements on cybersecurity. The tool allows users to compare the official positions of actors involved in discussions within the UN Group of Governmental Experts (UN GGE) and the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), and retrieve answers to cybersecurity-related questions.

Socio-economic transformation through the digital prism

Basing itself on three elements: knowledge, technology and future readiness to embrace digitalisation, the Digital Competitiveness Index explores how 63 countries and territories rank in employing digital technologies for socio-economic transformation. Three countries, namely, the US (1), Singapore (2) and Norway (9) have maintained the same places from last year. The commonality between all top ten countries is investment in knowledge and talent development whereas the bottom ten countries, mostly located in Latin America, underperform on attracting foreign highly-skilled personnel and e-participation.

Digital Competitiveness Index

	Country/Territory	Ranking (2020)	Change	Ranking (2019)
	United States	1	—	1
	Singapore	2	—	2
	Denmark	3	▲	4
	Sweden	4	▼	3
	Hong Kong	5	▲	8
	Switzerland	6	▼	5
	Netherlands	7	▼	6
	South Korea	8	▲	10
	Norway	9	—	9
	Finland	10	▼	7

Source: IMD