



PUBLIC NOTICE on account of the quarantine and self-isolation introduced because of the COVID-19 pandemic

VERSIÓN EN ESPAÑOL | VERSÃO EM PORTUGUÊS

THE BRAZILIAN INTERNET STEERING COMMITTEE (CGI.br), in the exercise of the powers granted it by Decree No. 4829/2003, and particularly by Paragraph 1, Article 24, of Law 12,965/2014, and based on the Decalogue of Principles for the Governance of the Internet, Resolution CGI.br/RES/2009/003/P, considering:

- The quarantine and self-isolation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was recognized as such by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, and by way of Law 13,979 of February 6 this year, which provided the measures to be adopted by the Federal Government, states and municipalities for dealing with public health emergencies;
- That self-isolation, as a prophylaxis to the COVID-19 pandemic, brings with it an exceptional dependence on forms of communication and, especially, on

telecommunication services that offer access to the Internet, and on the infrastructure of the telecommunication networks, which make the provision of these services possible;

- That this dependence has been reflected in the intensification of activities such as teleworking, distance learning, the population's use of telemedicine, as well as entertainment, games, on-demand attractions using video, and the need to shift large volumes of data in areas not dimensioned for this growing volume of traffic in residential access networks

- Furthermore, after the pandemic, digital inclusion and the Internet will also be essential for helping recover from the damage caused to the economy resulting from the measures adopted for dealing with COVID-19, and fundamental for returning to economic development and the exercise of citizenship;

- That, according to the PNAD/IBGE, 21% of Brazilian households still have no access to the Internet;

- That a large number of people, even with access to the Internet, still have difficulties using it, because of the lack of skills when confronted with new technologies;

- That Internet access is an essential service, but that on its own it is unable to meet all of society's demands for information and communication;

- That it is necessary to invest in content and the applications required for each specific case, without underestimating the importance of platforms, such as radio and digital television that must also be supported.

GOES PUBLIC TO STRESS THAT:

A. Because of the characteristics of the telecommunication services that support Internet access in Brazil, access to the Internet is largely through the mobile telecommunications service, the Personal Mobile Service (PMS);

B. Mobile networks are designed and set up with limited capacity, due to their technologies and radio frequencies and are based on statistical models of the dynamic occupation of urban spaces, privileging essentially the mobility of people and machines and, for this reason, both prepaid and post-paid service plans are limited by franchises and the bigger the franchise the more expensive the service plan that is offered;

C. That many low-income consumers, in the scenario of the quarantine established due to

the pandemic, have found it difficult to access the Internet due to the franchises they have signed up with and to use the online tools for their work, study and access to other public services;

D. The economic scenario resulting from the pandemic has been having an impact on the economy and affecting companies that provide telecommunication services and Internet connectivity. It has also been affecting citizens who were left without their regular income due to the self-isolation process established throughout Brazil;

E. Since 2001 telecommunication service customers have been paying part of the Fund for Universalization of Telecommunications Services (*FUST*), but the amounts collected were never used, with the exception of a small amount 18 years ago.

1. Therefore, CGI.br recommends that the Executive and Legislative Branches of government:

1.1. Recognize the essential and universal character of the Internet connection service in order to highlight the urgent need for the adoption of incentive measures, including the effective use of sectoral telecommunication funds to finance investments in the network infrastructure necessary for maintaining and expanding access for the low-income population, especially those living in a socially vulnerable situation;

1.2. Acknowledge that because of self-isolation, during this exceptional period and during the period when the economic indicators are recovering, there is a need to guarantee the payment of telecommunication and Internet connectivity services for economically vulnerable users;

1.3. Invest resources in financing the expansion of network infrastructure, especially in communities located on the outskirts of cities and in remote locations;

1.4. Streamline procedures for releasing financing for small and medium-sized PMS providers in conditions that are compatible with the urgency that has been triggered by the pandemic scenario;

1.5. Make every effort in all spheres to remove legislative barriers and excessive regulations to the installation of BTSs, telecommunication towers and the laying of fiber optic networks;

1.6. Guarantee the expansion of the digital TV signal by quickly liberating the installation of repeaters in the interior of the country as a way of making distance learning feasible in

locations where there is no effective access to the Internet, where there are no technological resources as needed for this purpose.

1.7. Along the same lines, CGI.br argues that financing instruments should also be used as a source of funds for accelerating the digital transformation of government and the Brazilian economy, as well as for the digital inclusion of society after the pandemic.

2. CGI.br recommends that its users generally:

2.1. Take extra care to prevent online scams and avoid the spread of fake news. Be wary with regard to unsolicited messages, do not access links without being sure of the destination, are suspicious of overly advantageous proposals and do not pass on news without checking first whether it is true;

2.2. Use parental control tools and follow the guidance of specialists to protect children and teenagers against criminal actions on the Internet;

2.3. Always keep operating systems and apps up-dated;

2.4. Avoid using the mobile phone network in places where Wi-Fi is an alternative. If possible, only send and download videos, photos or install new apps when they have a Wi-Fi connection;

2.5. Become volunteers - Help people who have difficulty using Internet applications; they may even find it easy to use messaging apps, but they are sometimes unable to fill out a form online, for example;

2.6. When buying new equipment, donate what is being replaced, because smartphones, tablets or computers that are in good condition are essential when it comes to people on a low income also being able to participate in activities on the Internet.

3. CGI.br recommends that ICT companies:

3.1. Autonomous System Owners (ASN) should take extra care to prevent and mitigate attacks on their network. Ensure their logical and physical systems also have spare protection capacity in order to avoid as many failures as possible such the loss of packages, increased jitter, high latency, but above all unavailability;

3.2. Telecommunication companies, including small and medium-sized MCS providers, should try and increase their capacity and accelerate the pace of expansion of their

networks in order to cover all inhabited areas in Brazilian municipalities;

3.3. Internet application development and content production companies must make their skills available to small and micro-enterprises, individual micro-entrepreneurs (IMEs) and civil society organizations in order to guarantee and strengthen their presence in the Internet economy;

3.4. Companies and organizations that own radio and television concessions must engage in increasing the number of available radio and television classes that are essential for distance learning where it is not possible to reach with the Internet;

3.5. Large companies that use the Internet must contribute to the digital inclusion of their employees, their chain of small suppliers and the communities they can reach.

4. For the Third Sector and the academic community CGI.br recommends that:

4.1. Third Sector entities use their mobilization capacity to identify the social vulnerability that results from digital exclusion, and to propose actions in partnership with ICT companies and adjustments to the legal framework, together with the Executive and Legislative branches. In addition, they should develop and encourage projects to ensure universal access to the Internet;

4.2. Areas related to the information and communication technologies of the academic community, which is already widely engaged in the fight against COVID-19, should also direct their research towards urgent solutions that enable progress to be made in terms of digital inclusion;

4.3. Education institutions should support and promote the necessary training both for users and technicians, in order to reduce barriers and deficiencies with regard to the digital literacy of the population in general, and for training and updating technical support teams at an accelerated pace in order to address the changes that will arise in the new post-pandemic scenario.