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IGF
2024

**Hong Kong Youth
Internet Governance Forum**
Prompting a S.M.A.R.T. Digital Economy

REPORT

WORDS FROM THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

After a five-year hiatus, we are pleased to have brought back the in-person **Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum** (HKyIGF) on July 27, 2024. More than 30 digital natives gathered at Hong Kong Baptist University to deliberate on their desired digital future with public and private sector professionals and academia in a series of interactive workshops, thematic discussions and experts' sharing sessions. The theme, "***Prompting a S.M.A.R.T. Digital Economy***", underscores our commitment to reinforcing sustainability, inclusivity, accountability, resilience and trust in the digital realm.

It has been an exhilarating journey to put together this digital empowerment initiative that equipped youth in Hong Kong with the foundational skills and insights to become aware and apprehend the complexities of ever-changing cyberspace. And with carefully curated content and sessions, delegates were able to take a stand on stage and the first stab at formulating the **2024 Hong Kong Collective Youth Statement on Internet Governance**.

This Forum offered a gateway for youth to embark on having constructive conversations and meaningful collaborations for the global common digital future. It is now crucial to empower these promising youth to participate in and delve further into the Internet governance discourse. Showing them paths to the "What's Next-s" and telling them the impact they have made in previous contributions are keys to captivating youth for continuous engagement.

Therefore, the subsequent **S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellowship** curated by Kenneth Leung, the **Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum** (APrIGF**)** coordinated by DotAsia Organisation, as well as the **Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum** (yIGF.Asia) and other regional programs by NetMission.Asia all play important roles in keeping youth informed and involved in the Internet policymaking processes and latest tech trends.

As we propel towards a brighter and more inclusive digital landscape, youth participation in this year's HKyIGF would not just be a standalone contribution – it is a pledge to the long-term commitment to a smarter and more equitable future and the *Internet We Want.*

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Digital Empowerment &
Tech Policy Specialist
@kennethkleung

Ms. Jasmine KO
Project Manager,
DotAsia Organisation

Mr. Timothy LI
Executive Assistant,
DotAsia Organisation

Ms. Jenna FUNG
Program Director,
NetMission.Asia

The Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum (HKyIGF) is a digital empowerment initiative for youth to exchange knowledge and thoughts about the Internet. The set of inclusive and interactive sessions with Internet policy practitioners, enthusiasts, and stakeholders invite digital natives to be involved in shaping the future of the Internet as they become aware of how Internet governance impacts their lives. HKyIGF promotes digital citizenship among youth by accentuating the Internet governance global discourse with relevant local contexts. By also amplifying local interests on the global stage, the Forum reinforces the multi-stakeholder model under the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UNIGF) mandate.

HKyIGF was first initiated by NetMission.Asia in parallel with the 2010 Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) and has been recognized by the UNIGF since then. In 2024, HKyIGF returned to the physical setting after 5 years under the theme "Prompting a S.M.A.R.T. Digital Economy", providing youth with a pathway and the necessary skills to voice their interests and perspectives meaningfully in Hong Kong and beyond.

This year's HKyIGF 2024 cast light on the latest technological trends and innovations, as well as the opportunities, risks, and Internet governance discourse that emerge therewith across the globe and carry implications for Hong Kong's transformation into a Smart City. With the ambition to build a world-famed Smart Hong Kong, it is paramount to ensure that the digital economy is **S.M.A.R.T.** – **S**ustainable, **M**ultistakeholder-involved, **A**ccountable, **R**esilient, and **T**rusted.

With a mix of gamified workshops, panel discussions, experts' sharing, open dialogues and networking opportunities, this year's Forum was carefully designed to ensure perspectives from the government, academia, private sector, technical community, civil society, and the youth are well represented in discussions. HKyIGF participants deliberated on the above topics and formulated their own statement with reference to the three thematic tracks of the 2024 Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) – "Security and Trust", "Resilience", and "Ethical Governance of Emerging Technologies".

Synthesizing the collective interests of Hong Kong digital natives, the youth statement will be a tool to ensure Hong Kong youth voices are being considered and valued in regional Internet governance forums as a contributing document.

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance

As the key deliverable outcome of the Forum, the collective statement synthesized Hong Kong digital natives' interests and concerns regarding the Internet in a local context and the global state. Reinforcing the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, this exercise honed skills of, and provided an actual path for, youth to meaningfully engage in tech policymaking processes. The Statement was filed as an input to amplify Hong Kong youth voices in local, regional and global Internet governance discussions.

Gamified Workshops

An overview of Internet Protocol fundamentals demystified associated Internet concepts through games, equipped youth with an understanding and the set of language essential for Internet governance discussions.

Thematic Discussions

Dynamic discussions with a focus on the 2024 APrIGF thematic tracks with a wide array of perspectives, prompted participants to think critically as they were formulating their own views on Internet governance.

Experts' Sharing

With a diverse set of perspectives delivered by thought leaders across stakeholder groups on longstanding and emerging Internet governance matters, participants gained broader insights into the intricacies and controversies of the Internet.

Networking and Open Dialogues

Open dialogues and networking throughout the Forum further encouraged youth to express ideas, ask questions and exchange thoughts among fellow participants and speakers whenever appropriate.

Empower youth in Hong Kong to be competent digital citizens and fortify the multistakeholder model of Internet governance with equitable youth engagement in decision-making processes.

Opening Remarks
| Ms. Jennifer CHUNG

Gamified Workshop & Expert's Sharing: How does the Internet Work?
| Mr. Edmon CHUNG, Mr. Timothy LI, Ms. Jasmine KO

Youth Statement Workshop I – Building Thoughts
| Mr. Kenneth LEUNG

Expert's Sharing: Economics & Governance of Tech Public Policy
| Dr. Monique WAN

Expert's Sharing: Regulatory Approaches to AI in the Cases of the U.S., the EU & China
| Mr. George CHEN

Expert's Sharing: Public-Private Partnerships in the Digital Economy
| Mr. Timothy TAM

Thematic Discussion: Prompting an Accountable & Trusted Digital Economy
| Mr. George CHEN, Mr. Timothy TAM, Mr. Kenneth LEUNG

Youth Statement Workshop II – Trading Thoughts
| Mr. Kenneth LEUNG

Thematic Discussion: Prompting a Resilient & Trusted Digital Economy
| Ms. Chris Perera, Ms. Jasmine KO

Youth Statement Workshop III – Sharing Thoughts
| Mr. Kenneth LEUNG

Closing Remarks
| Mr. Ryan MAN, Mr. Kenneth LEUNG

Ms. Jennifer CHUNG
Director of Knowledge
DotAsia Organisation

Mr. Edmon CHUNG
CEO
DotAsia Organisation

Dr. Monique WAN
Associate Dean
(Taught Postgraduate Studies),
School of Business
Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)

Mr. George CHEN
Managing Director &
Co-Chair
Digital Practice,
The Asia Group

Mr. Timothy TAM
Associate Director
Programme Management,
CEO Office
Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP)

Ms. Chris PERERA
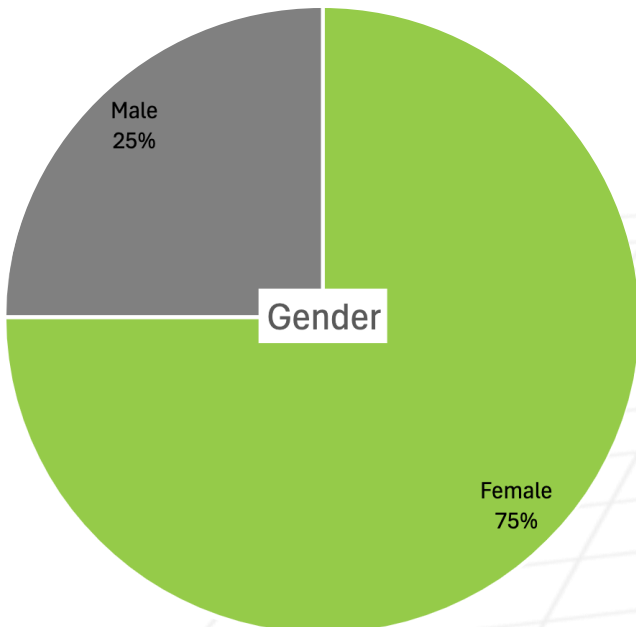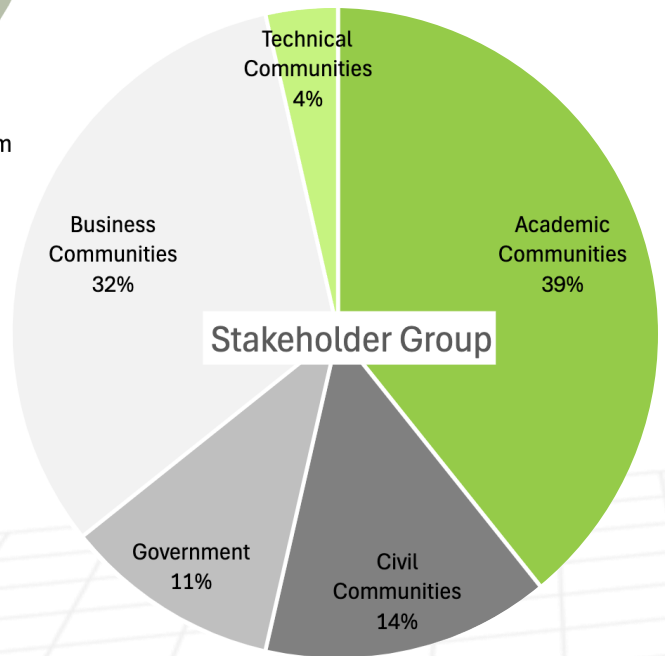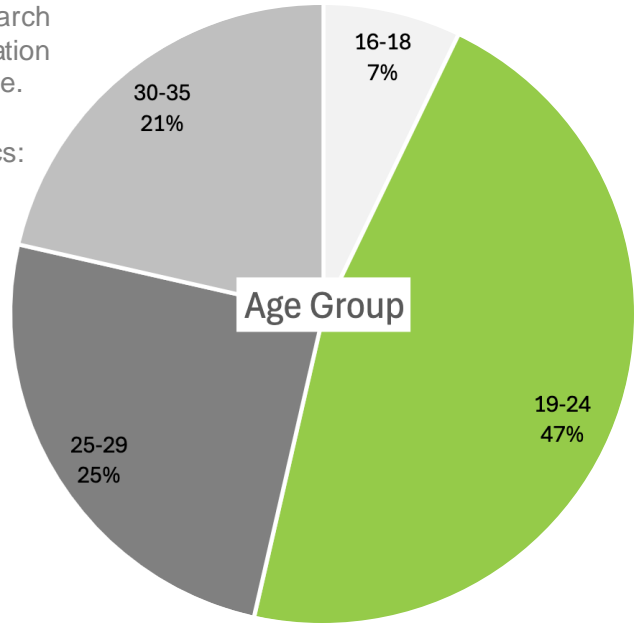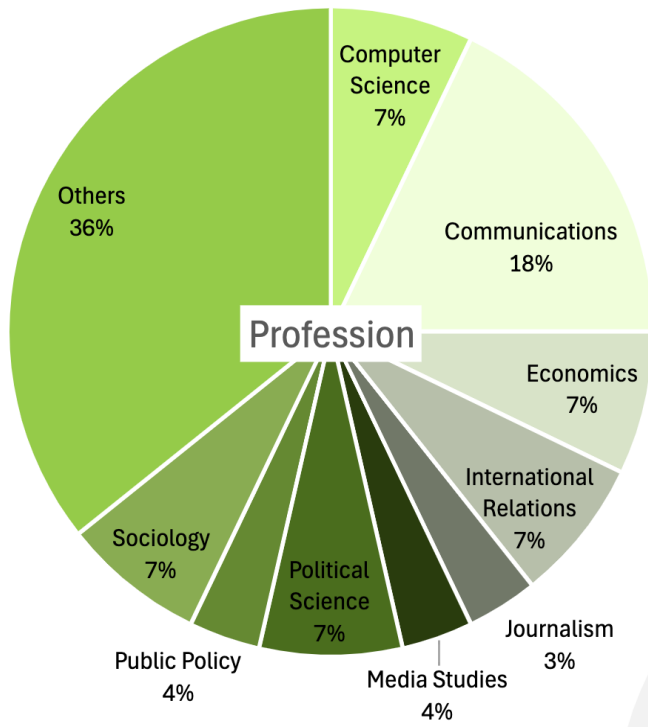Managing Director
APAC Spectrum Associates Ltd

Mr. Ryan MAN
Associate Dean
(Undergraduate Studies),
Office of the Dean of Business
Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)

With the return of HKyIGF announced on June 14, 2024, a Google Form was set up for public registration. This was first shared on HKyIGF's Instagram and Facebook pages and later promoted further using Meta Ads. Targeted mass email invitations were also sent to students, research assistants and faculty members of higher education institutions in fields related to the Internet and governance.

Captured below is a snapshot of delegates' demographics:

Age Group
- 16-18 7%
- 30-35 21%
- 25-29 25%
- 19-24 47%

Profession
- Computer Science 7%
- Others 36%
- Communications 18%
- Economics 7%
- International Relations 7%
- Sociology 7%
- Political Science 7%
- Journalism 3%
- Public Policy 4%
- Media Studies 4%

Stakeholder Group
- Technical Communities 4%
- Business Communities 32%
- Academic Communities 39%
- Government 11%
- Civil Communities 14%

Gender
- Male 25%
- Female 75%

HKyIGF 2024 delegates reflected on their participation in the Forum on social media, excerpts below:

Spur of the moment decision to attend the Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum last week turned out to be a goldmine! 🏆 Learned a ton about internet governance policies and got to pick the brains of some seriously impressive people in the field. Feeling inspired and ready to contribute to shaping the digital future!

🌐 As a participant in the Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum, I found the experience to be truly eye-opening and empowering! 🙌

A big thank you to the organizers and speakers who made this such a transformative experience! I'm excited to see the positive impact we can make together in building a brighter digital tomorrow! 🚀

The boundless energy and passion of my fellow digital natives captivated me as we immersed ourselves in discussions on shaping a smart, sustainable, and trusted digital future. 💬

LASTING IMPACT

The rejuvenation of the HKyIGF has made a lasting impact by not just raising awareness among digital natives in Hong Kong (and their communities) about the Internet, but also civic education in participating in public policy discussions.

Following the conclusion of HKyIGF 2024, over 30% of delegates (count: 11) signed up to join the S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellowship to work on finalizing their collective statement on Internet governance. This is a strong indication of the Forum's **success in building the capacity of Hong Kong's next-generation tech policy observers and shapers**, as well as **building a community for continuous youth engagement in this space** alongside other digital empowerment programs and opportunities.

With S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellowship curated by Mr. Kenneth LEUNG, the standalone extension of HKyIGF played a vital role in enabling Hong Kong youth to carry their own voices and interests overseas themselves. With 3 HKyIGF delegates/S.M.A.R.T.I. fellows joining physically and 1 virtually live, their participation in both yIGF.Asia and APrIGF were valuable experiences in their newly embarked journey of Internet governance. S.M.A.R.T.I. fellows' presence was greatly recognized by APrIGF 2024 participants across stakeholder groups. Their reflections posted online bolstered the impact derived from HKyIGF, but also informed other HKyIGF delegates **how their contribution made material influence beyond the Forum, encouraging Hong Kong digital natives to make continuous efforts in shaping a S.M.A.R.T.-er digital economy.**

Other than overseas engagement, 4 HKyIGF delegates/S.M.A.R.T.I. fellows also joined the fourth cohort (September – December 2024) of NetMission.Asia's Asia Pacific Policy Observatory (APPO) to hone tech policy research and analytical skills with a better understanding of the dynamics between polls, policies, people and politics. Through bi-weekly meetings online, Hong Kong youth have regular opportunities to connect with and exchange insights with NetMission Ambassadors and Internet governance enthusiasts across the region.

HKyIGF delegates were also encouraged to apply for other digital empowerment programs and opportunities such as the next cohort of NetMission Academy, Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy (APIGA) and other fellowships offered by the Internet Society, ICANN and the United Nations. By keeping in touch with HKyIGF delegates through different digital empowerment initiatives and on social media, **the 2024 HKyIGF Organizing Committee envisages their continuous and meaningful engagement in Internet governance discourse, making a lasting impact on our common digital future.**

DotAsia Organisation is a not-for-profit organization with a mission to promote Internet development and adoption in Asia. DotAsia has a strong mandate for socio-technological advancement initiatives including (a) digital inclusion projects to bridge the digital divide and the poverty gap; (b) educational initiatives, e.g. scholarships and promotion of Internet adoption for the advancement of knowledge, etc.; and, (c) research and development projects, including relief and re-build efforts in the wake of natural and otherwise disasters. DotAsia oversees the '.Asia' top-level Internet domain name and is formed as an open consortium of 20 official top-level-domain authorities around the region. In the past two decades, Asia has developed into a global force in the commercial, political and cultural network. The .Asia domain aspires to embrace this dynamism in the Asia Century to become a nucleus, intersection, and breeding ground for Internet activity and development in the region.

The Internet Governance Forum Support Association (IGFSA) is set up to support the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The goal of the IGFSA is to provide stable and sustainable support for the IGF Secretariat and to fund related activities. The IGFSA was launched on September 1, 2014 at the ninth IGF meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. The purpose of IGFSA is to promote and support the global IGF as well as the national and regional IGF initiatives. It shall notably, support the general objectives of the IGF.

Founded in 1956, **Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) School of Business** is the longest-established publicly funded business school in Hong Kong with a strong culture of teaching and research excellence, and among the 1% of business schools worldwide honoured with triple accreditation by the three leading global accreditation bodies: AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS.

The School is committed to excellence in education and research. It has been inspiring good business practice, creating values for stakeholders, and informing social and economic development through research on corporate sustainability, encompassing business ethics, corporate social responsibility and corporate governance. With scholars from across all the business disciplines, the HKBU School of Business aspires to be a leader in providing students with quality whole-person business education and in conducting impactful business research with and for society.Marrying academic challenges with practical experience in a vibrant intellectual setting, HKBU School of Business is the ideal platform for future leaders to explore, discover, research, and create.

The **NetMission** Ambassadors Program is a non-profit initiative that engages and empowers university students from Asia. Ambassadors are given the skills and knowledge to participate in Internet Governance discourse and to further build the capacity of other youth in Asia so their voices may also be heard. Ambassadors have the opportunity to participate in local, regional, and international conferences, and organize conferences and training activities for other youth.

Since the program was started in 2009, NetMission Ambassadors have regularly attended international Internet Governance conferences, including the United Nations International Governance Forum, ICANN, Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum, etc. NetMission Ambassadors have also played a leadership role in regional srnd local youth events, including the Asia Pacific Youth Internet Forum, Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy, and starting the annual Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum in 2016.

Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum
SESSION RECAP

/ Gamified Workshop /
How does the Internet Work?

Electrified by the turnout of in-person-format HKyIGF this year, Mr. Timothy LI and Ms. Jasmine KO were from head-to-toe galvanized and delivered punchy fervent introductions to kickstart the gamified workshop. Devised and conducted by the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), served as a fresh round of fundamental terminological guidance into the realm of Internet governance.

The 2024 HKyIGF Organizing Committee would also like to take this opportunity to thank APNIC for consenting to the use of its edutainment tool and materials.

IPGO is a card game that simulates how the Internet works. Bearing the instructional and interactive natures, the gamified module of IPGO serves as a gateway for digital natives and non-tech-savvy people to acquire fundamental knowledge of how the Internet, as a network of networks, functions in a broad cross-border context. (Learn more about IPGO here)

Through the interactive gamified module, delegates garnered a fundamental understanding of several foundational Internet concepts and protocols. By physically grouping the Device Cards into the different Network Operator Cards, delegates grasped the idea of "devices" (i.e., Internet of Things) connecting to the Internet through Internet Service Providers. While requesting Internet Protocol (IP) address allocations and assigning them to devices highlighted how IP addressing works to identify network hosts, building routing tables, the most laborious part throughout the game (in its literal sense), between operators illustrated how networks rely on routing protocols to determine paths for data transmission across the decentralized Internet.

As the gamified workshop neared its conclusion, one of the most difficult aspects delegates encountered was routing packets and determining the optimal pathways for data transmission. Timothy LI and Jasmine KO zoomed in on the two basic types of relationships in data transmission ("peer" and "transit"), from which different market dynamics and behaviors among the network operators would stem. The process of sending "packet" data from source to destination reinforced how pieces of data are divided and transmitted over IP networks through packet switching.

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

/ Expert's Sharing /
How does the Internet Work?

Overall, IPGO's hands-on gameplay enabled participants to not only learn about but also experience key principles like networking models, IP addressing, routing, packet transfer, protocol iterations, and the domain name system (DNS) that governs how the internet fundamentally operates.

With the IPGO game wrapped up by Timothy LI and Jasmine KO, **Mr. Edmon CHUNG, CEO, DotAsia Organisation**, debriefed IPGO and demystified associated Internet concepts and implications. Questions regarding the current governance mechanism of Internet Protocol, standards and the allocation of IP address blocks to network operators were addressed. Safeguards in packet routing personal data were also touched upon.

IPGO's blend of clear learning objectives and engaging gameplay make it a versatile and valuable educational tool that could benefit students, professionals, policymakers, and really any group looking to build a stronger conceptual model of internet architecture and operations. This session prepared delegates with fundamental knowledge and a set of language that could be of use in subsequent sessions as they explore different aspects of Internet governance for a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy.

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

/ Expert's Sharing /
Shaping the Digital Future:
The Economics & Governance of
Tech Public Policy

Following the first Youth Statement Workshop where delegates had a basic understanding of a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy and a preliminary idea of formulating their respective calls to action statements, **Dr. Monique Wan, Associate Dean (Taught Postgraduate Studies), School of Business, HKBU**, offered several tools to analyze incentives and policies of digital platform services providers, consumers, and governments.

Underscoring the various mechanisms and incentives of multiple stakeholders on digital platforms, Dr Wan illustrated how platform service providers can uncover business values through strategic design of "internal governance" (e.g., service agreements and terms and conditions). Alongside the introduction of "infonomics" and behavioral economic theories, Dr Wan illustrated how data and information might be used and misused in the digital economy, as well as the associated risks consumers may encounter when engaging in online activities.

With a call for delegates' critical thinking and end-users' role in fostering a brighter and more equitable digital future, Dr Wan enlisted several tech public policy directions that governments could take to ensure a S.M.A.R.T. digital future.

These academic insights were valuable in helping delegates formulate the appropriate calls to action/policy recommendations in addressing their issues of concern towards a S.M.A.R.T. Digital Economy.
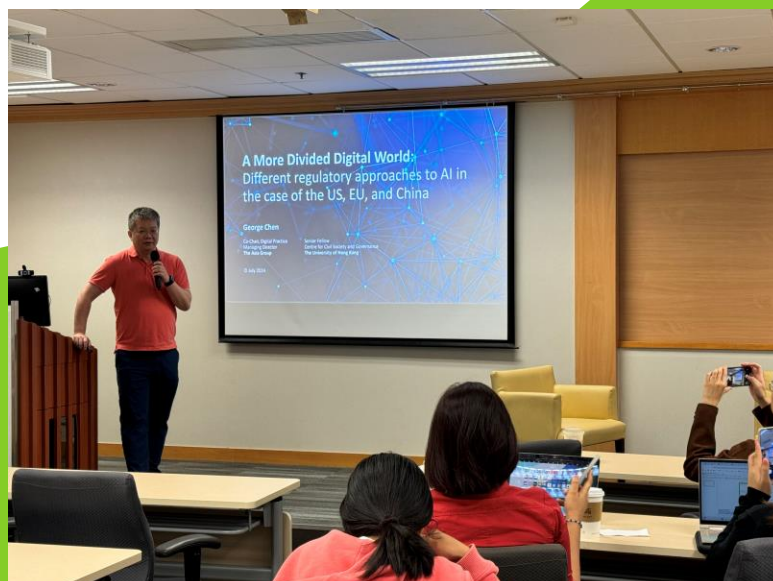

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

/ Expert's Sharing /
A More Divided World:
Regulatory Approaches to AI
in the Cases of the U.S., the EU & China

This session emphasized the importance of artificial intelligence (AI) governance for its irreversible and severe consequences. **Mr. George CHEN, Managing Director and Co-Chair, Digital Practice, The Asia Group,** shared his observations and previous research work that compare AI regulatory approaches to AI of the above-mentioned jurisdictions.

On the wide spectrum from the U.S. to the EU to China in governing the digital economy, the U.S. espouses a free Internet and the EU highly regulates this space, while China sets up the Great Firewall. When it comes to analyzing their governing approaches, Deriving from *Anu Bradford's Digital Empires*, George CHEN put forward that the U.S. champions "innovation"; the EU tilts toward "protectionism"; and China adheres to "ideology".

George CHEN further posited that the Internet already meant politics, and AI would make the Internet even more political and divided. The global AI regulation landscape as of date depicted the extensive influence of each significant jurisdiction on neighboring states. It is foreseeable that the era of AI uprising would generate more challenges. Recent initiatives such as leading to relevant discussions are highly encouraging and should be made a recurring event for continuous engagement to burnish AI governance and prevent AI-powered arms races – especially at a time of contentious China-U.S. relations and other geopolitical tensions in different parts of the world.

Additionally, several policy recommendations were also tabled for a less divided digital world. Regional institutions and economic frameworks should play a role in AI governance despite political reluctance. The United Nations should step up to improve the digital divide, especially in non-English ecosystems such as the Global South and Central Asia. Big Tech should also take more social responsibilities as they advocate for continuing to self-regulate AI. The "digital colony" mindset should also be abandoned when engaging smaller non-English speaking APAC jurisdictions.

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

/ Expert's Sharing /
Public-Private Partnerships
in the Digital Economy

There is no denying the pivotal role generative AI is playing throughout digital transformations, which have been unleashing productivity potential and fueling more awe-inspiring economic achievements than ever before. Salient issues, however, stand in the way of materializing digital economic ideals. Within them, pressing concerns surrounding data privacy, the spread of dis/misinformation, cross-border data flows and data localization requirements are stifling intellectual property creations and hampering productivity renewal processes. In response to these impediments, there is a growing imperative for the digital economy to foster robust, adaptable, and innovative Public-Private Partnerships (also known as PPPs).

As the potential of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) within the digital economy is explored, **Mr. Timothy TAM, Associate Director, Programme Management, CEO Office, HKSTP**, categorized these opportunities into economic impact, infrastructure and ecosystem development, and talent management.

On economic impact – the Hong Kong Government's pursuits of attracting strategic enterprises and skilled talent specializing in targeted sectors were acknowledged. Yet, the vital question of balancing self-reliance and maintaining Hong Kong's global business landscape should be deliberated.

On infrastructure and ecosystem development – Hong Kong innovation clusters have been receiving government support for over two decades. The private sector should also be more involved in developing Hong Kong's infrastructure and ecosystem with co-incubation and co-acceleration programs.

On talent management – reskilling and upskilling for the future of work are increasingly important in light of AI advancements. Inclusive growth to ensure all segments of the population benefit is of utmost importance. In the meantime, the private sector has been running initiatives focused on enhancing digital literacy and bridging the skills gap, exemplifying the potential of PPPs in this area.

Timothy TAM highlighted fostering PPPs and promoting inclusive digital ecosystems could raise policy efficacy. Industry associations provide feedback on local critical tech issues in policy consultations while global best practices provide valuable insights for creating frameworks that facilitate collaboration among stakeholders. Striking a balance between innovation and regulations remains crucial.

By focusing on economic impact, infrastructure development, and talent management, stakeholders can harness the numerous opportunities for collaboration and growth within the digital economy, ensuring that both public and private sectors effectively contribute to a more dynamic and S.M.A.R.T. digital landscape.

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

/ Thematic Discussion /
Prompting an Accountable & Trusted Digital Economy

Following the two keynote presentations by **Mr. George CHEN and Mr. Timothy TAM, they sat down with moderator Mr. Kenneth LEUNG** to delve further into the vision of a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy. Acknowledging partnerships could make sure different parties in the digital economy can hold each other accountable, Timothy and George highlighted the different aspects of partnerships between the public and private sector – from policy formulation to ecosystem betterment and social good initiatives.

Furthering on putting "people" into the equation of public–private partnership, the interests of private companies have to align with people's interests for the sustainability of their own businesses. Involving the general public from the outset would be beneficial in making sure people's interests are taken into account, but it also has to be balanced with efficiency, especially when the Internet and innovation are evolving rapidly.

Promoting open dialogues between citizens and the private sector would enable public input to directly shape company policies and initiatives that have greater social implications – eventually building public trust in respective business services and the overall digital economy.

Using this as a segue, the discussion shifted to focus on building a trusted digital economy, where two additional key points were raised. Firstly, trust can only be built via consistency of actions. The importance of integrity is emphasized, especially when tech companies are aggressively investing in emerging technologies and features such as AI, but longstanding issues like online scams are said to be "unresolved".

On the flip side, it is acknowledged that building public trust in technologies and digital services is more challenging than tangible products like groceries. Therefore, transparency and accountability also become essential for trust-building in the digital economy. This will not only count on tech companies' transparency practices (e.g., periodic transparency reports), but also on admitting wrongdoings and mistakes as appropriate (with honest remedies).

Delegates actively intervened throughout the session with questions from the multistakeholder model in Internet governance and public education on emerging technologies' full potential. These enriched the discussion towards a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy.

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

/ Thematic Discussion /
Prompting a Resilient & Trusted Digital Economy

In the style of fireside chat, this thematic discussion started by Ms. Jasmine KO on introducing **Ms. Chris PERERA, Managing Director, APAC Spectrum Associates Ltd**, with her career path and experience in Internet Governance from private sector and government perspectives.

When it comes to her expertise in Internet resilience and security, Chris PERERA pointed out that several elements have to be considered. Firstly on network security, what are the standards involved and how do these relate to cybersecurity and cyber threats. Then, she talked about Data Governance with examples of security, privacy, cross-border data flows and data localization. The role of User education is crucial to minimize risks that have occurred throughout the latest Internet development. AI strategy is another debatable wide topic – especially the counter-arguments between ease vs. scams.

As a former adviser to New Zealand ICT Minister and Broadcasting Minister, Chris PERERA highlighted that formulating regulatory frameworks and balancing various public policy objectives such as market access and ease of doing business are crucial. Public consultations and industry engagement are good avenues to communicate the importance of specific policy objectives and interests. Besides, advocacy work does consist of thought leadership, with the need to consider Industry investment return, costs involved, and policy objectives to make sense of the advocacy campaign.

Also being the closing session of the Forum, the discussion steered onto paths breaking into a tech career, where Chris PERERA shed light on the various paths that youth could take. Her own experience as a reference encourages youth to think out of the box. With her Engineering academic background, she eventually developed expertise in public policy and regulatory affairs throughout her on-the-job training. The key reminder here for youth to think of is: What transferable skills and expertise are we bringing to the next organization or along our career path?

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

/ Networking & Open Dialogues /
Remarks and Informal Engagement

Informal networking and open dialogues, as well as the working lunch also enabled delegates to gather around In between HKyIGF sessions to continue the conversations they just had during the curated workshops and discussions. Expert speakers also stayed behind to exchange ideas on the formulation of delegates' statements on Internet governance. This is integral to the overall Forum that emphasized the importance of stakeholder interaction and reinforcing youth engagement and community in addressing Internet governance issues.

Ms. Jennifer CHUNG, Director of Knowledge, DotAsia Organisation, welcomed delegates by underscoring the importance of youth engagement in Internet governance to reinforce the multistakeholder model. She also gave a preview of this year's Forum and highlighted the importance of S.M.A.R.T in social progress, including on Internet governance and across the digital economy.

Mr, Ryan MAN, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies), Office of the Dean of Business, HKBU, gave the remarks following presentations by delegates towards a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy and acknowledged the delegates have embarked on an important journey for the betterment of our society. He also encouraged delegates to think and act smartly and innovatively where transdisciplinary knowledge has become an indispensable asset in the digital economy and society as a whole.

Recognizing the importance of continuous meaningful engagement and training for Hong Kong youth to contribute to shaping our digital common future, Mr. Kenneth LEUNG announced the launch of his S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellowship as a standalone extension of HKyIGF as he congratulated delegates on the skills they built and being a S.M.A.R.T.er digital citizen. He also introduced various capacity-building programs including the Asia Pacific Policy Observatory (APPO) and other engagements in the Internet policymaking space.

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

HONG KONG YOUTH COLLECTIVE STATEMENT
CO-CREATION PROCESS & IMPACT SNAPSHOTS

2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance

The 2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance is the key deliverable of the rejuvenated Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum (HKyIGF). The co-creation, launch and propagation of the Statement not only empowered youth to reflect on their relationships with the Internet and the digital world, but also for HKyIGF delegates to apply key takeaways and learnings from the various sessions of the Forum in practice.

The **co-creation** process of the Statement consisted of three main stages – pre-HKyIGF global consultation, HKyIGF workshops and post-HKyIGF working group – each carries distinctive roles in the formulation of the Statement and capacity building for youth to meaningfully contribute to a S.M.A.R.T.-er digital economy.

The **launch** of the Statement was presented by three HKyIGF delegates who traveled to Taiwan as S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellows for the annual Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum (yIGF.Asia) and Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF). Engaging with rising and seasoned Internet leaders abroad and making interventions in regional live discussions, Hong Kong youth voices were properly presented and represented by youth themselves.

The further **propagation** of the Statement made sure Hong Kong youth voices towards the digital common future were heard across local, regional, and global stages – reinforcing impact made by Hong Kong digital natives in summer 2024.

Youth Statement Co-Creation
/ Pre-HKyIGF Global Consultation /
June 24 – July 26

A 5-week pre-HKyIGF global consultation was launched online to collate thoughts from all walks of life in regard to the theme and/or the digital economy in general.

The consultation was first distributed and promoted on the 2024 HKyIGF webpage and social media accounts (Instagram and Facebook); personal invitations requesting input were also later sent to members active in shaping Internet governance. In addition to using a standalone Google Form for responses, the consultation was also added to the HKyIGF Registration Form as an optional section.

With the option to stay anonymous, a total of **27 submissions were received**. Responses captured comments across Academia, Civil Society, Government and Private Sector stakeholder groups from Hong Kong and other parts of the world, including, Africa, Oceania, South and Southeast Asia.

Yet, it is important to note that no responses from the global consultation were adopted *directly* as part of the Statement. HKyIGF delegates were instead only considering these broad responses where appropriate as they brainstormed and formulated their own thoughts and statements.

This was a great exercise for HKyIGF delegates to be on the other side of policy consultations, where they digested inputs from the public and incorporated relevant ones into their Statement. **With youth's enhanced understanding of the model and mechanisms of public consultations, this impacts beyond Internet governance vis-a-vis multistakeholderism to also benefits Hong Kong and the globe with strengthened citizenship.**
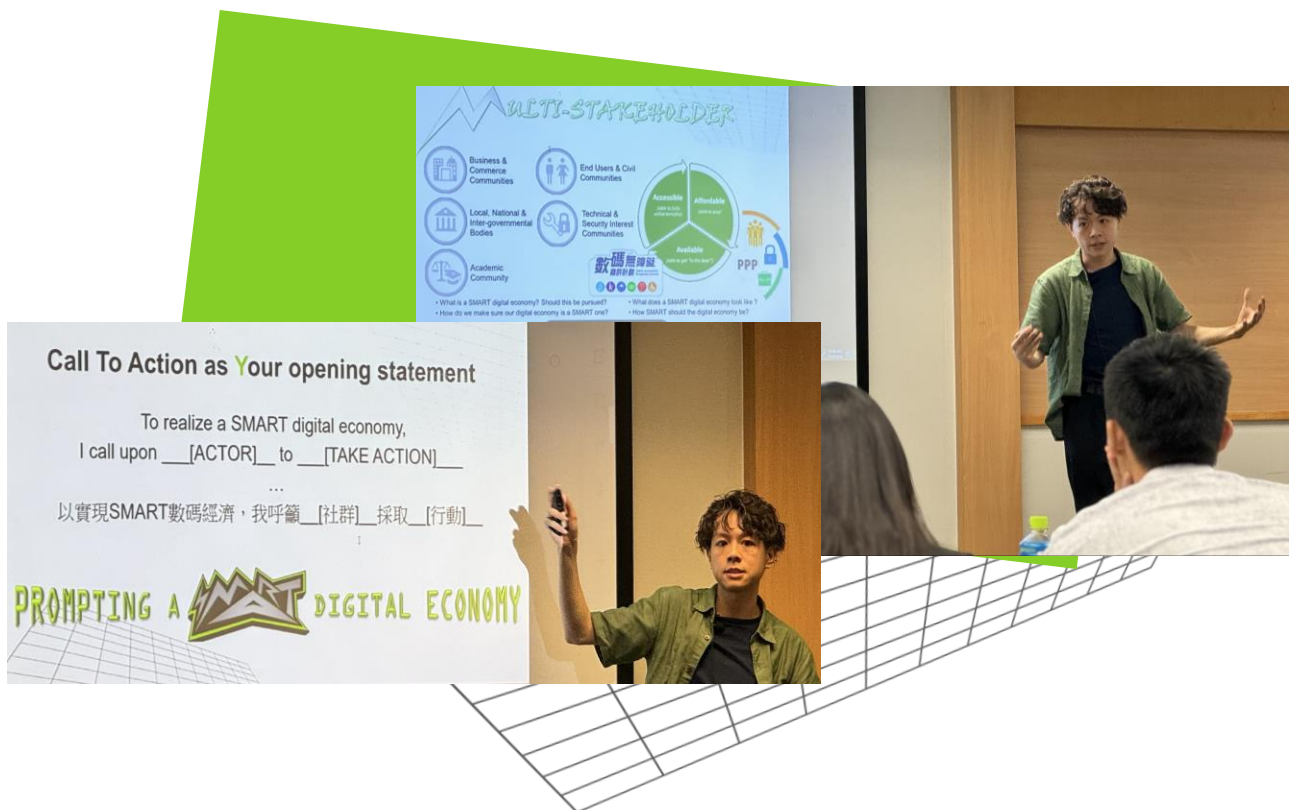
Held as a three-part workshop throughout this year's HKyIGF, each session was designed for a distinctive purpose – building thoughts, trading thoughts and sharing thoughts on a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy.

Starting with "**Building Thoughts**", Mr. Kenneth LEUNG deliberated with a roadmap on how the 2024 Hong Kong Collective Youth Statement on Internet Governance would be featured in and contribute to various local, regional and global discourses covering Internet governance as appropriate. The roadmap also gave delegates a glimpse into the governance structure of the Internet.

Before delegates decided on the digital economic issues they would like to spotlight and take a stand on (during this Workshop), Kenneth LEUNG illustrated what and how might each letter of "S.M.A.R.T." contribute to shaping a desired digital future. By ensuring Hong Kong's digital economy is a S.M.A.R.T. one – Sustainable, Multistakeholder-involved, Accountable, Resilient and Trusted, technological innovation and social progress in Hong Kong and the world would be encouraged and better developed to integrate across both cyber and physical spaces.

As delegates gained a better understanding of a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy, they were introduced to a modified Storytelling Canvas based on one of the innovation tools developed by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). With a step-by-step guide, they took the first stab at formulating and solidifying their (first) Statement on Internet Governance.

By employing the Storytelling Canvas modified from ITU Innovation, **delegates were able to articulate their interests and concerns about the Internet and digital economy in a more structured and compelling way.**
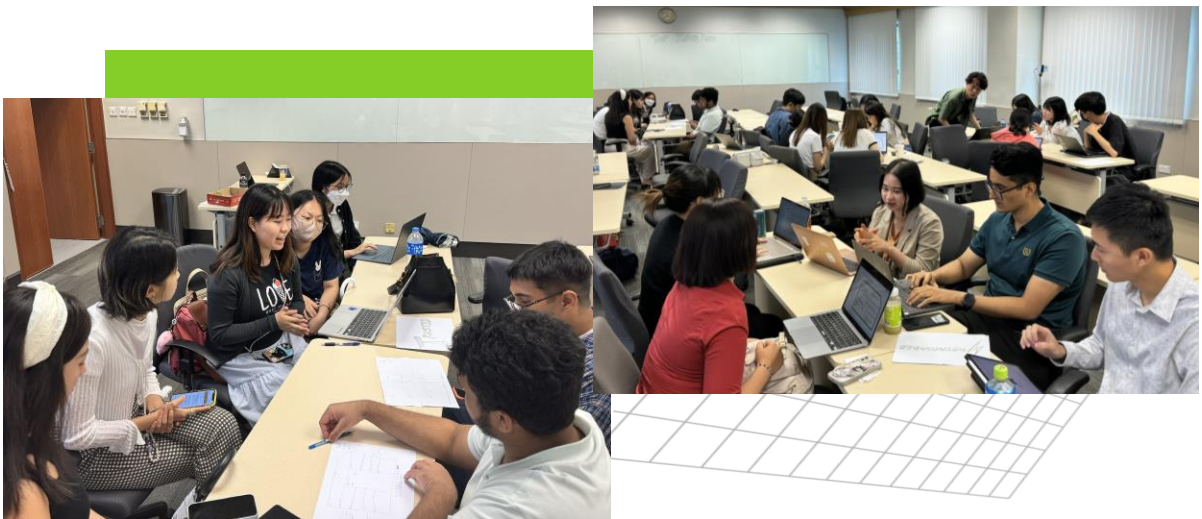
Youth Statement Co-Creation / HKyIGF Workshops /

July 27

As delegates formulated their own action-oriented statement on Internet governance and semi-finished Storytelling Canvas, they were split into "Group **S**ustainable", "Group **M**ultistakeholder", "Group **A**ccountable", "Group **R**esilient", and "Group **T**rust" according to their respective calls to action posited.

"**Trading Thoughts**" in the second Youth Statement Workshop, delegates were asked to present and discuss amongst their groups calls to action and canvases. They were also given access to a document that consolidated inputs received in the pre-HKyIGF global consultation round to advance delegates' exchanges. By taking into account their own canvases and statements, as well as global submissions for a S.M.A.R.T. Digital Economy, each group was tasked to draw up their Group Storytelling Canvas and Group Statement on Internet Governance. Expert speakers who were physically present also facilitated this session to guide delegates put together a strong case for a S/M/A/R/T digital economy.

As for the last of the three-part workshop, each group were given 4 minutes to present the outcomes of their discussions. In "**Sharing Thoughts**", delegates took a stand on stage calling on specific stakeholder(s) to address certain digital economic issues for a S/M/A/R/T-er common future. Audience questions and interventions followed every group presentation.

The Storytelling Canvas adopted for the 2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance was modified from ITU Innovation to facilitate HKyIGF delegates' formulation of their own statement and communicate effectively to their audience – other delegates in the room and the stakeholders they call upon to act in prompting a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy. (More about ITU Innovation's Storytelling Canvas here)

Along with the Storytelling Canvas, Kenneth LEUNG also posited five guiding questions to solidify delegates' statements: (1) What is a SMART digital economy? (2) Should this be pursued? (3) What does a SMART digital economy look like? (4) How do we make sure our digital economy is a SMART one? (5) How SMART should the digital economy be?

However, due to time constraints at the Forum, not all groups were able to agree on and fill out all boxes of the group storytelling canvas. Below are screenshots of the five canvases presented by HKyIGF delegates on stage.

SUSTAINABLE

IDEA
Education, regulation and supervision; Starting with schools and communities: universities ethical and moral education on us
technology companies showing us how to use their product; the self regulation of companies

3-5 year-plan: to increase adaptability of people to new technologies through education in highschool, inclusivity in different communities (less affluent backgrounds) equality in oppounirtity

COMMON GROUND
7 trillion dollars in GDP possibly generated by AI in the next 3 years; not a measure of per capita gains

PROOF
IMF: How artificial intellgience widens the gap between affluent and less affluent countries due to disparity in production processes

Unequal access to technological developments due to poverty (COVID-19); Scams

DESTINATION
To utilise and empower human beings when it comes to AI development to prevent being overpowered by new technology

CALL TO ACTION
To realise a sustainable digital economy, we call upon individual stakeholders, the government and provate organizations to educate themselves, push for the education of the masses to create a sense of sustainability

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER

IDEA
By prioritizing learning equity, we can unlock the transformative power of education, empowering all students to thrive and contribute to the betterment of our world

GOAL
-Ensure universal access to e-learning for all students.
-Promote educational equity and inclusivity.
- Implement AI-powered teching tools like AI teching assistants

COMMON GROUND
Parents, techers, students, government officials, and ethnic minority communities

Problem:
1. Lack of devices preventing some students from accessing e-learning
2. Unequal distribution of educational resources, particularly affecting ethnica minorities
3. Educational disparities due to age differences
Solutions:
1. Provide subsidies for electronic device purchases to bridge the digital divide
2. Utilize AI to offer personalized learning support to minority students with diverse needs.
3. Encourage younger generations to engage in community service to assist elderly individuals in educational settings

DESTINATION
Our destination is to create a multi-stakeholder ecosystem focused on education transformation

PROOF
-Khanmigo
-Intergeneration Tech Tutoring (NGP) program in Sham Shui Po

CALL TO ACTION
We urge the government to develop a comprehensive, long-term strategy for ensuring accessible online education for all.

ACCOUNTABLE

IDEA
Cooperation between third-party, organization and the government

GOAL
Make responsible decisions to products, services policies and practices.
Maintain balance between every sector, not being biased to any sector (decentralized)
Reduce the risks of cybercrime/hacks

COMMON GROUND
Enhance transprency by producing reports about data of how AI provide services assistance to the public

SUPPORTING STORY
There was legal analysis with members and the data rights law firm, AWO. It concluded the processing of consumers' personal data breaches the GDPR in multiple ways (Meta)

DESTINATION
Regulation to corporate and punishment/suspension to corporate if they users' personal information

PROOF
Regulate report on third party (with concrete data)

CALL TO ACTION
Build third-party organization to regulate the public but not just the government.
Provide more guidelines to the users

RESILIENT

IDEA
Technical circumvention tools like VPNs, mesh networks, and satellite Internet can help people bypass Internet blockades. Promoting distributed, decentralized Internet infrastructure that is harder to shut down entirely can increase overally system resilience Capacity building for civil society: Empowering local communities and activists with digital safety and circumvention skills that helps them stay online despite disruptions.

GOAL
Technical Community shall be parters to increase civil society's exposure to tech tools
- 70% of individuals have basic knowledge and skills to use technical circumbention tools

COMMON GROUND

SUPPORTING STORY

DESTINATION
Citizens from different stakeholder groups to be capable to encounter Internet shudowns

PROOF
Bangladesh protests - Internet shutdown under authoritarian regime

CALL TO ACTION

TRUSTED

IDEA
Government
Tech industry leaders, academia, civil society and users

GOAL
Develop and implement and stringent cybersecurity standards
Track the adoption and effectiveness of fair competition policies
Expand digital literacy programs to reach marginalized communities
Ensure ethical AI guidelines align with evolving technological advancements
Set deadlines for policy implementation and review

COMMON GROUND
Identify shared interest in promoting a fair, ethical and secure digital economy
- Highlight how future tech policies can benefit individuals, businesses and society as a whole.
- understand the needs and perspectives of diverse stakeholders to ensure policies are inclusive and effective

SUPPORTING STORY

DESTINATION
We try to ensure a digital economy that is sustainable, inclusive and trustworthy for all

PROOF

CALL TO ACTION

Youth Statement Co-Creation
/ Post-HKyIGF S.M.A.R.T.I. Working Group /
July 29 – August 13

Subsequent to HKyIGF 2024, Kenneth LEUNG launched the standalone S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellowship that included being part of the Working Group of the Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance. 11 HKyIGF delegates expressed interest and signed up to continue their engagement in Internet governance by being part of the S.M.A.R.T.I. Working Group.

Having based on the inputs collated during the Forum and pre-HKyIGF consultation for the Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance, Working Group members consolidated and finalized all submissions and the storytelling canvases for a cohesive statement on prompting a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy.

Across the two weeks, S.M.A.R.T.I. Working Group members gathered online twice via Google Meet for alignment and further deliberation on the Statement. For the style and consistency of the collective statement, Kenneth LEUNG presented a suggested structure for each (S/M/A/R/T) section. While all members were involved in formulating the entire Statement, two were assigned to lead one section for the ease of progress tracking.

Youth Statement Launch & Engagement
/ yIGF.Asia & APrIGF /
August 20 – August 23

Powered by S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellowship, 3 HKyIGF delegates presented the 2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance at the subsequent Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum (yIGF.Asia) held on August 20 in Taiwan. They were able to stand in front of over 160 youth from across the APAC region and amplified Hong Kong digital natives' call for a S.M.A.R.T. digital economy.

By being physically in the room (together with the 4th delegate/S.M.A.R.T.I. fellow joining virtually), they actively participated in yIGF.Asia and drove discussions during breakout sessions. The Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement was also made one of the reference documents in the formulation of yIGF.Asia's Youth Policy Statement.

HKyIGF delegates were also able to bring up specific calls and share examples with reference to the Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement (and HKyIGF) to regional stages – not just during yIGF.Asia, but also throughout their involvement in the Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) from August 21 to 23.

Interventions by HKyIGF delegates/S.M.A.R.T.I. fellows not only ensured Hong Kong youth's interests were taken into account in regional Internet governance discussions, this is also a crucial moment in digital empowerment to have Hong Kong youth saw their Statement through – from ideation and formulation to presentation and amplification – and made a mark in a material way.

Youth Statement Filings & Propagation / HK, APAC & the UN /
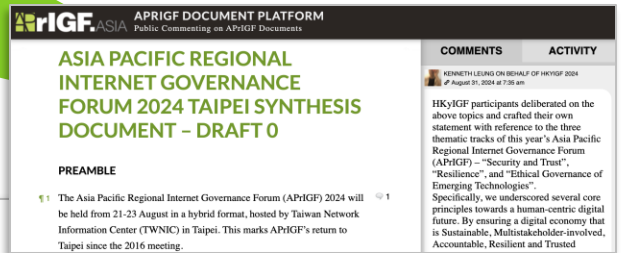
August – December

Local – Hong Kong

The 2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance was filed to the Chief Executive's Policy Unit of the Government of HKSAR online during the 2024 Policy Address Public Consultation. The annual Policy Address delivered by Hong Kong's chief executive sets the government's policy priorities, strategies and initiatives for the year ahead. Therefore, it is pertinent to underscore to the Hong Kong government the interests and appeals of its youth citizens during this consultation period.

Regional – Asia Pacific

HKyIGF delegates' participation in yIGF.Asia and APrIGF effectively amplified the outcome and impact of HKyIGF in regional live discussions. Additionally, Kenneth LEUNG spearheaded the submission of the 2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance to Secretariats of both regional fora, as well as made comments accordingly based on the Statement during the drafting of regional outputs – including (1) the yIGF.Asia Youth Policy Statement and (2) the APrIGF Synthesis Document.

Global – United Nations

While the 2024 United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF) has yet to be held as of the publication of this HKyIGF Report, we expect key insights from the regional outputs will be considered and deliberated during the IGF Youth Track and other relevant sessions of the global forum on December 15-19. Regardless so, with the 2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance embedded in this Report, Hong Kong youth voices would make their mark directly on the global stage by featuring on the UN IGF official website.

HONG KONG YOUTH COLLECTIVE STATEMENT
PROMPTING A S.M.A.R.T. DIGITAL ECONOMY

PROMPTING A SMART DIGITAL ECONOMY

2024 Hong Kong Youth Collective Statement on Internet Governance
Prompting a S.M.A.R.T. Digital Economy

Preamble

As the key deliverable of the 2024 Hong Kong Youth Internet Governance Forum (HKyIGF), the 2024 Hong Kong Collective Youth Statement on Internet Governance synthesises discussions and calls to action deliberated by the youth in Hong Kong, a metropolis with a population of over 7.5 million that has the ambition to be recognised as a "world-famed Smart City" by 2030.

Consolidated and finalised by Working Group members^, the Collective Statement was formulated based on HKyIGF participants' deliberation at the Forum, as well as submissions received from a 5-week pre-Forum global consultation for Hong Kong youth's consideration. With 5 chapters and 13 highlighted calls to action, this Statement is amplified and considered at regional and global fora, including the Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) and the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF).

This Hong Kong Collective Youth Statement on Internet Governance underscored several core principles towards a human-centric digital future. By ensuring a digital economy that is S.M.A.R.T. – **S**ustainable, **M**ultistakeholder-involved, **A**ccountable, **R**esilient and **T**rusted, technological innovation and social progress in Hong Kong and the world would be encouraged and better developed to integrate across both cyber and physical spaces.

This action-oriented statement by youth acknowledges the interdependencies and overlaps of efforts in achieving equitable sustainability, meaningful multistakeholder involvement, balanced accountability, high resilience and strong trust in shaping the desired digital future. While government agencies should generally assume the leadership/coordination role in charting a SMART digital economy and Internet governance, the success of such an ambition requires a robust whole-of-society approach that aligns with international standards and practices. Strategic partnerships and resource allocation, coupled with inclusive involvement across sectors and stakeholders, are crucial in ensuring a just digital transformation without hindering innovations and leaving certain underrepresented groups of people behind.

Youth in the year 2024 are referred to as digital natives for a reason, and it only makes sense to have "natives" at the table prompting a SMART digital economy. Meaningful youth engagement and influence in shaping our digital future must continue and be strengthened so that young people's interests about the Internet are protected and reflected at all levels – adequately and equitably.

On Behalf of HKyIGF 2024 Delegates,

Kenneth LEUNG
Convenor and Program Curator, HKyIGF 2024
Convenor and Curator, S.M.A.R.T.I. Fellowship
Independent Digital Empowerment and Tech Policy Specialist

^ S.M.A.R.T.I. Working Group Members *(in last name alphabetical order ; Representatives are marked with " * ")*

Kapel KHAREL, Rainbow LI, Donna Izabel MANLANGIT, NGUYEN An Binh*, Natalie TAM*, Kathy WONG**

and others who opted out to be named here.

Prompting a S.M.A.R.T. Digital Economy

Highlighted Calls to Action

To realise a Sustainable digital economy, we call on –

The **Government** to prioritise expanding infrastructure with the implementation of subsidised high-speed internet access in underserved areas, as well as digital literacy programs for the elderly and the marginalised more effectively.

Data centres to use at least 80%–90% renewable energy sources and comply with energy efficiency standards, including, but not limited to promoting the adoption of cooling technologies, energy-efficient hardware, and environmentally friendly building designs that minimise environmental impacts.

To realise a Multistakeholder-involved digital economy, we call on –

Public-private-school partnerships with governments leading the effort to bridge the gap of digital literacy. This could include further expanding existing digital equity programs such as school funding to technology subsidies and distribution, as well as lengthening such schemes.

The Government to utilise different government and education Institution programs in encouraging youngsters to assist non-governmental/profit organisations (NGOs/NPOs) in addressing the elderly in technology education issues by promoting intergenerational tech tutoring programs like the Hong Kong Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund).

The Hong Kong Education Bureau to establish a strategic partnership between technology companies and educational institutions to promote AI teaching assistants in offering personalised learning support for students with different backgrounds.

To realise an Accountable digital economy, we call on –

Government and regulatory bodies to enforce robust data protection laws that ensure transparency in data collection and usage. This will empower individuals, restore trust in digital platforms, and safeguard digital privacy.

Technologies companies and AI developers to prioritise fairness and accountability in algorithm design, implementing robust bias detection and mitigation measures. This will ensure fairness and uphold human-centric values in AI systems, preventing algorithmic bias and discrimination.

Competition authorities to monitor and regulate market concentration, promoting a level playing field for all digital players. This will address the concentration of digital power and market dominance, fostering a diverse digital landscape that encourages innovation and safeguards consumer interests.

To realise a Resilient digital economy, we call on –

Cybersecurity firms in the private sector to lead the way in establishing and enforcing robust, internationally aligned cybersecurity standards for Hong Kong. This safeguards Hong Kong's digital infrastructure and empowers individuals and organisations to protect themselves from cyber threats.

The **Securities and Futures Commission (SFC)** to prioritise cybersecurity best practices for cryptocurrency and fintech industries, ensuring robust risk management frameworks and safeguards for consumers. This helps foster trust and confidence in Hong Kong's financial technology sector, promoting responsible innovation and growth.

Social welfare organisations to advocate for equitable digital access for all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, bridging the digital divide and ensuring equal opportunities in education. In an effort to create a more inclusive digital landscape in Hong Kong, thereby empowering all youth to thrive in the digital economy.

To realise a Trusted digital economy, we call on –

The **Government** to implement a more robust cybersecurity system that complies with international cybersecurity standards and to cooperate with the Hong Kong Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data to raise public awareness of cyber and data security.

The **Government** to ensure that AI is designed safely and ethically by promoting framework and regulation for AI development as well as cooperating with non-profit organisations to educate citizens about AI fraud.

Prompting a Sustainable Digital Economy

To achieve a sustainable digital economy in Hong Kong, we must integrate sustainability into technology by ensuring equal digital access for all and fostering economic growth while protecting the environment. In promoting social inclusion, we can create a more prosperous and sustainable digital economy with enduring growth potential by ensuring that all segments of society have equal access to and benefit from digital technologies. Moreover, integrating eco-friendly practices into the digital landscape is crucial to mitigate environmental impacts. This twin-pronged strategy ensures the long-term viability of the digital economy while safeguarding our planet.

By concentrating on this integration, we can design a digital ecosystem that tackles social and environmental issues in addition to fostering innovation and economic expansion. This strategy makes sure that technological advances benefit society and offer equal opportunity to all citizens, particularly the elderly and underprivileged groups which promotes sustainable development.

Digital Divide

Hong Kong needs more access with marginalised groups and older individuals needing more technology access and the necessary skills to utilise it effectively. Research conducted by Hong Kong Baptist University highlights a contrast – 62.2% of residents aged 65 or older use the internet, while usage among younger demographics is almost universal (Fung, et al., 2023). This exclusion impedes integration and undermines the potential for a stable and long-lasting digital economy.

To realise a sustainable digital economy, we call on –

The Government to prioritise expanding infrastructure with the implementation of subsidised high-speed internet access in underserved areas, as well as digital literacy programs for the elderly and marginalised. These programs should include workshops with training sessions and easy-to-understand materials, such as comprehensive guides with large fonts and visual aids but not limited to these. Additionally, creating a library of instructional videos and offering support will enable these groups to navigate the online world more effectively.

Environmental Impact of AI and Data Centers

The rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data centres is causing a rise in energy consumption and carbon emissions, posing a threat to Hong Kong's economic goals. An article in The Irish Times (2024) reported that Google's greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 48% due to the expansion of their data centres for AI systems. Similarly, in the case of Hong Kong, as noted by Statista (2024), the revenue from data centres is expected to grow massively by 5.24% in 2029, reaching a cap of around USD 1.73 billion. This expansion of data centres in HK underscores the concerns about the impact of AI technologies and the difficulties in achieving net zero emissions which was planned to be achieved by 2050 (Hong Kong Government, 2024).

To realise a sustainable digital economy, we call on –

All data centres, whether new or existing, to use at least 80%-90% renewable energy sources and comply with energy efficiency standards, including, but not limited to promoting the adoption of cooling technologies, energy-efficient hardware, and environmentally friendly building designs that minimise environmental impacts. In addition, advocating for data centres that minimise harm to the environment will ensure that digital infrastructure supporting the digital economy expands sustainably.

Prompting a Multistakeholder-involved Digital Economy

A multi-stakeholder digital economy means Individual End Users can access the Internet and benefit from the digital economy. As a key factor, youth involvement is important not just for their role as future workforce who can shape digital inclusion but also for their subjectiveness to digital inclusion policies.

Digital inclusion not only can help cultivate talent and expertise but also promote successful policies and project-making due to the consideration of stakeholder value and needs, thus, it is important to consider the involvement and partnership of different stakeholders in policy-making as well as provide the necessary support to promote the participation of various party, especially the underprivileged students and the older generation. Education transformation is also important as it provides the participants with an effective learning and teaching experience.

Bridging the Digital Gap

To create an inclusive multi-stakeholder digital economy, it is pivotal to bridge the digital divide, especially for underprivileged students. In 2021, the UK Society for Community Organization found that more than 40% of 700 underprivileged children surveyed did not have essential devices and internet access.

To realise a multistakeholder-involved digital economy, we call on –

Public-private-school partnerships with governments leading the effort to bridge the gap of digital literacy by further expanding available digital equity programs from school funding to technology subsidies and distribution, as well as lengthening such schemes. This can be conducted by promoting policies for technology private sectors to cut down merchandise costs; partnering and providing funding for non-profit organisations to reach out to those in need and organise donation or lending programs, as well as working with school and community centres for program implementation.

Public-private-school partnership to build a digital inclusive initiative including internet access, skill training and support. This would grant students with hardship more opportunities to get access to essential technology and equip them with necessary digital skills, allowing them to fully participate, learn and thrive in the digital world.

Inclusion of Ageing Population

Moreover, the society should not forget the ageing generation who are struggling to use technology, not only due to the decline in physical and cognitive functions but also the lack of communication opportunities and cohesiveness in the construction of a digital society. According to Fong et al. (2022), Chen and Chan (2014) discovered that function degradation has an impact on user behaviour while Renaud and Van Biljon (2008) state that poor experiments in learning can lead users to perceive the device as being difficult to use.

To realise a multistakeholder-involved digital economy, we call on –

The Government to promote volunteerism amongst youngsters in assisting the elderly in technology education through the promotion of intergenerational tech tutoring programs like the Hong Kong Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund). This can be achieved by partnering with education institutions to incorporate such programs into the school curriculum and extracurricular activities, allocating funding and resources to non-profit organisations to help connect youth and elderly along launching public campaigns to highlight the importance of youth in digital inclusiveness.

The Government to reinforce the long-term and stable connection between students and non-profit organisations. This can be achieved through various Government and Institution programs, promoting volunteerism and student assistance for nongovernmental and non-profit organisations (NGOs/NPOs), establishing Student Care Teams focusing on the elderly in tech and encouraging students participation in different programs such as Youth Link. This would assist the elderly in having sufficient knowledge of technology while still receiving social connections, thus helping them engage more in the digital world.

Prompting a Multistakeholder-involved Digital Economy (cont'd)

Education Equity and Efficiency

Last but not least, it is important to create a just and equitable platform that allows the flourishing of students regardless of their backgrounds. Barreto et al. (2021) discovered that underrepresented students are 6 times less likely to take AI courses than their counterparts. The efficiency of AI teaching assistants has been proved through the application of Khanmigo – a tutorial AI. Not only can Khanmigo provide a unique learning experience to tailor to students with specific needs and different learning styles, but it also can provide lessons in different languages, breaking down the language barriers that often hinder underrepresented students.

To realise a multistakeholder-involved digital economy, we call on –

The Hong Kong Education Bureau to <u>consider adding an AI teaching assistant to offer personalised learning support for students with different backgrounds</u>. This can be achieved by cooperating with educational institutions to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of AI while providing AI to assist teachers in administrative tasks.

The Government and technology companies to <u>collaborate on developing AI tools, assess scaling ability, data privacy and security concerns</u>. In particular, establishing strategic partnerships between technology companies and educational institutions would provide students with engaging and effective learning environments that empower them to reach their full potential.

Prompting an Accountable Digital Economy

An accountable digital economy is one in which the technological ecosystem includes transparent, responsible, and answerable digital platforms, businesses, and governments for their activities and impacts on society. This should be sought due to fostering trust, assurance of ethical practice, and promoting digital growth.

Looking forward to a responsible digital economy, one desires robust regulatory frameworks, transparent data practices, and active citizen participation in digital governance. An accountable digital economy depicts a system where users are in control of their data, algorithms are explainable, and digital platforms are open for regular audits.

In the digital economy, accountability should be high and balance innovation with responsibility. Rather, it ought to extend to every digital activity from data gathering to decision-making processes that involve AI.

Privacy and Personal Data

Upholding privacy rights and ensuring secure data handling is crucial for preserving trust in digital systems and preventing misuse of personal information. It brought to light the Cambridge Analytica scandal, revealing how 50 million Facebook profiles were collected without people's permission. This event highlighted the pressing importance of implementing protective measures. (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018)

To realise an accountable digital economy, we call on –
> **Government and regulatory bodies** to enforce data protection laws that ensure transparency in data collection and usage. This aims to safeguard digital privacy and data protection, empowering individuals and restoring trust in digital platforms by giving users meaningful control over their personal information. This goal addresses the issue of protecting digital privacy and data protection, which has become critical as personal data is increasingly gathered and processed.

Algorithm Design and Algorithmic Development

Fairness and human-centric values in AI systems should also be upheld to prevent algorithmic bias and discrimination. This goal tackles the issue of addressing algorithmic bias and discrimination, as AI systems can inadvertently perpetuate societal biases, shedding light on Amazon's AI recruiting tool exhibiting bias against women, and emphasising the significance of this objective. (Dastin,2018)

To realise an accountable digital economy, we call on –
> **Tech companies and AI developers** to prioritise fairness and accountability in algorithm design, implementing robust bias detection and mitigation measures. By addressing this issue, we strive for fairness and equality in crucial areas like employment and justice.

Market Concentration and Fair Competition

This goal addresses the issue of the dominance of a few tech giants in the digital sphere, which raises concerns about competition, innovation, and consumer welfare. Addressing this concentration of power is key to nurturing a diverse digital landscape that encourages innovation and safeguards consumer interests. According to Hoofnagle et al. (2019), it was pointed out how the introduction of GDPR in the European Union sets the stage for tackling these concerns and fostering a more accountable digital economy.

To realise an accountable digital economy, we call on –
> **Competition authorities** to monitor and regulate market concentration, promoting a level playing field for all digital players. This seeks to address the concentration of digital power and market dominance, fostering a diverse digital landscape that encourages innovation and safeguards consumer interests.

Prompting a Resilient Digital Economy

A Resilient digital economy can achieve numerous things. As we progress to an era that becomes more digitised by the second, digital stability is a necessity to accommodate disruptions with fast recovery in times of natural disasters, cyber-attacks or any other destructive events. Our personal information and security are at stake, therefore the enhancement of digital systems is a necessity for achieving a resilient digital economy. In the midst of achieving all of this, a resilient digital economy is also able to narrow the gap in the growing digital divide between the more affluent and less affluent citizens of Hong Kong, thereby providing communities with a chance to participate in the digital economy equally.

Cybersecurity

The Hong Kong College of Technology, a school providing tertiary courses on cybersecurity, was found to be hacked in February 2024 with 8100 personal information of students leaked due to ransomware (Chan, 2024). On the other hand, despite public fear and outcry, the Hong Kong government has implemented plans to consolidate the Mandatory Provident Fund system into a digitised version labelled as 'e-MPF' (Yiu, 2024). The head of the project urged the public to be aware of fraud and stressed the prevalence of the e-MPF platform's cybersecurity resilience. Due to these developments, The Hong Kong government is proposing a new cybersecurity law that will require critical computer system operators to implement stronger security measures, which is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council by the end of 2024.

To realise a resilient digital economy, we call on –

Cybersecurity firms in the private sector to advocate for Internationally Aligned Cybersecurity Standards. These firms should work closely with the Hong Kong government, educational institutions, and financial organisations to establish and enforce stringent remediation and best practices, including mandatory cybersecurity audits, regular penetration testing, and the implementation of advanced security technologies.

Cybersecurity firms in the private sector to work closely with Clients In Ensuring Compliance with the Newly Proposed Law. The bill will impose strict cybersecurity standards on critical system operators, creating a need for comprehensive assessments, vulnerability testing, incident response planning, and ongoing security monitoring. Cybersecurity firms should ensure clients are aligned and informed of these requirements in an effort to reduce risks for firms and foster a more secure economy in the long run.

Risk Management

With the prominent use of digital technologies in various industries especially in the finance industry, the issue of cybersecurity and information privacy remains a prevalent issue. A Hong Kong-based cryptocurrency company 'Mixin' was hacked for over USD$200 million in September 2023, with about 1 million users losing their money to a cyber attack. (Reuters, 2023)

To realise a resilient digital economy, we call on –

The Securities and Futures Commission to promote cybersecurity best practices For cryptocurrencies. They have to work closely with licensed organisations and SMEs to develop and implement robust cybersecurity standards, guidelines, and protocols tailored to the cryptocurrency industry. This should include mandatory security audits, regular penetration testing, and the adoption of cutting-edge security technologies. There should be an effort to make sure companies have proof of reserves in case of contingencies.

The Securities and Futures Commission to establish a Cybersecurity Risk Management Framework for the FinTech industry. We encourage them to collaborate with industry experts and regulators to create a comprehensive risk management framework that helps fintech companies identify, assess, and mitigate cyber threats. This framework should be widely disseminated and adopted across the sector.

Prompting a Resilient Digital Economy

Digital Divide

During the wake of COVID-19, the digital divide was prominent in Hong Kong. While the overall household internet access is high at 94%, the rate drops to just 71% for low-income families with monthly incomes below HKD10,000. This digital divide raises concerns that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be put at a learning disadvantage, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and increased reliance on e-learning, despite government efforts to provide them with digital access (Lam, 2020).

To realise a resilient digital economy, we call on –

> **Social Welfare Organisations** such as the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) to <u>further advocate for equitable digital access</u>**.** To work closely with the government, educational institutions, and telecommunication providers to ensure that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet, as well as the necessary digital devices to participate in e-learning.

> **Social Welfare Organisations** to <u>facilitate community-based digital inclusion Initiatives</u> and coordinate with local non-profit organisations and community centres to establish digital inclusion programs that provide free or subsidised internet access, device loans, and digital literacy training for low-income families and their children.

A resilient digital economy requires a multi-pronged approach that addresses cybersecurity threats, digital inequalities, and the effective integration of emerging technologies. By fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, investing in digital infrastructure, and empowering all citizens with digital skills, Hong Kong can build a thriving, secure, and inclusive digital ecosystem.

Prompting a Trusted Digital Economy

Trust in the digital economy is the backbone to ensure that trust can be facilitated towards interpersonal relationships. A trusted digital economy entails strong cyber security defence mechanisms to secure confidentiality, integrity, authenticity, and data availability. This is extremely important to provide youngsters who are constantly exposed to the digital world with online safety and privacy.

To promote a digital economy with trust, it is important that participants enter the digital world knowing their information is safe. While older adults are reluctant to have their information attached online, Soffer and Cohen's (2014) survey also found that youngsters are highly valued for their information. AI monitoring is also required in order to cope with the growing integration of this technology.

Modernising Cybersecurity System

To ensure a digital economy that is trustworthy for all, it is important to promote online privacy which has been seriously affected by the borderless nature of the Internet. In one of the more prominent cases in Hong Kong, as identified by the Hong Kong Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD) a "serious" data leak impacting over 17,000 residents collected during the 2019 pandemic.

To realise a Trusted digital economy, we call on –

> **The Government** to implement a more robust cybersecurity system. This can be done by modernising cybersecurity measures with advanced technology implementation, providing training for employees as well as holding their responsibilities in case of data breaches and constantly addressing vulnerabilities in the system.

> **The Office of Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD)** to collaboratively develop and disseminate guidances similar to Guidance on Protecting Personal Data Privacy in the Use of Social Media and Instant Messaging Apps, incorporate such guidances into digital literacy and cybersecurity programs through workshops, seminar and media channel. This will help better safeguard citizens' personal data not only by upgrading the Government system to international standards but also by engaging the public with cybersecurity work through long-term campaigns.

Ethics of AI Design

Moreover, AI misconduct is one important issue that needs to be addressed, not only due to the concern of intellectual property rights violations but also the concern for fraud such as deepfake technology. Many people have expressed their concerns about being harassed using AI-created videos. Recently, a finance clerk was tricked into losing 25 million dollars through AI technology.

To realise a Trusted digital economy, we call on –

> **The Government** to ensure that AI is designed in a way that respects human rights and does not cause perpetual harm to protect citizens from the action of technology manipulation. This can be conducted by working closely with the Hong Kong Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD) to align the framework for AI with government policies and incorporate the Framework's recommendations into the existing regulatory framework, establishing laws and regulation on AI development through formation of supervision department, issuance of development licence and research legislation.

> **The Government and the AI industry** to work closely and introduce incentives and support programs for Framework establishment and educate the public about fraud by cooperating and providing financial support to non-profit organisations to educate citizens about AI fraud.

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