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Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum 2020 Final Report

11 October 2020 @ Hong Kong

Organiser

Supporting Organisation

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Introduction

Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum 2020 (HKyIGF 2020) was held virtually on 11 October 2020 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. With the advisory support from the ***DotAsia Organisation*** (dot.asia) and ***Cyberport 數碼港*** (www.cyberport.hk), and the dedication of the NetMission ambassadors from ***NetMission.Asia***, our virtual event was completed successfully.

This year, HKyIGF was held as a 3.5-hour virtual meeting with a series of interactive capacity building sessions and a panel discussion on the topic of misinformation and disinformation with our honorable guest speakers, participants and community members from the region. We believe all attendees have gained tremendous knowledge and insights by exchanging innovative ideas with each other.

Background

While young people use ICTs in everyday life, many are unaware of the importance of Internet governance. We see that the social implications of ICTs are not yet adequately integrated into mainstream education. Hence Netmission.Asia is devoted to promoting youth participation in Internet governance and digital inclusion through various capacity-building programmes following the model of youth teaching other youth.

In 2010, NetMission Ambassadors initiated the annual Youth Internet Governance Forum (yIGF) in Hong Kong in conjunction with the inaugural Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) for the youth of Asia-Pacific to voice out their opinions on Internet Governance. The youth initiatives were then continued in Hong Kong as NetY Program and iCity Program respectively in the subsequent years.

In 2016, NetMission Ambassadors reintroduced the Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum. It is our goal to engage youth to take part in the advocacy of Internet governance issues in a local context. We believe that by developing a sense of digital citizenship from a young age youth can have the awareness to critically evaluate the way they use ICTs, and spread that capacity to their peers and further youth engagement in Internet governance.

Vision

- Establish the Youth IGF Hong Kong as a sustainable annual platform for young generations to speak up on Internet Issues that concern them.
- Gain recognition of the Youth IGF Hong Kong among students & schools and further develop local and regional Internet Governance discussion networks

Organiser – NetMission.Asia

The NetMission Ambassadors Program is a non-profit initiative that engages and empowers university students from Asia. Ambassadors are given the skills and knowledge to participate in Internet Governance discourse and to further build the capacity of other youth in Asia so their voices may also be heard. Ambassadors have the opportunity to participate in local, regional, and international conferences, and themselves organise conferences and training activities for other youth.

Since the program was started in 2009, NetMission Ambassadors have regularly attended international Internet Governance conferences, including the United Nations International Governance Forum, ICANN, Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum etc. NetMission Ambassadors have also played a leadership role in regional and local youth events, including the Asia Pacific Youth Internet Forum, Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy, and starting the annual Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum in 2016.

Supporting Organisation – DotAsia Organisation

DotAsia Organisation is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to promote Internet development and adoption in Asia. DotAsia has a strong mandate for socio-technological advancement initiatives including (a) digital inclusion projects to bridge the digital divide and the poverty gap; (b) educational initiatives, e.g. scholarships and promotion of Internet adoption for the advancement of knowledge, etc.; and, (c) research and development projects, including relief and re-build efforts in the wake of natural and otherwise disasters. DotAsia oversees the '.Asia' top-level Internet domain name and is formed as an open consortium of 20 official top-level-domain authorities around the region. In the past two decades, Asia has developed into a global force in the commercial, political and cultural network. The .Asia domain aspires to embrace this dynamism in the Asia Century to become a nucleus, intersection and breeding ground for Internet activity and development in the region.

Organizing Committee List

Name	School/ Institute
Connie Siu M.H.	The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Jasmine Ko	Lingnan University
Mandy Chan	The University of Hong Kong
Martha Mai Hatch	City University of Hong Kong
Tina Chim	The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Guest List

Guest name	Title
George Chen	Head of Public Policy, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mongolia of Facebook
Donna Chu	Associate professor, School of Journalism and Communication, CUHK
Ho Wa, Wong	Candidate, 2020 Legislative Council Election (IT Functional Constituency)
Jenna Fung	Community Engagement Lead, DotAsia Organisation

Participant Statistics

This year, we have received *46 registrations* for the participation in our event. During the event, there were approximately *31 attendees* (highest) joined us on Zoom. Since we also streamed our entire event on our Facebook page, statistics have shown that our livestream video has reached *647 people*, and gained *761 total impressions* and *92 engagements*, including likes, comments and shares, (by 29 December 2020).

Since we did not imply a strict attendance rule to enhance participation of our event, and many attendees have joined us on Zoom or Facebook livestream without pre-registration, we did not have any evident statistics that can reflect the aspect of gender diversity this year. We wish to improve next year especially when there is a possibility that our event may have to continue as an online event in the upcoming year.

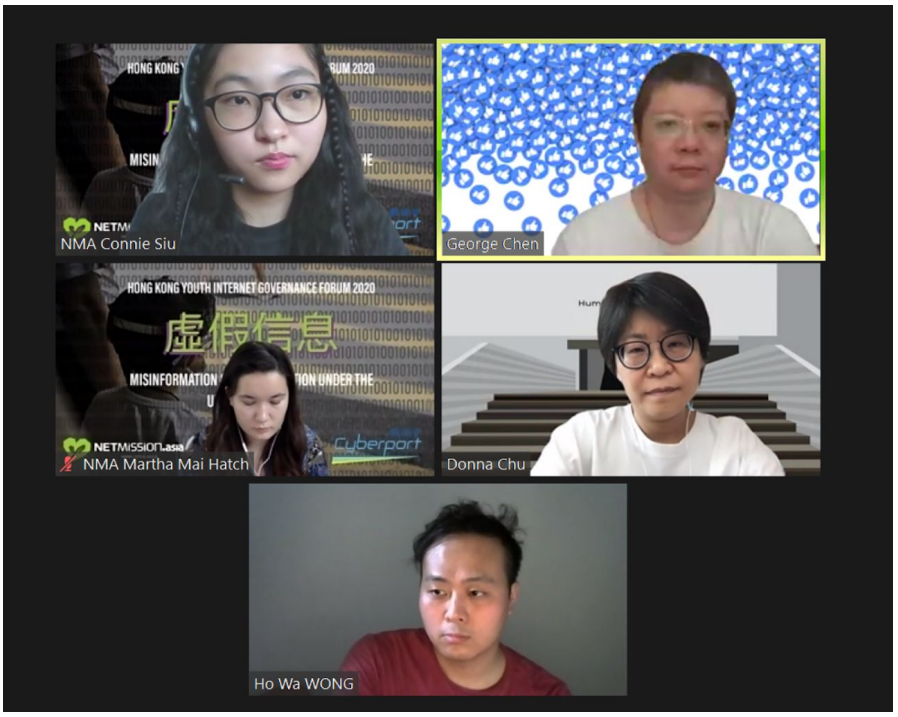
Program Agenda

Date: 11 October 2020 (Sunday)
Venue: Online

13:00-13:15	Registration & Networking	15 mins
13:15-13:35	Opening & Icebreaking	20 mins
13:35-14:15	Interactive discussion with participants	40 mins
14:15-14:25	Break	10 mins
14:25-15:15	*Capacity building session by speakers	50 min, 16 min @ speaker
	Facebook for a better-informed society (by Mr. George Chen, Head of Public Policy, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mongolia of Facebook, Private Sector)	
	How civic hacking combats disinformation (by Mr. Ho Wa, Wong, Candidate, 2020 Legislative Council Election (IT Functional Constituency), Public sector)	
	Fake news coping strategies (by Prof. Donna Chu, Associate professor, School of Journalism and Communication, CUHK, Academia)	
15:15-15:45	Panel discussion: Disinformation and misinformation under the uncertain times (by Mr. George Chen, Mr. Ho Wa, Wong, Prof. Donna Chu)	30 mins
15:45-16:00	Q&A	15 mins
16:00-16:15	Beginner's Guide to Future Engagement in Internet Governance (By Ms. Jenna Fung, Community Engagement Lead, DotAsia Organisation, Technical Community)	15 mins
15:30-15:45	Wrap-up	15 mins

Ice-breaking game

Interactive discussion with participants



Panel discussion

Participants and guest speakers

Panel Discussion Proposal

Panel discussion topic:
Disinformation and misinformation under the uncertain times

Session title: Disinformation and misinformation under the uncertain times
Session format: Panel discussion
Theme: Disinformation and misinformation

Proposers:
- Ms. Connie Siu M.H., Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Jasmine Ko, Student at the Lingnan University, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Mandy Chan, Student at the University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Martha Mai Hatch, Student at City University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Tina Chim, Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society

Speakers:
- Mr. George Chen, Head of Public Policy, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mongolia of Facebook, Private Sector
- Mr. Ho Wa, Wong, Candidate, 2020 Legislative Council Election (IT Functional Constituency), Public sector
- Prof. Donna Chu, Associate professor, School of Journalism and Communication, CUHK, Academia

Organising team:
- Ms. Connie Siu M.H., Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Jasmine Ko, Student at the Lingnan University, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Mandy Chan, Student at the University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Martha Mai Hatch, Student at City University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Tina Chim, Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society

Relevance:
In the midst of a global pandemic, Covid-19 is not the only thing that is spreading expeditiously. According to the United Nations, the world is also seeing another dangerous epidemic of misinformation that is affecting the lives of many more. Given that the spread of misinformation and disinformation takes place mostly

on online social media, it is necessary for us to discuss the issues from an internet governance perspective. These show that misinformation and disinformation is an urgent global issue which is highly relevant to internet governance.

Content of the session:
There has been an explosion of information on social media since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Various social media platforms have become a popular means for people to share and inform friends and families about the latest situation instantly and constantly. However, different from traditional media companies, the information on such platforms are generated by ordinary users, who are thought to have less responsibility to cross-check the facts. Not bound by strict rules, malicious users may be able to share misinformation and disinformation to mislead the crowd.

To address the problem, social media platforms begin employing third-party fact-checking agencies to help check the spread of misinformation and disinformation on their platform. However, the trustworthiness of the fact-checking report by the fact-checkers, and thus the effectiveness of this approach will rely heavily on the credibility and reliability of fact-checkers as well as the transparency in the selection criteria of the fact-checkers.

The session aims to raise the awareness of participants on the spread of misinformation and disinformation through the lens of different expertise offered by the speakers. This will also encourage them to reflect critically on the existing solution and inspire them to develop ways of improvement.

Discussion facilitation:
Moderators will be responsible for introducing the topic and facilitate the discussion by summarising the key points from guests and raising follow-up questions. Other organisers will be responsible for managing the time of each session in the workshop. The following will outline the structure of the whole workshop.

Introduction — 5 minutes
To connect the discussion with the capacity building sharing by our speakers, the moderator will first make a brief recap on the speakers' sharing during the capacity building session. Then, the moderator will initiate the discussion by asking guiding questions.

Discussion among panels — 30 minutes
Panellists will be given around 30 minutes to share their views on the topic. During the discussion, the moderators will facilitate the session by asking follow-up questions and inviting comments.

Q&A session — 15 minutes
The moderator will open the floor for participants to engage in the discussion. Participants can share their personal opinions, questions and through the online

chatting room. They will also be encouraged to raise hands and speak up remotely. By the end of the Q&A session, the moderator will make a quick summary of the whole discussion to conclude the session.

Moderator:

- Ms. Connie Siu M.H., Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society

Rapporteur:

- Ms. Martha Mai Hatch, Student at City University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society

Panel Discussion Report

Workshop Report:
Disinformation and misinformation under the uncertain times

Session title: Disinformation and misinformation under the uncertain times

Workshop organisers:

- Ms. Connie Siu M.H., Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Jasmine Ko, Student at the Lingnan University, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Mandy Chan, Student at the University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Martha Mai Hatch, Student at City University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society
- Ms. Tina Chim, Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society

Moderator:

- Ms. Connie Siu M.H., Student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society

Rapporteur:

- Ms. Martha Mai Hatch, Student at City University of Hong Kong, NetMission Ambassador, Civil Society

Key issues raised:

- How to increase the trust of the fact-checking system?
- What are the limitations of fact-checking on social media?
- What are the dilemmas faced when dealing with the identified false information?

- What is the role of individuals in combating misinformation and disinformation?

Discussion summary:

During the session, 3 guest speakers were invited in the capacity building session from three major stakeholder groups: Academia, Public sector and Private sector. Around 20 minutes were given for their presentation. After the capacity building session, the main moderator would open the floor for the free debate and discussion between different stakeholders. The following summarises the concerns raised by each stakeholder group during the capacity building session and summary of the panel discussion.

Capacity building session

Academia – Fakes News Coping Strategies

Prof. Donna Chu, an Associate professor from the School of Journalism and Communication of CUHK, has shared her studies on how youth cope with fake news nowadays. Interestingly, it was found that 36.3% of responding youngsters would still share fake news or hold a hesitant attitude in sharing fake news if it was beneficial to them. Academia group believed that youth interest and awareness in civic participation were associated with behaviours for coping with fake news. Academia suggested that more efforts should be put on enhancing youth confidence to facilitate promotion of more coping behaviours.

Public sector – How civic hacking combats disinformation

Mr. Wong Ho Wa candidate from 2020 Legislative Council Election (IT Functional Constituency), has shared the ways of the civic party to confront misinformation or disinformation. Public sector reinforced the needs of fact-checking platforms to protect the public from hoaxes, identify the source of disinformation and enable the public to check the facts and develop critical thinking. The public sector has demonstrated various examples from fact-checking resources in Asia and revealed examples related to the present pandemic situation. Public with different socioeconomic status, especially the youth, should embrace fact-checking platforms and put them into daily use.

Private Sector- Facebook for a better-informed society

Mr. George Chen, Head of Public Policy, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mongolia of Facebook, illustrated how to eliminate misinformation and disinformation from Facebook, a well-known social media. Owing to the high penetration rate in using Facebook in Hong Kong (93% Hong Kong Internet users got Facebook accounts and 97% of users only accessed Facebook using a mobile phone), the private sector stressed the needs of addressing the spread of fake news in media sites to protect our immature teenage users. Facebook has a diversified policy, for instance, handling hate speech, bullying or harassment, for which easily puts our youth at risk. Private sector emphasized the importance of creating a better-informed society by three main actions: remove and reduce misinformation or disinformation and inform problematic posts.

Panel discussion

During the panel discussion, panellists expressed their viewpoints over the limitation of the current fact-checking system and discussed the ways to improve the system and alternative solutions in addressing misinformation and disinformation online.

Trust of the system

When it comes to increasing the trust of the fact-checking system, the representative of civil society emphasised the importance of improving the mechanism. It was believed that more focus should be placed on developing a transparent and reliable system, rather than on the accuracy of every single outcome. The improved mechanism, which can withstand challenges and produce high-quality outcomes consistently, should be able to earn people's trust. Both the academia and the representative from the private sector support this view by stating that human mistakes were inevitable and efforts should be directed to improving the system as a whole.

One way to improve the mechanism would be to ensure the credibility and reliability of fact-checkers. The representative on private sectors shared the experience of Facebook, who worked closely with the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN) to ensure the quality of fact-checkers. In selecting competent fact-checkers for the fact-checking process, Facebook revealed that they relied on the assessment by IFCN, a professional organisation who reviews and renews memberships of fact-checking agencies based on their performance annually. It was also added that Facebook had established a system that allows users to report the fact-checker. Therefore, by reviewing the past performance and records of fact-checking agencies, private sectors could make sure to only renew licenses with reliable fact-checkers.

In addition, including different stakeholders, such as academia, civil society and fact-checkers, in the fact-checking process was also suggested as a viable way to improve the mechanism. It was believed that by having various stakeholders with different expertise overseeing the process, the accuracy of the fact-checking could be ensured.

Limitations of the system

Despite the significant role of fact-checking in debunking misinformation and disinformation only, there were a few limitations of the system.

The first of it was the difficulty in addressing the spread of misinformation and disinformation in the private messaging app. It was hard to verify information spread in private messaging apps unless someone reports them. To the civil society, it was undesirable to have private messages being constantly monitored due to privacy concerns. As a result, social media companies and civil society organisations could only take a rather passive role when it comes to managing the misinformation and disinformation on private messaging apps since they had to rely on enquiries or reports made by individual users.

Secondly, not all information could be verified. For example, rumours developed based on unverified information could not be fact-checked, unless further information was revealed after investigation.

Moreover, the fact-checking process done by human fact-checkers was said to be time-consuming. It was difficult to provide results instantly especially when there was no available technology to assist with the process.

Dilemmas faced when dealing with the identified false information

The private sector pointed out the difficulty in balancing the freedom of expression and the accuracy of the information. With the fact-checking process, the information could be verified and false information could be identified. Yet, further had to be discussed on how to handle the identified misinformation or disinformation without restricting freedom of expression online. Obviously, both the freedom of expression and the right to receive accurate information constitute part of the public interests. Yet, individuals could value each of them at a different degree. The representative from civil society added that opinions could be mixed with false information, which further complicates the issue. While some might support taking down certain controversial posts, some could act against such an act arguing that it was simply one's personal opinion. Such a dilemma was once again beyond the control of the fact-checking system.

Role of individuals

Because of the aforementioned limitations, it was agreed by all that the society would need more media literate and truth-seeking individuals to prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation online. The academia pointed out that the dominance of user-generated content and the participatory culture across social media platforms had diffused responsibility of providing accurate information. Different from the past, media companies were no longer the sole source of information and the only responsible party. When generating and sharing contents online, ordinary users bear the responsibility of verifying information. It was believed that individuals users who were critical over the information they received and care about truth in the first stage could help stop the spread of misinformation and disinformation online. Therefore, one of the keys would be to empower individuals users and equip them with the ability to verify information on their own.

Potential next steps/Key Takeaways

Our participants also shared their personal thoughts on the situation of fake news nowadays. Key discussion and major impacts are highlighted below.

Responsibility of fact-checking and influence on youths

Fact-checking is of utmost importance in communication and social media nowadays. Youth may be misled or even harmed by fake news. Yet, it was highlighted that none of the parties should own sole responsibilities on fact-checking. The government should not dominate the fact-checking system or 'fact-checking lab' from civic groups should not bear duties alone. To minimize misinformation and disinformation effectively, a multi-stakeholder approach

should be used to solve the problem. Efforts from various sectors should jointly work to build a harmonious and safe Internet world for our youth. Commercial companies should strengthen policies to halt the spreading of unverified information. Governments should introduce more practical platforms for fact-checking or ways for the general public to seek help who are affected by fake news.

HKyIGF 2020 recordings

You may access the recordings and learning materials of the event with the links provided below:

Facebook livestream recording	https://nma.asia/hkyigf2020-recording
Recordings & meeting chats	http://nma.asia/hkyigf-2020-recordings
PPT slides & learning materials	http://nma.asia/hkyigf-2020-materials