



NEWS DIGEST

MEITY Chair on Internet Policy

ICRIER's Internet Policy News Digest is your fortnightly update on Indian and global developments in cyber-security, digital economy, and Internet governance. This issue wraps up the last fortnight of 2018.

2018 was a year of heightened contestations between various stakeholders in the Internet policy area. Confrontations between State and 'Big-tech' were seen with companies testifying before governments, and new efforts to curb abuse of social media. States acting on competition related concerns have slapped enormous fines on Internet giants. Cybersecurity continued to remain in the spotlight with large scale data leaks and hacks coming to light and compromising the personal data of millions of people across the world. The expanding polarization of world-order extended to the cyberspace in 2018, which witnessed a widening chasm between countries over policy directions: The U.S, China and Russia rejected the 'Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace framework' that found signatories among 50 countries, including all of EU.

In India, debates on privacy and data protection were accompanied by the challenges with the Aadhaar system, and a burgeoning digital economy. The Justice Srikrishna Committee submitted its report along with new draft data protection legislation while sector regulators were quick with prescribing new regulations.

Last year the Internet reached an important milestone. ITU estimates show that little over half of the world population, around 3.9 billion people, will be using the Internet by the end of 2018. While we celebrate this, we must also remember 2019 brings with it our collective responsibility towards the unconnected, among other new challenges for the ecosystem.

These highlights and all archives for this news digest for 2018 are available at www.internetpolicy.in. Please email your valuable feedback and comments to internet.news@icrier.res.in.

GLOBAL

U.S. Air Force launches next-generation GPS satellites

The new satellites are expected to provide location information three times more accurately than the existing satellites. The GPS III satellites will also have stronger military signals that are harder to jam. The U.S. Air Force estimates 4 billion people worldwide will benefit from the launch.

Scientists at Kaspersky lab peg the value of individual data at around \$50 USD

The Lab investigates 'Dark Web' markets to estimate the value of personal data, its reseller value and how criminals use such data. The lab found criminals can sell an individual's complete digital life, from banking details to data from media platforms, for under \$50.

France set to enforce 'GAFA tax' on Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon from 1st of January 2019

The French finance ministry estimates the new tax will raise Euro500 million in its first year. 'GAFA' tax is named after Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon, the big-tech companies that are under its purview. The tax comes after failing to agree on an EU-wide levy.

Research finds years of hackers' eavesdropping activities on diplomatic communications of EU officials

A California based security firm Redwood City discovered the documents after it traced forensic clues in a malicious email it caught. The clues led to the discovery of an unsecured server with 1,100 EU diplomatic cables. The New York Times published some of the diplomatic communications it obtained.

Hackers working on behalf of the Chinese government breached into HP, IBM, hack into their clients

The attacks form part of a Chinese campaign called 'Cloudhopper', which attacks technology service providers to steal clients' corporate secrets. Cloudhopper, it is alleged, infiltrated HP and IBM multiple times in a breach that lasted months.

McAfee study finds IoT device Malware grew by 73% in third quarter of 2018

The study found an average of 480 new malware threats per minute, targeting IoT devices. Among other trends in cyber attacks, the study also found a 53% of spam botnet in the third-quarter was driven by 'Gamut', a spam-producing botnet.

Czech Prime Minister orders his government to stop using Huawei mobile phones

The announcement followed after Czech Republic's security agency's warning of a security threat posed by Huawei and ZTE. The country's Industry and Trade ministry also stated it will do the same.

INDIA

Broadband speed test reveals improvements in India's fixed broadband speeds

A report by Ookla finds that India's average speed of fixed broadband touched 23 Mbps, an increase of 50.4% from the previous year. For mobile, India's average download speeds touched 9.11 Mbps, an increase of 15.2% from previous year.

At least 10 Indian firms are set to receive funding from Google News Initiative

The news initiative by YouTube involves a disbursement of \$25 million to startups to support video journalism, strengthen newsroom online video capabilities, and promote novel formats for video journalism. Of the 87 recipients from 23 countries, 10 Indian companies were selected for funding under the initiative.

Union Home Ministry issues blanket order, allowing agencies to snoop on all computers

Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, allows the home ministry to issue orders to monitor and decrypt information stored on any computer, on grounds of internal security. The order authorizes 10 intelligence agencies to gain Home Secretary approval for each case of monitoring and/or decrypting computers.

India votes in favor of Russia's proposals on International Information Security at the UN

Adopted by the UN, the two Russian-proposed resolutions form the first code of conduct in the digital sphere. These are intended to regulate developments in ICT in relation to international security, and counter the use of ICT for criminal purposes.

MeitY releases draft rules that mandates platforms to publish rules, regulation, and privacy policy for users

The draft amendments, which are open for public comment until January 15, 2019, aim to curb the recruitment of terrorists, and the circulation of obscene content and fake news to tackle social discord such activities trigger. The draft also suggests digital platforms enable tracing of originators of information.

India extends invitation to Huawei for 5G trials, sparks cybersecurity concerns

For its 5G trials, which are to be held early next year, India invited major telecom equipment suppliers Nokia, Ericsson, and Samsung, but initially did not invite Huawei due to a risk of 'backdoor' access to Chinese cyber attacks through Huawei's equipment. Huawei's rival ZTE is excluded from the trials.

We'd love for you to spread the word! Do share contact details of those who may be interested in receiving ICRIER's newsletter, publications and notices regarding seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.

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