



January 31, 2019

ITI Comments to the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation

The Information Technology Industry Council (ITI) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation. ITI, the global voice of the tech sector, is the premier advocate and thought leader for the global information and communications technology (ICT) industry, and represents leading companies from across the ICT sector, including hardware, software, digital services, semiconductor, network equipment, cybersecurity and Internet companies. As a frequent facilitator between industry and government stakeholders, ITI appreciates the Panel's mission to advance proposals to strengthen digital cooperation and is excited to contribute to this discussion by highlighting our membership's work to bridge current divides in the digital landscape and increase access for all possible stakeholders.

Values and Mechanisms

ITI believes the values of inclusion (opening opportunities within the industry to individuals of all backgrounds) and access (enabling universal use of technological products through broadband availability, regardless of location or socioeconomic status) are the foundation of full participation in the digital landscape. Of additional importance to us is consumer trust, which includes both full transparency as to what the public's data will be used for and why and an assurance that the industry will do everything it can to keep sensitive personal information out of harm's way.

To properly weave these values into the digital landscape, the principles of transparency and consensus must be respected. To effectively work with governmental organizations and other stakeholders, industry must feel empowered to properly disclose elements of their business operations, such as security vulnerabilities. To effectively work with industry and other non-governmental stakeholders, governments must facilitate a consensus-based model where every participant has the opportunity to provide input on policy and implementation. This means emphasizing adherence to global, not country-based, standards, and the continued deployment of public-private-partnerships to leverage the expertise that industry can provide to governmental organizations.

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Leveraging All Stakeholders to Facilitate Digital Cooperation

ITI has identified two main barriers that prevent otherwise-interested stakeholders from participating in the greater digital cooperation sphere. The first is the more obvious socio-economic barrier, encompassing those who do not have the means to access new digital innovations or the educational opportunities to develop these innovations within the industry as an employee. The second is an informational barrier, comprised of those who have an interest in technological issues but lack the technical or governance-related knowledge to meaningfully participate in discussions (recent controversies regarding data privacy and protection have illuminated this problem).

A global multi-stakeholder forum that builds on existing ecosystems is the best way to patch these blind spots. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the OECD's Committee on Digital Economy Policy (CDEP), and the International Telecommunication Union can effectively work in tandem to provide both rigorous analysis as contribution to discussions as well as a broad, inclusive platform for the conversations themselves. While ITI recommends that the High-Level Panel continue its work through these existing mechanisms instead of establishing a new one from the ground up, there is room for each of these forums to work to bring these forgotten stakeholders into the fold, between scholarship programs and publications that can be accessible to new audiences.

Taking Action to Share Our Values

ITI is eager to share the progress our membership has made in bridging the digital divide and bringing the forgotten stakeholders identified in our last section into the fold. Over the years, our companies have developed programs that maximize the number of those that can not only enjoy the benefits of digital connection, but also can build a high-paying career in the industry itself. [Rolling Study Halls](#), a Google-led pilot initiative that equips school buses with wi-fi and on-board educators, has reached 16 school districts in rural areas of the country that struggle to provide broadband. The [Adobe Digital Academy](#) provides career-switchers and others of nontraditional backgrounds scholarships to attend an intensive technical skills workshop as well as the opportunity for employment after the training. With these combined efforts, the industry is committed to providing opportunities to those who would otherwise be left behind

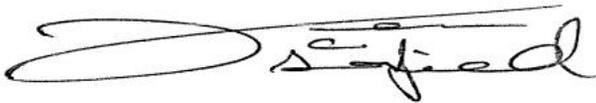
The ICT sector has become increasingly aware of the value of training our future workforce. IBM's [Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools](#) provide technical education to high school students at no cost in the U.S., Morocco, Australia and Taiwan. Additionally, ITI members have participated in preliminary discussions around the Government Effectiveness Advanced Research (GEAR) Center recently proposed by the

White House, which would leverage expertise from industry and academia to reskill the federal workforce.

Driven by a goal to increase transparency and expand its reach to those eclipsed by the “informational barrier”, ITI recently released its [Framework to Advance Interoperable Rules \(FAIR\) on Privacy](#). This framework advocates for full transparency over how a user’s data is collected and managed, including holding companies accountable for responsible data usage. ITI’s membership has also acted to [promote](#) democratic principles in elections around the world and to develop [standards](#) to insure that the development of technologies like AI is beneficial and not deleterious to society’s well-being. These are a few of many examples of our work to invite consumers of technology into policy debates and consider their interests.

ITI would like to thank the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation for its commitment to promoting dialogue between all necessary stakeholders around these important issues. Please continue to consider ITI as a resource on these issues, and do not hesitate to contact us with any questions regarding this submission.

Sincerely,



Dean C. Garfield

President and CEO

Information Technology Industry Council