



SUMMIT TALKS REPORT

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES: PREVENTION AND FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

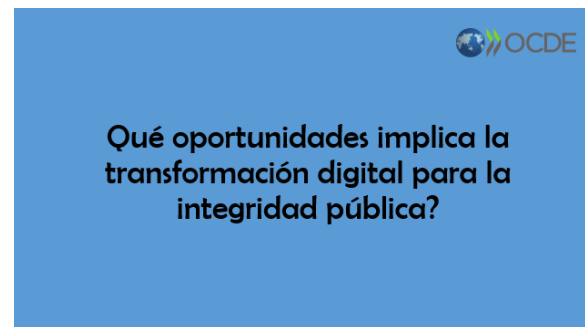
Tuesday, May 26, 2020

This report summarizes highlights and conclusions of the meeting and contains links to such documentation resources as the video and the presentations delivered. Consequently, it presents a set of recommendations regarding emerging technologies for preventing and combating corruption.

Video



Presentations



OECD



IDB



US DIGITAL SERVICE



CIVIC INNOVATION LAB



GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHAMAS

- [AGENDA](#)
- [IMAGE GALLERY](#)

Introduction

These summit talks or virtual seminar are a part of the cooperation initiatives fostered by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat in connection with execution of the Mechanism for Follow-Up and Implementation of the Lima Commitment with participating States, entities pertaining to the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), civil society, and social actors. In that context, this seminar seeks to facilitate, from a government, civil society, and international organizations perspective, the sharing of experiences and more in-depth familiarity with the adoption and use of emerging technologies as tools for preventing and combating corruption, including the need to make the most of technologies in actions to respond to emergency situations, such as the current global health crisis triggered by COVID-19.

Taking part in the meeting were experts representing two governments (The Bahamas and the United States), two representatives of international organizations and members of the JSWG (the IDB and OECD), and one representative of academia (Laboratorio de Innovación Cívica UNAM/UWV). The Seminar was inaugurated by the OAS Summits Secretariat. Through those participants' presentations, the webinar seeks to guide responses to the following questions:

Can new technologies play a part in preventing and fighting corruption?

How are those technologies being put to use?

What risks are attached to the use of those technologies?

Is the region ready for those technologies? What challenges does the region face?

Commitments 14 and 17 of the Lima Commitment of the Eighth Summit of the Americas in 2018 (“Democratic Governance against Corruption”) call for “Promoting and or strengthening the implementation of national policies and plans, and as appropriate subnational plans in the areas of open government, digital government, open data, fiscal transparency, open budgeting, digital procurement systems, public contracting and a public registry of state suppliers” and “Promoting the use of new technologies that facilitate digital government in order to promote transparency, interaction with citizens and accountability, through development of tools for the identification, detection, systematization, and monitoring of government procedures.” The OAS General Secretariat pursues those commitments through the work of the Department of Effective Public Management (DEPM) to respond to mandates of the member states in respect of digital government, open data, open government, and government procurement, as the Technical Secretariat of the Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean (GEALC Network) and the Inter-American Government Procurement Network (RICG). The Meeting was organized by the Summits Secretariat, with the help of the DEPM and the participation of other entities in the JSWG and civil society.

Thematic approach

The meeting addressed five different angles with a view to achieving a comprehensive analysis of the issue.

First, remarks by the **United States Digital Service**, based on its experience, triggered a discussion regarding the use of design and technology to deliver better services to citizens. It highlighted identity as the key to all interaction between a citizen and government and to security and trust in government services, irrespective of the fact that countries experience identity in different ways. However simple it may appear to be, identity is in fact particularly important to be able to define how each citizen identifies himself or herself to a series of government agencies for the various procedures that have to be completed. USDS underscores the importance of transparency in the construction of such systems from the very start, using an open methodology, including open-source software.

The second presentation by the **Department of Transformation and Digitization of the Government of the Bahamas** pointed to advances made in the country with regard to blockchain technology, which progressed from school certificates to digital wallet products. It has had a positive impact on fighting corruption, although its applicability is limited. The platform eliminates the intermediary and manual intervention and makes it possible to perform transparent and traceable two-way payments between individuals and the government, thereby bolstering accountability. In the Caribbean subregion, little or nothing is being done by countries with regard to new technologies. Some of obstacles identified are: a) budgetary constraints, causing initiatives to be put on hold or suspended; b) lack of trust; even where solutions are available, individuals mistrust the transactions; and c) digital illiteracy, feeding into the “I don’t understand”, “I don’t trust,” or “I don’t use it” cycle. Finally, in the Caribbean, it is important to develop more robust cooperation mechanisms to expedite learning about new technologies based on individual experiences that can be replicated in other countries.

The third presentation, delivered by the **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, focused on the timeliness of addressing the digital transformation toward data-driven public integrity. Starting with data, it highlighted value creation based on digital technologies and consistent use of digital technology in all spheres of public policy; the latter being one of the recommendations of the OECD to countries adopting digital government strategies. However, the OECD pointed out that emerging technologies are still at the experimental phase, due to: a) resource and capacity constraints; b) institutional, legal, and cultural barriers; and c) technical and practical challenges, such as the availability of reliable data and lack of common standards. For the OECD, a data-driven public sector transforms the design of public policies and services and the way they are delivered and monitored, but, above all, data and information boost public trust and enhance transparency and accountability. Finally, speakers pointed to open data in government procurement geared to dealing with the crisis triggered by COVID-19 as one of the main instruments for fighting outbreaks of corruption during the pandemic.

The fourth presentation, delivered by the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, addressed the emerging technologies being used to help fight corruption, and cited KYC (Know Your Customer), Big Data, Machine Learning, and Blockchain (distributed ledger technology, DLT) as some of those being used in the region. However, the IDB points out that some limited use is still being made of traditional technologies, which the region is not fully exploiting. They include: a) electronic management of the whole procurement and hiring cycle via the web; b) online posting of the uses and availability of public assets; and c) posting of public sector budget and accounting information on the government’s open data portal as a way to facilitate citizen oversight. As for the use of emerging technologies, the IDB mentioned the following applications: a) sharing real time information among financial institutions and anti-corruption agencies, using KYC; b) the swift processing of massive amounts of data using

sophisticated analytical tools, with cloud computing facilitating the use of those technologies; c) the use of smart algorithms to reduce the frequency of false negatives in the investigation of suspicious cases, detection of illicit activities, and the identification of abnormal behavior; and d) replacing paper certificates with reliable, traceable, records that can be audited.

The final presentation, delivered by a representative of Civic Innovation Lab (**Laboratorio de innovación Cívica**) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), discussed transparency as a way to counter disinformation and corruption by using emerging technologies and stressed disinformation's negative impact on citizen participation and how it thereby undermines democracy. By using bots (robots) and nudges programmed into algorithms, audiences are manipulated, particularly into believing conspiracy theories for a social good. The Civic Innovation Lab argues that these threats can be countered by implementing more transparent communication strategies using other types of nudges that, rather than imposing thought, provide a citizen with an opportunity for self-expression. Blockchain technologies are likewise used, in a civic technology for the social good approach, to fight corruption and enhance transparency in local government initiatives during the public policy implementation cycle.

Conclusions

- If individuals do not trust digital government solutions, they won't use them. With the transparency, security, and privacy afforded by new technologies in digital government environments, governments can build trust in individuals.
- Progress with new technologies is limited in the Caribbean region and such use as is made of them is largely found among private sector actors.
- Before developing complex digital initiatives using emerging technologies, it is important to acknowledge that most individuals do not understand them, so that thought needs first to be given to the individual before embarking on new developments.
- Intra-regional cooperation can facilitate the adoption of new technologies and expedite learning processes and spare especially challenged countries from engaging in costly, lengthy, or discouraging trial and error stages.
- Technical, human, and institutional capacities for adopting emerging technologies are limited in Latin America and the Caribbean, as are the uses that can be made of them to prevent and fight corruption; those capacities also vary greatly from one country to another.
- It is not a matter of opting for one technology or the other. That will largely depend on the capacities of each country. Indeed, it is best to implement a combination of traditional technologies (that basically support the opening up of data and information) and emerging technologies.
- Both traditional and emerging technologies feed on data, as well as generate them. The quality of the data those technologies rely on is fundamental for improving their performance and what they can achieve.
- There are still hurdles hampering the advancement of the digital agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean and hence the espousal of new emerging technologies to prevent and combat corruption. They include connectivity (half the population in the region is not connected); half of the countries in the region lack a digital agenda; the institutions responsible lack sufficient human resources; the region needs another 500,000 ICT professionals, 150,000 of them in

cybersecurity; there is only limited availability of key technological tools such as interoperability platforms, digital identification, and digital signature; regulatory frameworks are obsolete when it comes to data protection, identification, cybersecurity, and interoperability; and not enough financial resources are being invested to advance the digital agenda.

- Emerging technologies are being misused for acts of corruption and disinformation, whereas they could be used to counter those abuses, enhance transparency and citizen participation, and prevent and fight corruption.

Recommendations

The following recommendations result from the exchange of views in this seminar and are submitted as input to OAS member states for actions they undertake to follow up on their commitments with respect to the use of emerging technologies as tools for preventing and fighting corruption, as well as to help them meet the need to make the most of technology in their responses to emergency situations, such as the current global health crisis triggered by COVID-19.

1. Digital government solutions should be so designed, and new technologies for satisfying public needs implemented, with a focus on the user and on building trust via those solutions. It is vital that those processes pursue openness, transparency, and accountability.
2. To promote the generation of reliable data in the public institutions of the member states in the region as inputs for making the most of both traditional and emerging technologies.
3. To promote subregional plans or programs for adopting and taking advantage of emerging technologies tailored to the circumstances of those subregional communities, to their existing capacities, and to their integration, trade, and economic development concerns. In those initiatives, it is essential to sensitize users and strengthen human and institutional technical capabilities.
4. To strengthen national digital government strategies and generate them where they do not already exist or where they are obsolete, including chapters envisaging the adoption of emerging technologies for a digital transformation promoting data-driven public integrity.

Program for the meeting

I. Introduction

II. Opening remarks: María Celina Conte, Acting Director, Summits of the Americas Secretariat, OAS

III. Presentations

1. Edward Hartwig, Deputy Administrator, United States Digital Service (USDS)
2. Carol Roach, Acting Director, Department of Transformation and Digitization, Office of the Prime Minister of the Government of Bahamas
3. Barbara Ubaldi, Head of Digital Government and Open Data, Public Governance Directorate, OECD

4. Miguel Porrua, Coordinator of the Data and Digital Government Cluster, Institutions for Development Sector, Institutional Capacity of the State Division, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
5. Saiph Savage, Director of the Civic Innovation Lab, West Virginia University

III. Questions and Answers session

Moderator: Mike Mora, Specialist, Department of Effective Public Management, OAS

REGARDING THE SPEAKERS



Edward Hartwig, Deputy Administrator, United States Digital Service (USDS), Executive Office of the President of the United States of America.

Edward Hartwig is currently the Deputy Administrator of the United States Digital Service (USDS). The USDS was created to protect and modernize the most critical public services in the United States following the failure and successful reconstruction of healthcare.gov in 2013. Since 2014, the USDS has constructed more than 150 digital products in dozens of Federal agencies. USDS products include establishing the interoperability of medical data, the modernization of services for veterans and access to benefits, and the development of a single login and identity platform for the United States Government.

Before joining the USDS, Edward worked as an advisor and speech writer for the United States ambassador in Austria. While he was in Austria, he also founded a grassroots movement to enhance and expand Austria's innovation economy. Edward is also a former Foreign Service officer in the United States State Department, who served in the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, and Austria. He began his professional career as a public defense attorney in Massachusetts, defending impoverished clients facing life in prison.



Carol Roach, Acting Director, Department of Transformation and Digitization, Office of the Prime Minister of the Government of Bahamas

Carol Roach is Acting Director of the Department of Transformation and Digitization (the central Information, Communications, and Technology agency for the Government of The Bahamas). Her career in public service has been devoted to policy formulation, project management, business analysis, training, process development, and the implementation and deployment of information and communication technology. She studied at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, where she graduated with a B.A. in Computer Science. She did her postgraduate studies at Pace University in New York, USA, where she obtained an M.A. in Internet Technology for e-Commerce, and won a prize as an outstanding student from the Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems. She is a

certified project management professional and has completed formal training as a Business Analyst Professional and Scrum Master.

Carol's standard procedure is to "evaluate, advise, and assist." As an active member of her Anglican Church community of St. Ambrose, Nassau, Bahamas, and as a public servant of over 27 years' standing in the Government of The Bahamas, she has put that approach to good use to change the lives of individuals and her country. She is a true "aquaphile", who loves to go swimming and collecting shells and rocks. Carol is a proud mother of four girls.



Barbara Ubaldi, Head of Digital Government and Open Data, Public Governance Directorate, OECD

Barbara Ubaldi heads the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Unit responsible for the work on Digital Government, Open Data and Data-driven Public Sector within the Division for Public Sector Reform of the Public Governance Directorate.

Barbara leads thematic reviews on digital government and co-ordinates the work on the use by governments of emerging technologies to enhance public sector openness, efficiency and innovation. She is also responsible for working with adherent countries on the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies and the development of the OECD *OURdata* index and Digital Government Index

Prior to the OECD Barbara served for eight years as Programme Officer for E-Government and Knowledge Management at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York. She gathered extensive experience working with developing countries on digital government, ICT and knowledge management for development.

Barbara is a Fulbright Fellow and has an M.A. in Public Administration from Northeastern University in Boston. Apolitical included Barbara among the 20 most influential figures in 2018 y 2019 on Digital Government worldwide.



Miguel A. Porrúa, Coordinator of the Data and Digital Government Cluster, Institutions for Development Sector, Institutional Capacity of the State Division, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Miguel A. Porrúa is the coordinator of the Data and Digital Government Cluster (Data-Driven Digital Government - DDG) of the Innovation in Citizen Services Division (ICS) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Before joining the IDB, Miguel was a Senior Specialist in e-Government at the Organization of American States (OAS), where he ran the Organization's e-government portfolio. Before that, Miguel was Director of Government Relations for Latin America at the e-government company govWorks, based in New York, where he oversaw e-government projects in the

region. Before coming to the United States, Miguel lived in Montevideo (Uruguay) where he managed public sector modernization projects for the Spanish Government (the Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development, AECID) and the United Nations (UNDP). Miguel has a B.A. in Economics and Businesses from the University of Oviedo (Spain) and a MBA from the Thunderbird School of Global Management (Arizona, United States).

Miguel has written several articles and papers on e-government and is co-editor of the book entitled *América Latina Puntogob*. His article "E-Government in Latin America: A Review of the Success in Colombia, Uruguay, and Panama" was published in the 2013 Global Information Technology Report of the World Economic Forum. He also coordinated the 2016 Report on Cybersecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean, published jointly by the IDB and the OAS.



Saiph Savage, Director of the Civic Innovation Lab, West Virginia University

Saiph Savage is a Co-Director of the Civic Innovation Lab of the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM). Her research focuses on crowdsourcing, disinformation, and civic technology. For her research into disinformation and collective action, Saiph was recognized by the MIT Technology Review as one of the 35 top innovators of less than 35 years of age and she is a Google Anita Borg scholar. Her work has been covered by the BBC, Deutsche Welle, and the New York Times. Saiph frequently speaks at conferences and publishes articles in first-class journals, such as ACM CHI, ICWSM and Web Conference, where she has also received honorable mention awards. Saiph has received grants from the National Science Foundation, as well as funds from the likes of Google, Amazon, and Facebook Research. She has cooperated with and given talks to civic organizations, such as the Democratic National Institute, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CFAR), and the Aspen Institute.

Currently, Saiph is a research professor at the University of West Virginia, where she directs the Human Computer Interaction Lab. In the rural area of West Virginia, Saiph has managed to introduce the subject of human computer interaction and advance a research agenda using an approach centered on the human being and social theories to train rural workers to be better informed about disinformation. Saiph's students have obtained scholarships and internships in Facebook Research, Twitch Research, Microsoft Research, and the Oxford Internet Institute. Saiph has a M.A. in Computer Engineering from the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM), and a M.A. and doctorate in Computer Science from the University of California, Santa Bárbara (UCSB).

Regarding the Summit of the Americas and the Department of Effective Public Management

The VIII Summit of the Americas (Lima, Peru, 2018) ended with the adoption by the Heads of State and Government, of 57 mandates for preventing and fighting corruption set forth in the "Lima Commitment: Democratic Governance against Corruption". Among those 57 measures, there were specific mandates in the areas of Digital Government, Open Data, Open Government and Government Procurement for preventing and fighting corruption. The Summits Secretariat of the OAS General Secretariat, as the Technical Secretariat of the Summits of the Americas Process, is mandated to assist member states with

implementation of the mandates and initiatives of the Summits and to follow up on implementation of the mandates derived from the VIII Summits of the Americas and earlier Summits. For its part, the Department of Effective Public Management (DEPM) of the OAS, with which the Summits Secretariat coordinated to organize this meeting, aims to make public management more effective, transparent, and participatory in order to achieve the “effective exercise of democracy”, pursuant to Articles 2, 4, and 6 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. The fields it works in include the above-mentioned areas of Digital Government and Open Data.