

# ISOC UK England Chair's Report for 2021

The last Chair's report that I presented was drafted in December 2020, thus this report will include activities since that date.

As you all know, this past year has been one of challenges. Whilst at the beginning of 2021 we were all hoping that the worst of the COVID19 pandemic was behind us, the rise of variants has extended the emergency conditions and has prevented the Chapter from staging any face to face activity. By now, we are all used to participate in meetings remotely using Zoom or other remote participation tools.

Participation in online activities has been steady but we have not seen any particular growth in activity, potentially due to the multiplication of online meetings. There is a wider "Zoom fatigue" with people who have spent much time on one call after another. Furthermore, periods where offices reopened made members busy in their everyday work, thus less time was spent on volunteer activity.

Nobody knows what turn this will take in 2022. As we see another variant "Omicron" spread through the world there is little visibility as to when our lives will return to "normal". Thus the Chapter will continue its online activities like in 2021, inviting members to propose ideas for workshops and roundtables which are of interest to everyone. Email [contact@isoc-e.org](mailto:contact@isoc-e.org) if you'd like to volunteer to organise something online.

## Q1 and Q2 2021

### IPv6 Matrix

Following on from the previous year, the Chapter has been offered free virtual hosting by Mythic Beasts. The IPv6 Matrix has been measuring the use of IPv6 in the world's 1 Million most popular Web Sites since 2010. The project has collected over 500Gb of data relating to the spread of IPv6 worldwide. Its two servers (one crawler and one web server) are now 14 years old. It was time to replace them with modern technology.

In April 2021, the IPv6 Matrix Servers were finally decommissioned from running at the University of Southampton and physically transported to London. This is the first step in the project that will lead to the full virtualization of the IPv6 Matrix Project. The date mentioned above is the day after the servers were received in London and is a major milestone in the project.

With the servers physically leaving the University of Southampton, this closes an important chapter that was opened when the Group Design Project (GDP) was confirmed for three students to work under the supervision of Dr. Tim Chown. This was back on 25 September 2013. I delivered the two servers at the University of Southampton on 28 October 2013, to take residence in Building 53. They never stopped collecting data ever since, until their final crash. The next stage was to recover the data on the crashed disks, set-up virtual test rigs and get a contractor working on migrating to new virtual servers. More on this in the "IPv6 Matrix" section of this report.

### ISOC Statement on UK Online Public Safety Bill

In May 2020, the Chapter gave its support for a Statement made by the Internet Society in response to a draft UK Online Public Safety Bill proposed in the UK Parliament. The Statement defends the use of Encryption.

The Statement can be found on: <https://isoc-e.org/internet-society-has-commented-on-the-uk-online-public-safety-bill/>

## Webinar: Rebuilding and Enhancing Trust in Algorithms Policy

In June, the Chapter organised a Webinar led by Dr. Ansgar Koene, focussing on the presentation of the policy implications and recommendations based on the outcomes of the EPSRC funded ReEnTrust project. ReEnTrust was a collaboration of the Human Centred Computing Group at the University of Oxford, the Artificial Intelligence and its Applications Institute (AIAI) at the University of Edinburgh, and the HORIZON Digital Economy Research at the University of Nottingham ReEnTrust: Rebuilding Trust in Online Algorithmic Systems.

A full recording of this session can be found on: <https://isoc-e.org/trust-in-algorithms-policy/>

## Roundtable: Understanding the UK's Online Safety Bill

*"The draft Online Safety Bill delivers the government's manifesto commitment to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online while defending free expression."*

This Webinar and Roundtable with esteemed panellists explored the more controversial aspects of the Online Safety Bill and why there is so much pushback to some of its articles.

A full recording of this session can be found on: <https://isoc-e.org/understanding-the-uk-online-safety-bill/>

## ISOC Fundamentals training program on encryption

Contrary to last year, the Chapter registered fewer participants for the ISOC Fundamentals training programs. The sole candidate that made it through to the end is Ben, who completed the course on encryption. His report can be found here: <https://isoc-e.org/isoc-2021-training-chapter-participant-perspective/>

The Chapter urges that ISOC reviews its programme and continues to improve it, to make the programme attractive to more ISOC UK England members.

The Chapter took part in the ISOC Fundamentals workshop on "Online Safety Through the Language Barrier".

## Q3 2021

### The threat to DNS (Pan-national Infrastructure) a joint BCS/ISOC Panel

BCS (The Chartered Institute for IT) and the UK Chapter of the Internet Society organised a joint meeting discussing the threat to DNS thanks to a link-up by David Misell. This roundtable included Bill Woodcock, Executive Director of the Packet Clearing House (PCH) and Dr. Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chair of the UK Chapter of the Internet Society. Together we discussed the multiple threats to the DNS.

Details of the panel discussion and a link to its recording can be found on: <https://isoc-e.org/the-threat-to-dns/>

### DPA's Lord Renwick Memorial Lecture with Vint Cerf

The Chapter supported publicising this year's Lord Renwick Memorial Lecture with Vint Cerf.

The Webcast of the Lord Renwick Memorial Lecture with Vint Cerf is now available via a link on: <https://isoc-e.org/lord-renwick-memorial-lecture-dpa-2021/>

## [.UK Internet Governance Forum Overview](#)

.UK Registry Nominet organised a one hour Webinar “.UK Internet Governance Forum Overview” on 30th September 2021 and ISOC UK partnered with long time IGF experts to answer the questions participants (which included Nominet and ISOC UK England members) might have about the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the UK IGF. <https://isoc-e.org/uk-igf-overview/>

This was the first time the Chapter collaborated with Nominet in organising a joint session for the UK Internet community and we hope to be able to repeat this exercise in 2021.

## Q4 2021

UK Internet Governance Forum - <https://ukigf.org.uk/events/uk-igf-2021/>

The UK Internet Governance Forum is the national internet governance forum for the United Kingdom. Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) are an initiative led by the United Nations for the discussion of public policy issues relating to the internet. A key distinguishing feature of IGFs is that they are based on the multi-stakeholder model – all sectors of society meet as equals to exchange ideas and discuss best practices. The purpose of IGFs is to facilitate a common understanding of how to maximise the opportunities of the internet whilst mitigating the risks and challenges that the internet presents. The UK IGF has a steering committee and secretariat. The UK Chapter of the Internet Society is a member of the UK IGF Steering Committee.

The Chapter, as a co-organiser of the conference, had a say in organising each of the sessions. Like last year with this year's IGF taking place online, it was possible to invite panellists that were not necessarily located in London, and often were first timers in any Internet Governance Forum.

Videos of the event can be found on: <https://ukigf.org.uk/events/uk-igf-2021/>

Our Chapter has long been advocating that funding for the UK IGF should be diversified. In recent years, Nominet was the sole funder for the event, with the risk of accusations that the forum could be controlled by Nominet. With this risk in mind, the UK Chapter of the Internet Society led by example this year and pledged £2000 for the UK IGF. This is a drop in the ocean compared to the overall budget, but a couple of other organisations followed suit. We hope that other UK organisations will provide financial support next year to as to achieve the goal to make the UK IGF less reliant on a single donor. ISOC UK's contribution was both recognised and acclaimed. For the Chapter it is a big step – £2000 is a significant disbursement made only possible through the Internet Society Foundation's Regional and Local IGF Grant which we thank for providing the funds. <https://www.isocfoundation.org/>

The UK IGF Organising Committee has already met online to debrief and focus on improvements for next year's UK IGF. The UK Chapter will be fully involved in the development of next year's agenda, as it was this year, with at least three members of the Chapter's leadership in the UK IGF Organising Committee. <https://ukigf.org.uk/committee/>

## Other Activities

The Chapter has continued its active involvement with:

**UK MAGIG (DCMS Multistakeholder Advisory Group on Internet Governance)** – this group has held regular online conference calls (in lieu of face to face meetings) to discuss UK-wide involvement at IGF. A sub-group has focussed on ICANN issues. Another sub-group has focussed on ITU Issues. Both groups have seen involvement from several representatives of the Chapter. DCMS has indicated that they are planning to continue this multistakeholder engagement for international issues.

**Internet Society IoT Security Policy Platform** – this group is no longer officially supported by the Internet Society that used to be hosted by ISOC HQ have now ended. The Chapter remains involved in the mailing list but unfortunately we have not found ways to perpetuate the coordination taking place in this group. The Chapter was a contributor to the Internet of Things (IoT) Security Policy Platform Statement – more information on <https://www.internetsociety.org/iot/iot-security-policy-platform/> Unfortunately nothing further has come out of that process, with participants moving on to other projects and departments.

**UK DCMS Secure by Design** – As a follow-up to contributing to consultations from this DCMS department, the chapter is keeping a watching brief on the follow-up action and reports.

In July 2020, DCMS opened another call for views, relayed by the Chapter ( <https://lists.isoc-e.org/pipermail/policy/2020-July/001039.html> ) and the Chapter is looking forward to host another Webinar soon inviting DCMS to provide details of its findings – the Pandemic lockdown having slowed down the analysis process.

On 21 April 2021 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) published the government’s response to the call for views on proposals to regulate consumer connected product cyber security.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/secure-by-design>

The Pandemic has made it hard to arrange even a Webinar with the right people to answer questions on the topic and we aim to arrange a follow-up sometime in 2022.

#### Internet Society Global Campaigns

Like last year, one of this year’s Strategic Engagements of the Internet Society is on **Encryption**. As seen above the Chapter is involved as well in this Global Campaign, adhering to the points expressed on the Internet Society’s briefing page on Encryption:

<https://www.internetsociety.org/policybriefs/encryption/>

#### IPv6 Matrix

As you have read from the beginning of this report, the Chapter has been offered free virtual hosting by Mythic Beasts.

The Chapter applied for a Large Grant from the Internet Society Foundation, based on a budget of \$24 700. The proposal for migration involves taking each sub-system running on obsolete physical hardware and migrating it to the modern virtual machine environment. Unfortunately, in September 2020, as preliminaries started and the Web Server was surveyed, it suffered a disk failure and despite several attempts, the local Team at the University of Southampton failed to bring it back up.

A plan had been made to ship both servers back London, to the Team that originally put them together 7 years ago. This had become complicated due to very strict confinement, security measures and protocols at the University of Southampton – and rightly so, to combat COVID19. It took perseverance and until April 2021, including huge logistical problems bought forth by security, authorisation and protocol issues in a university that was under a lockdown, to extract the servers from the university’s highly secure machine rooms and ship them to London. I really want to thank the Team at the University of Southampton’s iSolutions contractor, in particular Lance Draper, who was our person on the ground locally for all the years after Dr. Tim Chown left the University of Southampton, Andrew Paul Landells, who raised all the paperwork necessary to open the doors that needed to be opened, and Tony Gregan, who, armed with the paperwork, managed to battle through the security doors and save the servers from a certain demise.

The Team in London (Alan Barnett and Rex Wickham from 2020Media) took the servers apart and attempted to recover the disks on specially designed test rigs. The data was recovered and archived. Once that milestone was achieved, it was possible to look for a contractor to build the new virtual systems and migrate both the crawler and the Web server to its new virtual host. The hardware of the servers being over 14 years old, was dismantled and fully recycled all the way to component level. Contracting took place over the summer (James Lawrie from SilverMouse) and work began where it became obvious that a complete re-writing of the crawler was needed, both due to the magnitude of changes in the libraries that the crawler was using (software libraries change in 14 years!). This will allow for the same functionalities, but a vastly improved crawl with less repeated tasks and much optimised data structures. To-date James is working hard to finish the project in the forthcoming month. Whilst the project has been very much delayed, it so far has not suffered significant cost overruns, as the travel budget that had been allocated and that was not used due to the Pandemic, is used for additional costs relating to data recovery and third party storage until the new home for the servers will reach production status and be archived accordingly. We look forward to the re-launch of the project's public Web site and of the crawls in the first quarter of 2022. Look out for a Webinar that will accompany the announcement.

## VAT

The IPv6 Matrix project being larger than our usual invoices, with a grant being paid from the United States and the contractor being paid in the UK, the Chapter stood to lose 20% VAT on the value of the contract it allocated to a UK contractor. In order not to lose this value, the Leadership Team decided that the Chapter be registered for VAT starting from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

## Membership

As you know, Global Membership of the Internet Society and membership of the UK Chapter are open and free. From last year's total of 1660 members, the Chapter has now reached 1744 members, a 5% increase year on year which is lower than last year but understandable with the current Pandemic conditions and the lack of outreach with other organisations. Future common activities with other organisations should help this figure to rise again.

## Mailing Lists

It is also time to remind you of our discussion mailing lists which are open to all - as a prime channel for you to interact with the Chapter, but also with other members in the UK.

They can be accessed on: <http://lists.isoc-e.org/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo>

- **UK Policy Mailing list:** Internet Policy especially UK Internet Policy. This includes discussions on Government Inquiries, but also any Internet policy topic that is likely to affect UK Internet users and businesses.
- **Open-Trust:** a discussion forum focussing on Internet Trust issues, from the Trust Issues covered globally by the Internet Society (See: <https://www.internetsociety.org/issues/trust/> ), to the work undertaken about Trusting Platforms and Algorithms, in a world dominated by increasing Surveillance, Tracking, and, at the other end of the spectrum, Fake news. This is also the mailing list that is likely to be used for Trust-derived topics, such as Encryption.
- **ISOC-UK-Universities:** a forum focussing on University and student activities. Many UK Universities now offer courses about Internet Governance, sometimes as a standalone item, sometimes as part of a wider media course, but often as a research topic. This group, still looking for a person to lead it, is a channel for interaction on issues that young members might face. Plus – how do we reach students, researchers and academic experts so they actively engage in the Multistakeholder consultations and activities that are offered both on a national and international basis?

As a reminder, your User Profile also allows for you to subscribe to Internet Society-wide mail discussion lists and discussion groups on **CONNECT** as well as **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)** such as the ones on the Internet of Things, etc.

## Focussing on 2022

2021 has been a challenging year for everyone. With a glimmer of hope on the horizon in the form of several vaccines, many hope that life as we knew it will return to “normal” in 2022. This was exactly the case in 2021 but sadly it did not materialise.

Whilst in the meantime, I look forward to seeing many of you attend our online activities, I hope to meet many of you sooner rather than later at future events whether in the UK or elsewhere. The UK Chapter is dynamic thanks to its members and my report could not be complete without thanking all our active members for their efforts at a time that for many, means a focus on more immediate survival matters. The Chapter, whilst not seeing a huge amount of activity, has been successful at having an impact on the topics it has focussed on.

In 2022, with your help, we hope to start the year with the following:

1. A presentation of the re-launched IPv6 Matrix Project - January 2022

This will provide our members with a full update on the IPv6 Matrix Project's successful migration to a virtualised environment. It's got quite a history. It's coming back alive soon.

2. A roundtable discussion centring on the Online Safety Bill - January 2022

This will take place with the help of Internet Society staff who are proposing several speakers. The issue is a major issue in the UK.

3. A follow-up on IoT Security and the work that is taking place in the UK - February 2022

This would be a follow-up with someone from DCMS providing a status update

The more volunteers get involved, the more we can expand on Chapter activities. We would like to hear from you if you would be interested in becoming a Convenor on any of the above, or other topics that fall within the mission values of the Internet Society.

Finally, once again, I would like to thank the ISOC UK Leadership Team, Christian de Larrinaga, Desiree Miloshevic, Louise Marie Hurel, Matthew Shears and Nigel Titley. This year has been extraordinarily challenging for all of us, collectively, individually, professionally and personally – some of us have had to battle COVID at home; some of us have had to rethink our lives altogether. It has been a year of uncertainties and I am well aware that within our membership, the same has been true.

I wish you all a good holiday season and that the New Year will see us all emerge from the tunnel of fear, uncertainty and doubt, and be able to focus again more on some activities that we pursue for pleasure rather than outright survival.

Warmest regards,

Olivier MJ Crépin-Leblond, PhD

For the ISOC UK England Leadership Team, December 2021