More highlights from day 2

How to process personal data for big data analysis and the development of AI

Byoung-il Oh, president of Korean Progressive Network Jinbonet, gave a presentation on the key aspects of how the newly revised Personal Information Protection Act in South Korea has allowed the commercial exploitation of citizens' personal data, even without their consent. One striking example is how pharmacies can now sell prescription data to private entities without the subjects' consent, and this data is then subsequently further sold to pharmaceutical companies. This is being done by several governments globally in the name of fostering their big data and artificial intelligence (AI) industries. He explained the crucial difference between pseudonymous and anonymised data and how Korean civil society has opposed such laws. In the ensuing discussion, Oh also said that while some experts say that Korean data protection is strong, he thinks it's rather rigid and not flexible (unlike the GDPR), and so it is not actually strong. One participant questioned whether the GDPR is "a pie in the sky, just another piece of paper" as a model. Oh agreed that even the GDPR does not regulate intelligence and police agencies. He also urged everyone to attend Thursday's session on "Pandemic as a vector for surveillance and other abuses" to discuss how the pandemic has further influenced citizens' data collection and use.

APC Environmental Sustainability Ecosystem

Facilitator Jennifer Radloff of APC began by showing us a vibrant reading of Yomi Ṣode's poem "Chaos in the Sky and on Land". Next, the civil society organisation PROTEGE QV discussed their work on climate change in Cameroon, and how getting timely information around climate disasters is critical and an urgent need. One needs to be careful with such data since it needs to be credible, lest it create needless public panic. The climate doesn't just affect our ecosystem but also our entire life cycle, such as sanitation, tourism, agriculture, etc. Cameroon has signed global protocols and now needs to implement them. Since environmental data is of major interest to APC, Radloff asked the group how might we collect and use such data? One example cited was how SPACE Kerala has implemented an APC-funded project for collecting open geospatial data to create maps that provide early flood warnings. Open Culture Foundation (OCF) in Taiwan spoke about their first environmental project, Civic Sense on low-cost air quality monitoring and raising awareness to help improve air quality information for evidence-based policy making.

Another interesting point that was raised was how the "internet of things" promises technology like sensors to gather new data and offer advice on cultivating land or avoiding floods, but we need to ensure it works alongside rather than excludes historical memories and Indigenous knowledge already embedded in our communities. As one participant noted, "The goal shouldn't be to replace forms of knowledge, but to try to help produce alternative forms of knowledge with the help of local communities." A final open question was whether we can go beyond thinking about a circular

economy at the device level and instead consider a circular economy of telecoms and other infrastructure.

Come together, a walk through APC guidelines on planning and designing online events with magic brought by azar and nadege

When designing and planning an online event, it is key to nurture an environment where each person feels seen, heard and acknowledged. This is the main idea drawn from the process of creating the APC guidelines on planning and designing online events, also called "Come together". The session "Come together, a walk through APC guidelines on planning and designing online events" introduced participants to a process that took over a year, starting with the beginning of the pandemic, to collect APC's extensive experience in online organising. APC's hvale and Leila presented the guide as a learning process, not a set of lessons taught from above. "At first, it was going to be more simple material, but it evolved into a learning process that involved questions on principles, values and care, and how to embed them when designing online events at every step of the way," they said.

Participants shared their first impressions on this resource. The layout, structure and design were praised (and particularly the mushrooms, which have become a "powerful symbol in queer narratives", in the words of one the participants). It was highlighted that the guide starts with questions on whether an event is really necessary or useful, as opposed to taking things for granted. "The pandemic has put a lot of pressure on organising events and attending them. This guide starts by asking: Is this event really needed? Can you replace it with an email or anything else? Let's start with the 'why' and then move to the 'how'."

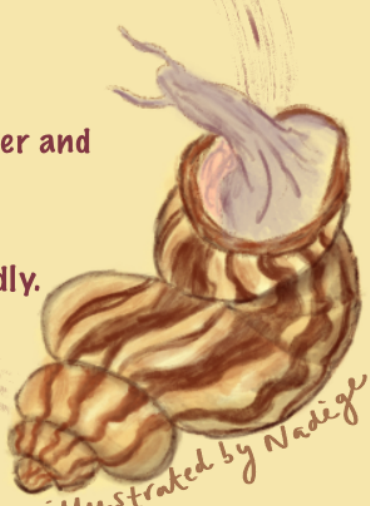
And here is a gift from nadege for all of us: an illustrated poem by Mexican poet Isabel Zapata that was read during the session.



Reasons Not to Step on Snails

by Isabel Zapata

Because they're both male and female at once.
Because their shells grow with them.
Because Apicius cooked them with fermented fish guts.
Because their slime erases wrinkles.
Because they take three hours to mate.
Because they have twenty thousand microscopic teeth.
Because Pope Pious V declared them fish so Catholics could eat them
during Lent.
Because their naps take all week long.
Because Leonardo da Vinci ate them with butter and parsley.
Because they walk with their bellies.
Because they crunch; because they love unrigidly.



illustrated by Nadiga



Razones para no pisar a un caracol

Por Isabel Zapata

Porque son machos y hembras al mismo tiempo.
Porque su concha crece con ellos.
Porque Apicio los cocinaba con vísceras de pescado fermentadas.
Porque su baba quita las arrugas.
Porque su apareamiento dura tres horas.
Porque tienen veinte mil dientes microscópicos.
Porque el papa Pío V dijo que eran peces para poder

Your TECH choices make a difference

Which technologies are more ethical and sustainable to use? In order to make an informed decision, people need to know about practices and concepts related to internet services and the consumption and use of ICTs. This was the focus of the session "Your TECH choices make a difference", facilitated by Pangea, which went through options including DNS domains, Nextcloud advanced, secure email, choice of user devices and ethical internet access providers. Choices were also linked to the environment and sustainability, and a need for a circular economy was raised. Independence from commercial platforms was also stressed as key. "You pay corporations like Facebook with privacy. For them, you're 'a cow in a farm'."

Tracking Migrants to Digital Exclusion

The documentary "The Migrants - Plights, struggles and aspirations" by APC member in India Digital Empowerment Foundation illustrates the journey and after-journey of the Indian migrants who travelled back to their villages from the cities during times of COVID. During this session, the film was screened and there was a round of questions from the participants to the filmmaker, Abner Manzar, that allowed the creators to share the challenges faced at the time of producing this documentary. The film documents the migrants' financial and emotional states and the obstacles they faced during their journey, such as whether they were accepted by their own villages and if the government provided any support. One of the interviewees expressed that they had to sell their bicycles, which they used as their main transportation to travel back to their village, to get the bribe money to the police in order to cross the border, otherwise the police would take away their bikes and incite violence on them. This is one of the many examples that was narrated in the film, their surviving situations.

The film concentrates on three states: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. One small silver lining: during the filming process, they met a 19-year-old migrant who was quite knowledgeable and educated. They ended up hiring him as one of their Soochna entrepreneurs (information entrepreneurs). He now runs his own information centre, providing government information and villager entitlements in his own village.

Access to information and local content fostering diversity in developing countries

This session, organised by APC members Núcleo de Pesquisas, Estudos e Formação (Nupef) from Brazil, Servelots from India and Zenzeleni Networks from South Africa, opened an interesting discussion on locally produced content and its access, through the introduction of three initiatives with different approaches and some common challenges, pre, during and post-COVID times. During the pandemic, fake news, decontextualised and contradictory information, as well as inequalities in access to media and the internet created added challenges to those working in these fields. But it also created opportunities!

Using the resources it had in place – its human network and the internet – Zenzeleni Networks launched in its communities the Intanethi Yethu Challenge, which was implemented with support from DFID and APC. As part of this challenge, community members were encouraged to submit

content telling about how COVID was experienced in their own realities, and in their local languages. This allowed locals to access cash, which was scarce during the pandemic (as the content producers were retributed with money), as well as to produce and use content that spoke directly to the lived realities of the context Zenzeleni operates in.

Servelots, based in India, shared its story of how they brought people together and created local content while building the villagers' capacities. The focus of it was their experience with a community radio run by local young girls, and the associated ASPiration networking device, which is a tiny computer that allowed them to broadcast from different villages. They also organised the Kishori Film Festival that featured short movies on agricultural income, carpet manufacturing, driving safely, the journey from clay to brick, and paper boats.

Nupef, based in Brazil, explained how their pilot project Graúna Comunitário operates as a platform that stores public interest information in the cloud, so that it can be accessed without an internet connection. This project aims to provide people in remote communities with access to useful and reliable public information, addressing the country's cultural diversity, the current invasion of fake news, and the existing inequalities in the levels of literacy, access to the internet and to information, as a consequence of serious issues with the democratisation of communications and the human rights crises that Brazil is going through. This phase of the project, which entails curating existing information (before moving into local content production), presented them with the challenge of choosing which resources or content to feature and make available for the communities. For this, they developed a methodology, prioritising four main topics (human rights, health, environment and culture) through which they are able to consult the local communities, the public prosecutors' offices (to find out which were the themes that were more relevant for each community, such as discrimination, human trafficking, etc.) and they also contacted local leaders to know more about the communities and their traditional knowledge.

Initiating Digital Rights Monitor Asia

In the "Initiating Digital Rights Monitor Asia" session, Media Matters for Democracy (MMfD) introduced the Digital Rights Monitor (DRM) initiative in Pakistan and shared more about their plans to expand it to Asia. The DRM is a platform to report on digital rights and internet governance issues in Pakistan and collates related resources and publications. Seeking potential partnerships from member organisations interested in collaborating to expand it regionally, MMfD told us more about what they have achieved so far, the vision to move forward and also explored some opportunities for collaborations. One example shared was the Challenge series on freedom of religious expression on the internet, a compilation of case studies looking into different policies and how they are made to restrict religious expression, in which concrete cases from different countries are welcome. Participants were invited to share their thoughts and suggestions and also reflect on questions proposed by the organisation. Is DRM Asia something you would like to collaborate with? How we can share resources? Is there any potential for collaborative fundraising? Are there recommendations about what to post at DRM? Organisations or individuals are also invited to send their content to cross-post or post on DRM's website. On the MMfD side, you can reach Hija Kamra, who facilitated the session, at hija.kamran [at] mediamatters [dot] pk for more information, suggestions and to continue the conversation on cooperation possibilities.

ICTs and Environment Course presentation

In this session, Nodo TAU and Colnodo presented their ICTs and Environment Course, developed with help from APC, to other members of the network, so that they can use it or work on similar initiatives. In the words of Florencia Roveri from Nodo TAU, this online course teaches people about the relationship between the environment and ICTs, including aspects around manufacturing and design, energy sources, carbon footprint, circular economy and the "right to repair". "The goal is to learn by doing, so that these people can go to their communities and spread the word, apply what they've learned and have a positive impact there," Roveri explained. Olga Paz of Colnodo guided participants through the Moodle platform and the way in which the course is structured, "in character-based narratives, to try to make it as dynamic as possible, also keeping in mind that our main target is very young people."

Regarding recognition of all these learning resources, a participant referred to APC being a member of https://academy.itu.int, which could be explored to offer more courses with diplomas and official recognition. The presentation of the course was followed by a lively discussion on how to promote more awareness regarding the digital devices that we don't use anymore, to contribute to a circular economy, and how to draw the connections between individual and community responsibility and the role and interests of big corporations.

Creating learning exercises for greater impact training

This session, hosted by individual member Helen Nyinakiiza, invited the participants to design a mock one-day workshop on digital safety awareness for low-intermediary tech skilled individuals. The attendees were invited to reflect on a series of questions about their own experiences while attending trainings, and in particular on digital security, pointing to the different ways in which we learn. "As educators and teaching enthusiasts, we want to provide meaningful experiences for learners. They, in turn, put trust in us to create content that is interesting and engaging." The session offered insights into "what to teach" and "how to teach" different sections of a workshop agenda and have fun while doing it.

Community networks and cooperative or collective hosting projects sharing experiences / Compartencia entre redes comunitarios y proyectos de hospedaje cooperativas o colectivas

In this session, members involved with autonomous server projects and community networks came together for a vivid conversation around the differences and similarities between these two models. In the discussion, lessons learned, emerging issues, and worries and hopes for the future were shared from both perspectives, aiming to identify mutual needs and opportunities for collaboration, as well as brainstorm on ways to keep the conversation moving forward. As a common ground, some participants pointed out that both community networks and autonomous services seek to be more people-centred and promote autonomy, self-determination and decentralisation, facing growing challenges in a scenario where energy resources are scarce and social and environmental concerns are latent. This also includes situations where many

technologies and the internet ecosystem have been becoming more corporatised over time.

Some of the topics discussed had synergy with other sessions that happened on Day 2 of our convening, specifically "Access to information and local content fostering diversity in developing countries" and "APC Labs: Let's fund and support tech projects together". The discussion also indicated that, beyond spotlighting collaboration possibilities, maintaining these conversations and reflections could invigorate our thinking and initiatives in both areas, helping to refresh the political aspects of our models. APC email lists should be mobilised to continue the many interesting and needed reflections and ideas raised during the session, facilitated by Jaime Villarreal, from May First Movement Technology, and Peter Bloom from Rhizomatica.

APC Environmental Sustainability Ecosystem: A Virtual World Cafe

In line with APC's strategic priority for "people to use and shape the internet and digital technologies to create a just and sustainable world" and connecting with the environmental work of many members, Day 2 of the convening included a "Virtual World Cafe" on environmental sustainability and its intersection with digital rights and technologies. Guest speakers Jes Ciacci of Sursiendo and Mireia Roura and Leandro Navarro of eReuse.org covered intricate and complementary topics.

The session started off with an exploration of feminist environmental justice, which has recently been developed into a Feminist Principle of the Internet that states, "A feminist internet respects life in all its forms; it does not consume it. Our proposal for a feminist internet principle in relation to the environment resignifies care towards an ethics of collective care in choices around design, extraction, production, consumption and disposal of the technologies involved." By abandoning unsustainable economic models and exploring other solutions, we must first acknowledge that "there is more than one way to see the world" and from there ask the key question, "How do we build this interrelationship so that we can enable different spaces of listening?"

From here the session took a deep dive into development and use of digital devices with a focus on reuse as a viable strategy. It acknowledged that "we need growth that acknowledges the right to connectivity" but that has as its model the intent to reduce, reuse and recycle digital devices instead of creating, consuming and abandoning new ones. A particularly telling research project revealed the number of detected use hours of devices to be twice as high in public administration than in private companies, even though corporations typically replace perfectly usable devices every two to three years. APC's environmental sustainability group will continue to do the hard work of visibilising alternative models as we move toward reconceptualising what sustainability means in the digital world.

APC Labs: Let's fund and support tech projects together

This session was an enthusiastic dialogue around how to fund and support tech projects together. Organised by APC individual member Mallory Knodel, the session started with an introduction where she pointed out that APC has several members that are implementing technology and some

of them have coalesced around a group called InfraRed. Other members are not part of InfraRed but are providing certain services, such as email and messaging, as well as the APC community networks projects involving partners providing connectivity.

Participants discussed the idea of APC playing the role of a "trade association" that provides services to this coalition in multiple forms, especially in the four main areas identified by the facilitator: 1) legal and policy support, 2) resource and infrastructure sharing, 3) joint fundraising and 4) technical standards. The people present also put their minds together to reflect on whether APC should be the home of such an initiative and also think about how to move forward. Among the first steps that emerged was the idea of doing scoping research to start the conversation. Also, to have a more generic document, like a concept paper, explaining the four buckets of work and identifying who could be interested in getting support on those areas, such as the InfraRed participants, ISPs, community networks and hacklabs, among others. This concept paper could also be the basis for a collective funding proposal in the near future. Those interested in finding out more and getting involved can reach Mallory Knodel at mallory [at] mayfirst [dot] org.

Go back to read the rest of the Dish of the Day!

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