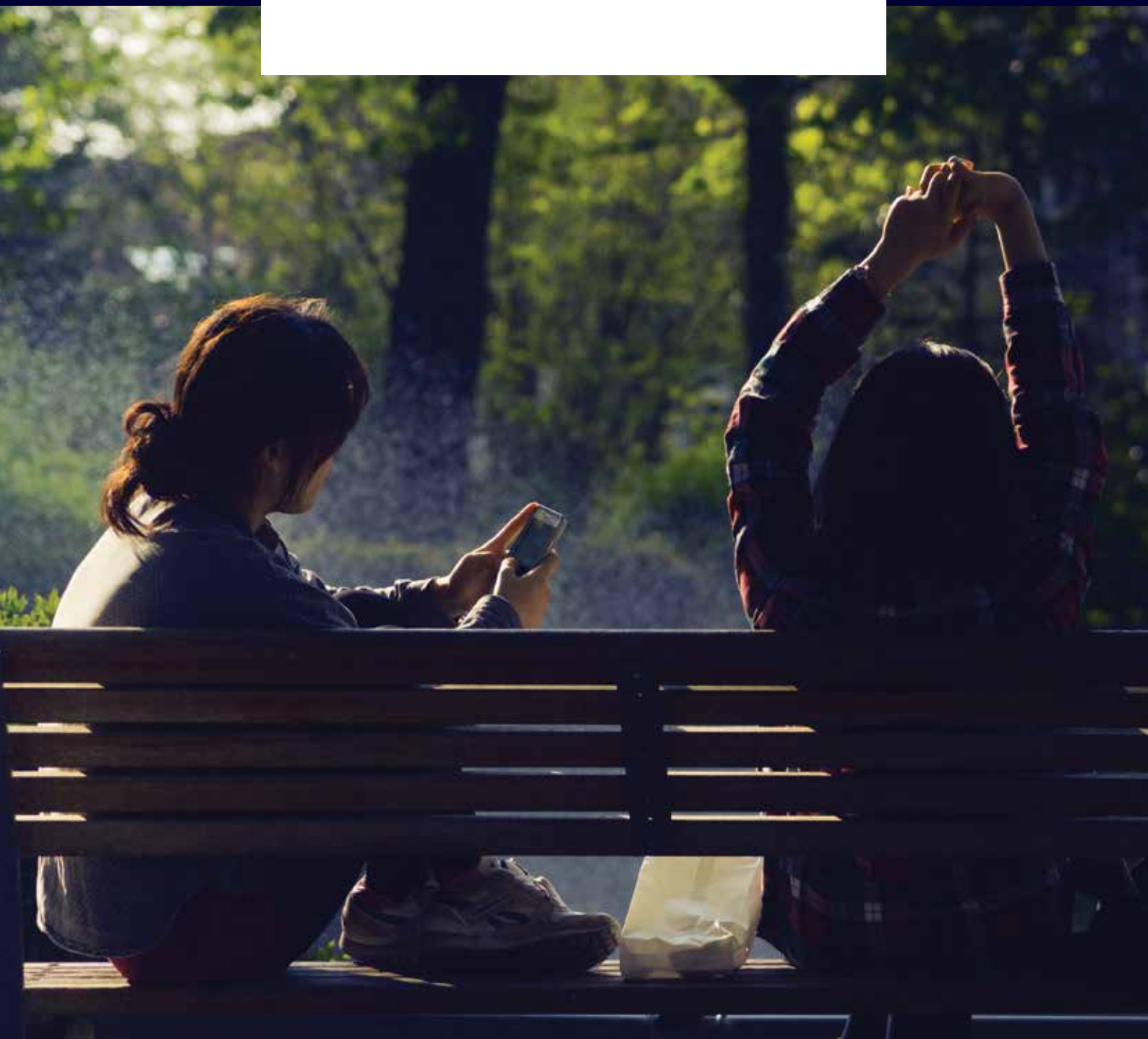
11

Methodology



Methodology

In 2016, the Internet Society initiated a process to elicit opinions and perspectives from the global Internet community (e.g. Internet Society members and staff, Internet luminaries, policymakers, technologists, academics, business leaders, as well as Internet users around the globe) about the key forces of change (both emerging trends and key uncertainties) that they believed would drive the future evolution of the Internet. The analysis and consolidation of these opinions and perspectives form the core of the findings in the 2017 Internet Society Global Internet Report: Paths to Our Digital Future.

The process of gathering the community's views on the future of the Internet comprised a number of elements:

- In-depth interviews of over 130 Internet experts and users
- Two global surveys that received over 2,000 responses from around the world and across all stakeholders
- Two regional surveys
- Ten Internet Society community roundtables
- A survey soliciting suggestions for recommendations as to future actions

In total, more than 3000 survey responses were received. Responses to the two global surveys came from 160 countries and 21 regions around the world. Individuals from approximately 94% of the Internet Society chapters participated in the surveys, and 69 per cent of respondents self-identified as Internet Society members.

Interviews

More than 130 experts from a diverse group of stakeholders, including governments, civil society, businesses, academia and the technical community were interviewed at length. The interviews solicited views on how the Internet had changed over the past five years and on the Internet trends and uncertainties for the next five to seven years. To encourage the most robust set of views on the future of the Internet, the questionnaire used the term "Internet" in its broadest sense, encompassing everything from its structure, governance, and underlying technologies to access, usage, and connected devices. The interviews took up to an hour to complete.

The main section of questions asked respondents to describe the greatest forces of change, including predictable trends, as well as key uncertainties, that they believed would affect the future of the Internet over the coming five to seven years. Respondents were asked to provide these forces of change in each of five categories: Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, and Political (STEEP). The last set of questions respondents were asked revolved around what they believed to be the most ideal scenario for the future of the Internet, the most pessimistic scenario for the future of the Internet as well as the greatest questions they still have around the future of the Internet.

Examples of questions included: "What trends (i.e., highly predictable forces of change) are you starting to see develop that will likely affect the future of the internet over the coming five to seven years? How do you see these trends playing out"? And, "What are the greatest uncertainties (i.e., issues we know are important but are difficult to predict) that you could see impacting the future of the Internet? How could these unfold in different ways — and what impact would each have on the future of the Internet"?

Global surveys

The interviews were complemented by two global surveys over the course of several months in 2016, with the intent to gather qualitative and quantitative data from stakeholders, experts, and Internet users around the world on the key forces of change driving the future of the Internet.

The first survey was comprised of open-ended questions in order to solicit input in parallel with the interviews, and was used to identify the set of issues that our global community believes will drive change in the Internet in the future. From transformations of the Internet economy to the crippling effects of cyberattacks, 309 unique forces of change impacting the future of the Internet were identified. Through grouping of similar concepts and a screening based on impact and predictability of forces, Internet Society staff merged these 309 forces into a smaller subset of 37 uncertainties that formed the basis of Survey 2.

The second survey was targeted at gathering opinions on the likely direction (or inherent uncertainty) of these key forces of change identified in the first survey. These issues (or forces of change) were provided to survey respondents along with two sliding scales — one representing today, and one representing 2021. Respondents were asked to place a marker between two plausible extremes of how the issue could unfold, with the mid-point reflecting uncertainty. By comparing the placement of the market between the 'Today' and '2021' sliders, we were able to gauge the direction of change.

The findings from the interviews and surveys were further consolidated into the six Drivers of Change and three Areas of Impact that guide this report.

Roundtables

The Internet Society organised over 10 roundtable discussions with our community from different regions to discuss in greater depth the initial findings. These included the following events/ discussions:

- Internet Society Board of Trustees, 2016
- Internet Hall of Fame members (multiple video conferences)
- Internet Governance Forum 2016, Open Forum
- IETF Policy Makers Roundtable
- IETF 95 & IETF 98
- Internet Society all-staff meeting, 2016
- Internet Society Organisational Members Briefing, IETF 98
- RightsCon Brussels 2017 Chapter calls: Youth SIG, Africa (English & French), Latin America
- Chapter meeting, Oman
- Caribbean Chapter roundtable, ARIN 39

Regional surveys

In order to ensure that there was greater depth of information from Asia-Pacific and Africa, we followed up with two surveys to supplement the regional input on the emerging security and trust divide, and artificial intelligence.

Interview questions

1. Do you see a linkage between cybersecurity/ cybercrime and peoples' ability to access and use the Internet?
2. To what degree will trust impact peoples' ability to access and use the Internet? Will there be a difference between or within countries?
3. What do you think the policy responses from governments to cyberattacks will be?
4. How will government responses to cyberattacks impact the open Internet?
5. How will governments respond to the increased use and deployment of Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things?
6. What are the implications of the above for society?

Recommendations survey

In June 2017, the Internet Society issued a final survey to seek input on a set of recommendations to address the challenges and opportunities identified in the Drivers of Change and Areas of Impact. These served to complement and inspire recommendations developed by Internet Society staff.