

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT 108604: STRENGTHENING CYBER POLICY RESEARCH CENTERS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH (LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN)

Mariscal, Judith;

Mayne, Gloria;Ruiz del Rio, Alejandra;

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**Strengthening Cyber Policy Research Centers in the Global South
(Latin America and the Caribbean)
Project Number: 108604**

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By: Gloria Mayne Davó, Project Coordinator
Alejandra Ruiz del Rio, Project Coordinator
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Executive Director
Judith Mariscal, judith.mariscal@cide.edu
Project Coordinator(s)
Gloria Mayne, gloria@centrolatam.digital
Alejandra Ruiz del Rio, alejandra@centrolatam.digital



Centro Latam Digital
Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas A.C. (CIDE)
Carretera México-Toluca 3655, Altavista
01210 Ciudad de México, CDMX, México

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Executive Summary

In January 2018, IDRC awarded Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas A.C. (CIDE) funding to create the cyber policy center Centro Latam Digital (CLD). The Center's objective is to generate rigorous, evidence-based research to provide policymakers in Latin America with the capacity to design and implement inclusive policies that best respond to a new generation of technologies within the regional context. After two years since its creation, CLD plays a critical role in shaping evidence-based digital policy in support of human rights, democracy, social inclusion and economic development at the local, national and regional levels.

The specific objectives of this grant were to:

- support the cyber policy center in the generation of knowledge in key areas of cyber policy such as innovation, cybersecurity and digital rights to consolidate its role as an innovative thought leader at the national and regional levels;
- support the development of capacities of the cyber policy center in cyber policy issue areas in which there is limited knowledge; and
- strengthen the advocacy role of the cyber policy center in national, regional and global debates on cyber policy.

In the final stage of its pilot phase, CLD advanced on its core activities and built up its recognition as a reputable producer of digital policy research and thought leadership in the region. The CLD team focused primarily on the creation of a community of scholars, expert civil society organizations and multilateral institutions working in digital policy for development in various countries of the region. This community has collaborated with CLD in the advancement of each of the three fundamental objectives of the center:

- Research strategy: producing actionable research relevant to emerging and pressing issues in the digital policy space. This strategy has been developed by identifying windows of opportunity for policy impact and knowledge gaps around topics such as electronic voting, digital identity, cybersecurity and frameworks for internet legislation in the region.
- Capacity building: producing workshops, international academic forums, thematic seminars, executive courses and other activities to strengthen the capacities of legislators, public sector officials, civil society organizations, media and other academics around digital policy.
- Dialogue: increasing CLD's visibility as a generator of knowledge on digital policies in the region by strengthening existing networks and engaging with new strategic partners to develop research and outreach activities for identified audiences, in alignment with CLD's communications objectives and institutional goals.

In addition to continuing its ongoing research as stated in its latest [Interim Technical Report](#), CLD has carried out activities around policy windows and the changing landscape over the past six months. In February 2020, Centro Latam Digital held a workshop for the Science and Technology Commission at the Mexican Senate, providing 30 senate staff with the necessary knowledge for drafting and revising legislation related to cybersecurity and other ICT subject areas.

Taking advantage of the policy window in Mexico around the Guidelines for Traffic Management and Network Administration presented by the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT), CLD convened a number of net neutrality specialists and advocates to discuss the risks and opportunities presented by these guidelines and recommendations to IFT. Participants included leaders from civil society organizations, tech companies, internet governance specialists and academics. In this rare occasion where all stakeholders were exchanging different and often opposite points of view, CLD was able to find points of consensus and provide recommendations to IFT.

A key objective for CLD since its inception was to provide a platform for Latin American scholars to be able to publish and disseminate their research results in their own language. The need was to fill a void in the region with the creation of an academic journal: the [Latin American Journal on Economy and Digital Society](#). In July 2020, CLD will launch the first open-access, indexed journal published online in Spanish, English and Portuguese to disseminate high quality research on digital policies in the region. CLD finalized a strategic partnership with the University of San Andres through its Center for Technology and Society (CeTyS) with the aim of strengthening the Journal's academic backbone and regional reach. The journal is led by an editorial committee composed of three academic institutions, CIDE in Mexico and Universidad de San Andrés in Argentina as well as the Center for Telecommunications Studies in Latin America (Cet.La), with Centro Latam Digital as the umbrella institution of the Journal.

Due to the Covid-19 health emergency, CLD was unable to proceed with planning and organizing our annual CPR LATAM event which would have taken place in Mexico City in June 2020. Instead, CLD focused efforts and resources to provide knowledge around the impacts generated by Covid-19 and the mitigation efforts by different governments in the region. Centro Latam Digital invited researchers on topics of digital policy to participate in the development of research papers and policy reports to generate knowledge about how information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been used to face this crisis in Latin America as well as the continued impact of these measures on the wellbeing of people in the region. Through these collaborations, CLD is currently conducting research on misinformation, data protection and privacy, online work and education and the gender gap in online labor markets in the region in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. The aim of this series of research papers, policy briefs and webinars is to provide knowledge to policy makers who are facing the ongoing challenge of introducing effective policies and public services in response to the pandemic.

Also contributing to our efforts to generate knowledge around the global health emergency, Centro Latam Digital launched its first podcast with a seven episode series focused on ICT and Covid-19. The series focuses on topics including privacy, digital gap, gender-based violence, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and the economic impact of the pandemic in Latin America.

Over the timespan of this grant, CLD has built a trajectory of relevant, regionally specific research, capacity building activities and convenings. Through these activities we have reached key stakeholders and worked towards growing our research capacity in order to increase our policy influence in the region. CLD has also made important strides in terms of institutional strengthening, which will be a key element to ensure greater presence in the region as we move forward to Phase II of this center. The following sections provide further details on CLD activities over the past six months, as well as our lessons learned from the pilot phase and plans for next steps.

Background

While new digital technologies provide immense opportunities for the Global South to advance in long-standing development goals, they also present challenges. The emergence of the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence and data analytics have increased the risks and stakes of inequality and the vulnerability of the poor and marginalized populations such as indigenous groups and women. Affordability, digital services, and more broadly, cyberpolicies in Latin America must include a framework that mirrors new technological environments and thus enables economic innovation that can be scaled on.

Along with these challenges, digital rights continue to be infringed throughout the region as nations are struggling to understand how to ensure data protection and privacy, how to balance data markets, and control how to adapt to new realities in the digital sphere. If these challenges are addressed, the region could experience a leapfrogging process towards development based on innovation that would generate long searched development outcomes such as better quality health and education, effective political participation, civil rights and human development.

As the number of internet users in the region increases and ICT innovations continue to emerge, local, national and regional ICT policies in Latin America must consider the implications of a dynamic cyberspace policy environment and be able to respond with appropriate regulations to protect users and promote effective adoption and innovation. Therefore, the former research network *Regional Dialogue on the Information Society (DIRSI)* recognized that a key challenge in the region with respect to digital policy is to create an inclusive digital society that fosters digital rights, network openness, cybersecurity and promotes economic growth.

Given the evolving nature of ICT innovation, digital policies in Latin America must be approached locally relevant to take into account the various dimensions. Global developments in ICT innovation and digital policy have regional and national implications, and there are several knowledge gaps, and academic discussion is dominated by actors from the Global North.

DIRSI together with Telecom CIDE, a former research program at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) academic institution based in Mexico City which, for 15 years, served as a thought leader and world renowned telecommunications policy and regulation research center, identified the challenges and opportunities for evidence-based research as well as training and generating dialogue on new issues associated with the fourth industrial revolution. In response to an IDRC call for proposals under the Cyber Policy Centers program, these organizations joined forces to respond to this call and proposed to create a new research center based in Mexico City at CIDE with the mission of generating knowledge and building a community that responds to this new technological context.

The Cyber Policy Centers initiative at IDRC aims to strengthen independent policy research institutions across the Global South by providing funding to develop research and policy capacity in pressing cyber policy issue areas including innovation, digital rights and cybersecurity. CIDE was chosen as the host institution for this research center under the Cyber Policy Centers portfolio, given its institutional capacity and reputation for its 27 years in producing independent, interdisciplinary and scientifically rigorous knowledge for Mexico and Latin America.

Project objectives

In January 2018, IDRC awarded Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas A.C. (CIDE) funding for the creation of a cyber policy research center. This initiative aims to provide policymakers in Latin America with high-quality, evidence-based research to design informed policy decisions and effectively respond to the rapid technological changes. The specific objectives of this grant were to:

- support the creation of a cyber policy center dedicated to producing knowledge in key cyber policy areas to strengthen its role as an innovative thought leader at a regional level;
- support the development of research capacity of the center in the aforementioned cyber policy issue areas; and
- strengthen the center's ability to influence national, regional and global debates around cyber policy in Latin America.

Stemming from the objectives of this grant, Centro Latam Digital (CLD) implemented IDRC funding to build on previous research and capacity of former initiatives Telecom and DIRSI. CLD is an academic research center that generates knowledge, strengthens technical capacities and promotes dialogue around the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for economic, political and social development in Latin America. It aims to identify opportunities for better design and implementation of effective digital policies that strengthen the adoption of information technologies as an engine of social inclusion, productivity and prosperity in the region.

Centro Latam Digital implements research and capacity building strategies in the areas of digital innovation, digital rights, and cybersecurity, with a transversal gender lens. Our main objectives are to:

- Generate independent research: offer high quality, evidence-based research to inform the design and implementation of digital policies in the region.
- Build capacity: strengthen the knowledge and capacity of key stakeholders in the region for the adoption of ICT as tools for social and economic development.
- Convene: bring together different actors across sectors to generate dialogue and collaboration among key players so that together they can contribute to the development of digital policies in the region.

We strive to do this through:

- Applicable research: evidence-based interdisciplinary research
- Capacity building: executive courses and workshops for policymakers, regulators and issue-area experts
- Dialogue: public online and in-person seminars, networking events and regional expert forums.

Progress towards milestones

Building on the activities reported on CLD's interim report presented in January 2020, the following section provides a detailed summary of the process undergone during the final six months of the project.

DIGITAL RIGHTS

Policy window: define guidelines to net neutrality policy in Mexico

Net neutrality and its technical, legal, economic and political implications continues to be a focus of debate in the internet policy arena. The outcome of the 2014 Mexican telecommunications reform included a law which called for the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT) to issue general guidelines for net neutrality applicable to internet service providers. After five years of the introduction of this law, the IFT issued a draft for the Guidelines for Traffic Management and Network Administration in December 2019 for public consultation through March 2020.

This generated much discussion and concern among different stakeholders including digital rights organizations and researchers as these guidelines were considered to be a threat to net neutrality. All of the ICT community in Mexico agreed that these guidelines presented serious risks to privacy and personal data protection. To address these concerns and provide recommendations to IFT for improving the guidelines with a multi stakeholder approach, Centro Latam Digital held a one-day workshop at CIDE on February 25th. This workshop brought together digital rights experts from civil society organizations, think tanks and academia as well as representatives from big tech companies and internet service providers. Through the discussions, participants were able to express their concerns around the guidelines and draft recommendations for areas of improvement. Although the group was very heterogeneous and represented multiple perspectives, not all in agreement, we were able to produce an output with joint opinions on the weaker points of the guidelines that need to be strengthened in order to promote net neutrality in Mexico. [Please see Annex A for the full workshop agenda](#), [Annex B for a list of participants](#) and [Annex C](#) for CLD's official statement following the event. The consensus points are summarized below:

- The guidelines have to give legal certainty to the different parts of the internet ecosystem. It is necessary to give clarity on what practices are allowed, which practices are subject to regulation and what are the procedures for addressing norms violations. In the preliminary design of lines there is a lack of definition of key concepts that can result in misinterpretations and have effects contrary to the objectives of public interest.
- These guidelines need to address freedom of expression, discrimination and differentiated services, innovation, privacy, digital inclusion, censorship and transparency.
- Experts agreed that it is essential to rethink the guidelines working backwards from end objectives, and include a human rights, economic growth and development perspective.
- It is important to create a diagnosis based on evidence to give clarity on the current situation of the country and complement it with an analysis of best practices, definitions and rules that have been implemented in other contexts as well as the impacts that these rules have generated.

IFT received the suggestions gathered by CLD as well as other general concerns raised by private and social sectors about the potential negative impact of the proposed guidelines. In response, IFT organized a series of virtual round tables with experts to address the various areas of concern and improvement upon the guidelines. Alejandro Pisanty, our lead researcher en Cybersecurity participated in these dialogues and shared some of the concerns and discussion points that were covered in the workshop. His participation on these round tables can be seen on IFT's Youtube channel which can be accessed through the link in [Annex D](#).

Digital ID Systems

During the grant extension period, CLD concluded a preliminary study focused on digital identity systems. The study analyzed the current state and necessary modifications to the regulatory framework of countries in order to effectively incorporate digital identity systems. In an initial stage, the study covered Mexico, Uruguay and Argentina, three diverse countries with different frameworks that have made progress towards this objective. This report also evaluates other considerations that need to be made such as data privacy and cybersecurity for these systems to be reliable and secure. This study has been done with the aim of providing useful information for governments that are in the process of incorporating these digital ID systems. The document underwent a review and was revised. Over the following months CLD will disseminate this study with the aim of providing a roadmap for the countries that have been included in the assessment in terms of the laws and policies that need to be incorporated or adapted if a digital ID system is to be introduced. This study may be a stand-alone document or a series of studies of national cases; we aim to broaden the scope of the study by including more countries in the analysis and including different use cases and their implications, i.e. digital commerce, cross border services and others. A preliminary draft of the study can be found in [Annex E](#).

Adding to CLD's work on Digital ID systems, executive director Judith Marisal was invited by congressional representative Javier Ariel Hidalgo Ponce to participate in an open parliament session on April 30, 2020 with select Mexican Congress officials to provide input on the newly proposed General Law of Digital ID and Citizenship. In her intervention, she made reference to the conclusions in CLD's Digital ID study. She pointed out that while digital identity systems offer great benefits in terms of improving accessibility of public services, strengthening citizen participation and enabling the efficient allocation of public resources to vulnerable populations, the implementation must reconcile the tensions that exist between the right to identity, the right to privacy and access to one's digital citizenship and personal data. Thus, her recommendations were to deepen the specificities in the sections of the Law in order to avoid ambiguities that give rise to interpretations that result in actions that go against its original objectives. To see a summary of CLD's recommendations presented to congress on this law proposal, see [Annex F](#).

Analysis of the use of technologies in the wake of the Covid-19 emergency

In the context of the current Covid-19 global health emergency, new questions arise about the possible uses of technology to address public health problems and mitigate risks. But they also resurface old questions that are even more relevant in a context of crisis, such as the issue of digital divide and inequality of access to connectivity. In the interest of contributing to the understanding of the impacts generated by Covid-19 and the mitigation efforts by different governments, CLD reached out to digital policy researchers to conduct rapid response research projects that will generate immediate knowledge around how ICTs have been used in the context of the pandemic in Latin America as well as the impact these measures have on people's lives. Our objective was to generate timely and focused research with potential to inform and impact public policy in the short and medium term. The issue areas included mis and disinformation during the pandemic, the use of contact tracing applications and data protection and privacy, the impact of the digital divide on remote work and distance learning availability and quality as well as data for evidence-based policy decision-making. For this COVID-19 rapid response series, CLD formed collaborations with reputable researchers within our network and across the region, and selected the following studies that are currently underway:

- **Analysis of social inequalities in Argentina in times of pandemic: a study of access, connectivity and the adoption of ICT in the educational and labor context** (Sebastián Benítez Larghi, Argentina). This study will analyze the impact of remote labor and education policies in Argentina in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It seeks to evaluate the ways in which connectivity access and the adoption of ICT conditions the practice and continuity of teleworking and education, and evaluates the reinforcement of existing social inequalities including social class, gender and geographic region.
- **Mapping Disinformation and Confusion in Brazil in the context of COVID-19** (Virgílio Almeida and Louise Marie Hurel, Brazil): This study seeks to understand how pro-science and anti-science influencers and political figures have been propagating confusion in Brazil in the context of COVID-19 through Instagram. The results of this research project will help health and sanitary authorities to understand the impact of social media on the behavior of different groups in society and will provide a powerful contribution to the visibility of disinformation and confusion dynamics within challenging socio-political environments such as Brazil.
- **Technologies in the face of the pandemic: analysis of data management, the role of intermediaries and privacy in applications developed by Latin American governments** (Paola Ricaurte Quijano and Jacobo Nájera, Mexico): Analyzing health technology applications developed by Latin American governments to address SARS-CoV-2 virus, including self diagnoses and targeted health messaging. This study takes a forensic methodology to analyze design principles, data management and privacy policies that may pose a threat to user rights.

During the upcoming months, CLD will be disseminating results of these studies through various communications and outreach strategies in order to reach policy makers and influence relevant ICT, labor and education policies as well as private employers, advocacy organizations and media. Please see [Annex G](#), [Annex H](#) and [Annex I](#) to read preliminary drafts of these studies.

Within a broader lens CLD has produced a series of shorter policy reports on issues that have resurfaced as a result of the pandemic. These include barriers for the use of ICT services in the context of the pandemic. For example, under this health and economic crisis, some governments are displaying funds through electronic means to vulnerable populations, and a large segment of the poor are financially excluded. Thus, one of the reports examines digital payments and its barriers. Other reports evaluate: infrastructure deficit, gender gaps in online work and ICT and education.

- **Employment and the digital gender gap in Latin America:** This brief helps bridge a knowledge gap around gender differences in online employment as a result of ICT adoption and internet use in Latin America. It examines the gender gap in internet use, job tendencies and responsibilities among different genders and age and education levels as factors that significantly impact the digital gender gap. Please see [Annex J](#) for a preliminary draft.
- **Covid-19 in America: actions for connectivity in the face of the pandemic:** This report highlights specific actions in these countries compared to those carried out by the US Federal Communications Commission, including: free access to pandemic-related content; measures to prevent internet service cuts; extra provisions in data packages; the implementation of mobile applications for monitoring the pandemic and the adoption of virtual platforms for online education. The report emphasizes that even with these innovative measures, lack of broadband access continues to be the major factor in creating barriers to connectivity and implementing these strategies. Please see [Annex K](#) for a preliminary draft.

- **Fintech in Latin America: ¿What are the barriers to entrance and innovation?:** This brief shows key findings from a recent study that analyzes how competitiveness agencies in Latin America are challenged by the rapid changing landscape of digital technologies. It highlights how eliminating barriers to competition in the financial technology sphere promotes entry of new actors, innovation and facilitates financial inclusion. The study looks at legal frameworks in Argentina, Chile, Brasil, and Peru and Mexico and identifies policies and infrastructure deficits that hinder the ability for financial technologies to serve as alternatives to traditional banking and offer other gateways for financial inclusion of marginalized populations. Please see [Annex L](#) for a preliminary draft.

These policy reports were created to disseminate early key results of more in depth publications by the authors in order to quickly reach policy makers and highlight priority policy recommendations. These policy reports will be published and released during summer 2020 and will be complemented by a series of webinars with the authors to give greater context to the topics addressed in the briefs and inform a live discussion with civil society organizations, academics and interested publics across the region to generate a better understanding of the importance of these topics.

Electronic Voting Study

Over the past months, CLD's affiliate researchers, Mercedes Albornoz and Edgardo Martinez finalized a policy report that compares the different existing electronic voting systems that have been used in different countries in Latin America. This study analyses the existing legislation, specific use cases and refers to the security and privacy concerns of said systems in order to weigh in on the convenience of implementing them vis-a-vis the associated risks. The intended audience for this policy report are governments that are in the process of creating legislation to facilitate electronic voting, particularly for public consultations. This raises serious concerns around the possibilities of populists/authoritarian governments using these mechanisms without the proper system in place to safeguard democracy. This report is also intended for organizations who are doing advocacy around electronic voting and the concerns this raises around security and privacy. With congressional elections across the region in 2020 and presidential elections expected in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile in 2021, CLD will incorporate key findings from this report in future communications and outreach activities to inform legislators who will propose, analyze and vote on initiatives to promote electronic voting systems. Additionally, we aim to have this report be referenced and used in the discussions around the digital citizenship bills that have been introduced in the federal level and more recently in the local level in Mexico City, for example. A working document for this policy report can be found in [Annex M](#).

Podcast Series

Centro Latam Digital launched its first podcast on Anchor, Spotify and Soundcloud listening platforms with a seven episode series focused on ICT and Covid-19. This podcast addresses some of the most outstanding, current topics on the digital realm in Latin America and its impact on our lives. Jimena Moreno, digital rights researcher at Centro Latam Digital and CIDE, is the host of this series and interviews experts in relevant thematic areas, representatives of civil society organizations and academic specialists from across the region to examine the risks and opportunities associated with digital innovation. The most recent episodes have focused on privacy, connectivity, digital gender gap and gender-based violence, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Latin America. Our most recent guests include: Miguel Morachimo and Carlos

Guerrero of Hiperderecho; Maria Paz Canales of Derechos Digitales; Raul Katz of Telecom Advisory Services; women's rights specialist Aimée Vega; Carolina Aguerre of the Center for Technology and Society at University of San Andres, Argentina; Claudio Lucena of the Catholic Portuguese University and Diplo AI Lab and cybersecurity specialist Nicolás Castellón of Capgemini advisors. This podcast has contributed to CLD's alternative content strategies and has served as a partnership mechanism and platform for dialogue with other researchers, universities and civil society leaders across Latin America.

For CLD, the production of this podcast has been an opportunity to be on the radar as a communicator of knowledge on digital policies in Latin America as well as to strengthen relationships with specialists on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, gender, and privacy across the region. This podcast has also served as a platform for partners to share their expertise and highlight specific cases through digestible and engaging content directed at a variety of audiences including civil society leaders, advocacy groups, public officials, academics, philanthropic institutions, thought leaders, students, and the interested general public in the region. Please see [Annex N](#) for the full series.

CYBERSECURITY

Mexico Senate Workshop on the Principles for Effective Internet Legislation

To complement CLD's suggestions for improvements on the cybersecurity bill submitted to the Mexican Senate in fall 2019 by the Commission of Science and Technology, we continued to work with the Commission to design and implement a capacity building session on cybersecurity legislation best practices and broader digital policy subject areas. The workshop "Principles for Effective Internet Legislation, IT Security and ICTs" was held over three days during the week of February 24-28, 2020 and provided senators and their staff with the necessary knowledge for drafting and revising legislation related to cybersecurity and the digital sphere. Approximately 30 senate staffers participated in five sessions on the following topics: internet principles and governance; IT, Internet and cybersecurity; legal aspects of the internet and cyberspace; and principles of effective ICT legislation, led by issue area specialists from universities, private consulting firms and advocacy nonprofits in CLD's network across the region including: Luis Fernanda García of R3D; Carlos Guerrero of Hiperderecho; Alejandro Pisanty, lead cybersecurity researcher at CLD and professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Fátima Cambroner, Carlos Estrada, and Fernando Dworak. Please refer to [Annex O](#) for a complete description of the workshop and syllabus. A post-workshop evaluation which was sent to the participants provided positive feedback on the structure, content, and speakers of the sessions. Across the board, respondents agreed that the quality of the information presented was very useful and relevant to their line of work. While they expressed interest in participating in more workshops organized by CLD on these topics, they noted specific interest in learning more about data protection laws, comparative policy to learn from other countries' experiences and best practices, and how to build awareness in the public sector on the importance of digital policy for development.

CLD made plans to replicate this workshop in partnership with the University of San Andrés in Argentina for legislators from the incoming administration. This, however, has been postponed due to current restrictions on travel and gatherings. CLD is planning on developing an online version of

this workshop in the near future to continue building these capacities in the region and to reach a wider audience with policymakers in various Latin American countries.

Special Publication | Principles for Internet Legislation: framework for online and offline conduct, and a successful experience of the impact of legislative power

Policy makers and legislators all over the world are facing a scenario in which there is a need to develop regulation that is effective in terms of protecting citizen's rights and liberties as well as preventing cybercrime while avoiding over regulation which stifles innovation. In this context, CLD developed a set of preliminary guidelines to provide legislators with a framework that can help demystify the process of developing regulation for online behavior and to avoid mistakes such as drafting regulation that is technology specific or not enforceable. The purpose of this work is to provide general criteria, based on the technical foundations of the internet, which serves as a guide for lawmakers, advisors, consultants, and citizens in general on the potential impacts of the internet on the wellbeing of society. It contributes to a dialogue between technical specialists and legislators working on the design, implementation, administration, operation and evaluation of technologies and digital systems in their countries. Preliminary concepts from this guideline were featured in the Senate workshop held in February 2020. To review a preliminary draft please see [Annex P](#).

A final version of this document will be integrated to become a joint publication of a book between CLD and Instituto Belisario Domínguez, the Mexican Senate's institute for legislative studies. The aim of this joint publication is to carry out a critical and interdisciplinary assessment of the current situation in Mexico with respect to digital rights, citizenship and government in order to identify progress and achievements and pending issues in the legislature and public policy agendas. This book will provide Senators with the necessary context and background to draft and revise legislation that will impact the digital policy ecosystem in Mexico and other countries. Centro Latam Digital provided the outline for this joint publication and the center's affiliated researchers are producing five of its thirteen chapters. The book will be distributed in the fall of 2020.

Analytical model for Cybersecurity governance

CLD produced an analytical model for cybersecurity governance. This study provides deeper knowledge on the political economy that goes into play in the development of laws, policies and programs that pertain to a country's cybersecurity. This study highlights the cases of Brazil and Argentina, however the framework is designed to be applied to different countries in order to provide a comparative analysis that can be useful not only at the country level but also to find similarities and differences in cybersecurity governance regionally and globally. This study provides information about the effects of cybersecurity governance in producing specific outcomes in terms of policy and how these outcomes address or fail to address cybersecurity. Through this work CLD has made a contribution to the literature of cybersecurity that serves as useful evidence for the work of civil society groups working to advocate for digital security in their countries. Please see [Annex Q](#) for a preview of this study.

Gender and Cybersecurity in Latin America

CLD affiliate researcher Aileen Aguero produced a research paper titled "Gender and Cybersecurity in Latin America" focusing on women's online security, particularly in terms of digital violence, cyberbullying, cyberattacks and privacy after discussing opportunities for gender-focused research

with Gender at Work. In this analysis, data used from DIRSI's previous AfterAccess surveys point towards a high prevalence of online violence incidents, with one third of social networks users reporting online harassment, attacks and violence. In addition, results point to differences in perception of online vulnerabilities such as exposure to malware and possible privacy violations. In this case, female respondents appear to be more concerned about these issues than male respondents. This is an important finding because it can disincentivize users, and in this case more women from using the internet and adopting digital platforms. Although awareness of online safety risks is necessary, it is important that users also have knowledge about adequate safety practices and tools that ensure online safety so that the perceived risks do not outweigh the benefits. This research has been completed and is undergoing a final editing process before being published broadly on CLD communications platforms. CLD will conduct direct outreach to gender-focused advocacy groups and feminist networks to share this knowledge so that it can be used as a tool in their policy influence efforts. Please see a preliminary version of this study in [Annex R](#).

DIGITAL INNOVATION

empatIA

On April 16th we announced the official launch of [EmpatIA](#), an initiative coordinated by ILDA and Centro Latam Digital, with the support of IDRC and the Inter-American Development Bank. This initiative seeks to promote the development of applications and prototypes for solving developing goals in public policy and services in Latin America through the implementation of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies. The launch was announced with a call for proposals which was directed at actors from the academic, private or civil society sectors, in partnership with government entities. We invited organizations working on the frontlines of data, artificial intelligence and the key ICT issues in our region to apply. Applications were reviewed by specialist in the area and the criteria selection had a special focus on projects working on climate change, gender inequality, natural resource management, democratic institutions or government transparency and emergency management in the context of #COVID19. Out of 79 candidates, 18 finalists were selected and continued to the interview phase. We are currently in the final stages of evaluation to select the projects that will be integrated into the first cohort of projects supported by EmpatIA.

INCREASING VISIBILITY AND STRENGTHENING NETWORKS

Centro Latam Digital is an active member of the Feminist AI Research Network, led by the <A+> Alliance, Gender at Work and IDRC. Being part of this network has allowed CLD to incorporate a stronger gender lens in its research areas as well as its institutional objectives. By connecting with other leaders in AI and digital policy specialists across the Global South, CLD has learned from a variety of points of view, experiences and initiatives that are directly addressing social inclusion and gender. This has also provided the opportunity for CLD to speak about its work and connect with other like minded institutions at a global level. As CLD continues to conduct rigorous research on the digital divide, privacy threats and AI, we will incorporate the knowledge and best practices discussed through this network to our recommendations for the design and implementation of inclusive, feminist policies.

Latin American Journal on Economics and Digital Society

Since its inception Centro Latam Digital had the goal of creating a space for academic reflection that could contribute to further understanding of the economic, technological, political and sociological impacts of ICTs in the particular context of Latin America. There was no academic journal, to the best of our knowledge, exclusively focused on digital policies in Latin America and published in Spanish and Portuguese. This is a significant barrier for many professors who chose to write in languages other than English. CLD has spent the last six months in the creation process of the Latin America Journal on Economics and Digital Society, which is set to launch on July 15, 2020. This is an online academic journal that aims to disseminate original, evidence-based research to influence the design and implementation of effective and inclusive digital policies in the region.

The process of creating this journal was not straightforward. In order to achieve regional coverage and impulse, we considered it was important to launch this journal with another academic institution in the region. After trying out a collaboration with other possible associates, CLD finally found a good match with the Universidad de San Andrés.

This will be the first open-access, indexed journal published online in Spanish, English and Portuguese that disseminates high quality research on regional digital policies in Latin America. While the Journal will publish issues twice a year, articles can be submitted online (revistalatom.digital) all year round and will be approved and published on a rolling basis. In addition, each article and issue will have a Creative Commons license - 4.0 and be indexed on reputable scholarly platforms such as Latindex, Google Scholar.

The editorial consortium is a partnership between CLD, CIDE, Center for Studies on Technology and Society (CETyS) Universidad de San Andrés, and the Center for Telecommunications Studies in Latin America (cet.la). While Centro Latam Digital is the umbrella organization leading the strategy and housing the Journal, the consortium allows the Journal to have regional representation and further collaboration with partners such as CeTyS and cet.la on the editorial process. In March 2020, Maia Levy Daniel, lawyer and researcher with experience in technology public policy and regulation, was hired as the Managing Editor of the journal and has been working directly with CLD leadership and the Editorial Consortium on developing the overall strategy of the Journal and coordinating the release of the first issue set for publication on July 15th. In June 2020, Centro Latam Digital, by way of CIDE, signed a partnership agreement with CeTyS to secure the operations of the Journal from Universidad de San Andrés (UdeSA) in Buenos Aires. CIDE will also serve as part of the Editorial Committee along with UdeSA as reputable academic institutions with solid academic review processes that will serve as a backbone for the academic rigor of the Journal. Also in June 2020, CLD and Editorial Consortium partners held a virtual meeting with an international cohort of recognized specialists from various disciplines and sectors that have agreed to participate in the Journal's advisory committee and provide input on the strategic direction of the Journal. The Advisory Committee also supports building the Journal's credibility as a regional source of evidence-based knowledge that promotes inclusive development.

Audiences of this Journal include Latin American academics or international researchers with a focus on regional ICT topics who seek to publish in an indexed academic journal and specialists on digital technologies from civil society organizations, governments, and multilateral institutions, among others. In addition, readers will include scholars, public officials, legislators, advisory legislative groups, multilateral institutions, civil society organizations, journalists, international philanthropic institutions and other relevant publics.

Each issue of the Journal will tentatively feature up to 10 articles focused on the following topics: artificial intelligence and algorithms; competition policy in the digital era; cybersecurity and encryption; data protection and privacy; digital commerce; digital divide; economic innovation; education and digital skills; financial inclusion and digital services; ICT regulation; internet governance and online freedom of expression, among others.

Articles will be evaluated based on their contribution to ICT literature, originality, clarity, academic rigor and relevance to the Latin American context. The gender and regional diversity of authors and themes will be considered as well. Articles submitted to the Journal will be subject to a fast-track, double-blind anonymous arbitration review system.

In some cases, the Journal may dedicate special issues to a relevant specific topic. For example, the first issue of the Journal is mainly focused on the impact of ICT within a COVID-19 context. This issue includes articles on: digital divide, gender digital divide, infrastructures, competition policy, education, and network resiliency, with authors ranging from Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, United States and Uruguay.

CPR LATAM Annual Conference

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Organizing Committee of [CPR LATAM](#), CLD's annual regional digital policy research conference, decided to postpone this year's CPR LATAM conference until further notice. While this was unfortunate given that article submissions had already been reviewed and participants selected to present their work at the conference originally anticipated for June 2020 in Mexico City, CLD was able to identify ten strong academic proposals with a relevant focus and invite authors to present their paper proposals to be considered for the first issue of the Journal. As the Journal develops and builds its audiences over time, CLD will continue to create direct strategic links between the CPR LATAM annual conference and the Journal publications and authors. The Journal will build on CPR LATAM's network of ICT researchers in the region and strengthen strategic partnerships with other academic and advocacy organizations working in digital policy through the dissemination and use of the Journal, as well as build relationships with philanthropic and civil society partners to highlight specific research topics through special initiatives. As part of future activities, CLD will host online forums and webinars in partnership with the Journal to highlight findings from relevant and high-quality research in the region, and connect authors to capacity building activities so they may present their research to policy makers and other relevant stakeholders

[Please see Annex S for an overview of the journal and a list of advisory committee members.](#)

Problems and challenges

Being selected as one of IDRC's Cyber Policy Centers (CPC) has been an unparalleled opportunity for Centro Latam Digital to learn and innovate, and thus be able to contribute to addressing the vast challenges the region faces. CLD's creation has not been linear. We have oftentimes learned through trial and error. Today, CLD has created its own organizational culture and built a team that is highly effective and committed to the project as well as associate researchers that contribute high-quality work. We are now in a position to continue producing valuable research for the region as well as to provide platforms for knowledge-sharing and capacity building to strengthen digital policies in the region.

As we developed our initial research strategy, one of our main challenges was to select lines of research within each area of study. We needed to narrow down the research areas to focus on. The CPC program objectives covered a diversity of topics across the region, and we soon realised that we needed to reduce our scope. The possible areas of focus were countless and there are important variations across the region, so choosing a research agenda that could be useful for the current context and challenges has been a continuous learning experience.

One of the main lessons in this regard has been the importance of seeking alliances with other centers to broaden the scope and include different countries in the research to adequately reflect this diversity. The digital rights ecosystem is dynamic and rapidly evolving and this is a challenge for academic research which has a different pace. Over the past years, we have learned to balance rapid response research to be able to provide insights when needed, with longer research projects which are deeper in scope and require time to develop.

Another important challenge we have faced has been balancing several projects and initiatives with the current structure. CLD is a small team but we have been eager to jump on different opportunities and projects to increase our scope of work. We are continuously learning ways to balance ongoing projects to be able to take on new ones, strengthening internal processes and evolving the team's structure to be more effective. In this respect, we have also grown through collaborations and are eager to continue making partnerships that strengthen the digital policy research in the region.

Another important challenge in terms of team building has been choosing fellow researchers for conducting research and strategic projects that are a right fit in terms of expertise, quality and timely delivery, expectations, availability and commitment to participate. This has been an important learning process and we will continue to map out partners, stakeholders and other initiatives to continue growing our network of collaborators, something necessary for a regional organization.

Finally, being part of CIDE, which is a large publically affiliated institution with complex internal processes and bureaucracy, offered us great opportunities yet also presented some difficulties and significant management efforts. More recently, the Mexican federal administration's open animosity towards publicly funded research centers presented a great threat and significant challenge not only to our operations but also to our existence within CIDE. This has contributed to CLD's learning experience and will be an important lesson for the center's future planning stages. With support of this grant, CLD conducted an external evaluation of the project's internal processes to identify opportunities for strengthening operations and project management in future stages of the center.

Overall Assessment and Recommendations

Closing its pilot phase, Centro Latam Digital had important lessons both in terms of institution building, scope of research areas and opportunities for collaboration with other organizations. As previously mentioned, the scope and breadth of research areas proved to be very ambitious for an initial pilot. The opportunity to engage in a continuously adaptive process for the overall project strategy has been enormously valuable. Learning along IDRC on the CPC initiative itself provided opportunities to enrich our vision and goals and to be more bold in terms of what we seek to accomplish as a research center and the kind of impact we want to have in the region. The opportunity to engage with other CPCs throughout this pilot phase has also been invaluable, not only for the areas of collaboration it has presented, but also because as a consortium we can have more impact in our respective regions by joining forces and sharing methodologies, expertise and data. This is one of the recommendations we feel would be most valuable for IDRC's initiative. It is difficult

to find opportunities to engage the consortium as a whole, given that all centers have their own projects and timing. However, perhaps we could contribute to agenda-setting in international forums and create a cross regional block of experts that carries more weight collectively than we do individually. CLD sees great opportunity in developing a collective impact strategy amongst the CPCs given the parallels and contrasts of challenges and opportunities for impact in each region.

Finally, leveraging the knowledge and expertise from partners in the Global North to promote innovative research in the Global South is a great opportunity. This is something we have been interested in exploring but as of yet, have not been able to incorporate into our strategy and it was not formalized throughout the pilot phase.

Annexes

Annex A: [Event Agenda - Net Neutrality in Mexico](#)

Annex B: [Participant List - Net Neutrality in Mexico](#)

Annex C: [CLD Statement following Net Neutrality Workshop](#)

Annex D: [CLD participation in IFT virtual round tables on Guidelines for Traffic Management and Network Administration](#)

Annex E: [Preliminary study on digital ID systems](#)

Annex F: [Summary of recommendations to Mexican congress on Digital Identity and Citizenship bill](#)

Annex G: [Preliminary draft: Analysis of social inequalities in Argentina in times of pandemic](#)

Annex H: [Preliminary draft: Mapping Disinformation and Confusion in Brazil in the context of COVID-19](#)

Annex I: [Preliminary draft: Technologies in the face of the pandemic](#)

Annex J: [Policy brief: Employment and the digital gender gap in Latin America](#)

Annex K: [Policy report: Covid-19 in America: actions for connectivity in the face of the pandemic](#)

Annex L: [Policy brief: Fintech in Latin America: ¿What are the barriers to entrance and innovation?](#)

Annex M: [Electronic voting study](#)

Annex N: [Centro Latam Digital podcast: series on technology in the wake of Covid-19](#)

Annex O: [Principles for effective internet legislation: Workshop description and syllabus](#)

Annex P: [Principles for Internet Legislation: framework for online and offline conduct](#)

Annex Q: [Analytical model for Cybersecurity governance: Argentina case study](#)

Annex R: [Study on Gender and Cybersecurity in Latin America](#)

Annex S: [Overview of Latin American Journal on Economics and Digital Society](#)