



Building a Rights-Respecting Digital Future for Nepal

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Lalitpur, Nepal

ORGANIZER



IN COORDINATION WITH



BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The rapid expansion of digital technologies in Nepal has profoundly reshaped civic space, governance, media, and democratic participation. While digital platforms have enabled new forms of expression, participation, and innovation, they have also introduced complex challenges related to freedom of expression, privacy, data protection, electoral integrity, misinformation, surveillance, and platform accountability. In recent years, Nepal has witnessed an increased push towards regulating the digital sphere, particularly social media platforms, often raising concerns about over-regulation, shrinking civic space, and potential conflicts with constitutional freedoms and international human rights standards.

Against this backdrop, Digital Rights Nepal (DRN) initiated the Digital Rights Summit as a national platform for dialogue, reflection, and agenda-setting on digital rights issues in Nepal. The Digital Rights Summit organized in January 2025 successfully reflected on Nepal's digital rights landscape in 2024, bringing together diverse stakeholders to assess emerging trends, policy developments, and rights-based challenges. The Summit created a shared space for constructive dialogue between policymakers, civil society, journalists, technologists, youth leaders, and digital rights advocates, and was widely recognized for its timely and inclusive approach.

Building on the success, learning, and momentum of the January 2025 Summit, Digital Rights Summit 2025 is being organized to reflect on developments throughout 2025 and to collectively shape priorities and advocacy directions for the year ahead. This year the Summit is being organized in collaboration with the Digital Rights Action Group. The Summit responds to a critical moment in Nepal's digital governance journey, marked by intensified debates on social media regulation, digital political campaigning, and electoral integrity.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SUMMIT

The Digital Rights Summit 2025 aims to:

- Reflect on Nepal's digital rights landscape and key developments throughout 2025.
- Critically assess emerging regulatory approaches to social media and their implications for freedom of expression and civic space.
- Provide a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue among policymakers, civil society, media, youth, technologists, and digital rights defenders.
- Launch the State of Digital Rights Report 2025, offering an evidence-based overview of policy trends, legislative developments, and lived digital rights challenges.
- Identify shared priorities and collective actions to advance a more open, inclusive, and rights-respecting digital future for Nepal.



OPENING CEREMONY

The Summit will begin with an Opening Ceremony, bringing together key national institutions and leadership committed to digital rights, democratic governance, and press freedoms. The session will be chaired by Mr. Bhola Nath Dhungana, Chairperson of Digital Rights Nepal, and will be graced by Hon. Jagadish Kharel, Minister for Communication and Information Technology, as the Chief Guest. The ceremony will also feature the presence of distinguished Special Guests including Hon. Ram Prasad Bhandari, Acting Chief Commissioner, Election Commission Nepal; Hon. Manoj Duwady, Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission; and Hon. Durga Bhandari, Member, National Information Commission. The session will set the tone for the day by highlighting the importance of rights-respecting digital governance in Nepal.

LAUNCH OF THE STATE OF DIGITAL RIGHTS REPORT 2025

A key highlight of the Summit will be the official launch of the State of Digital Rights Report 2025. The report provides an evidence-based analysis of Nepal's digital rights environment throughout 2025, documenting policy developments, legislative initiatives, judicial trends, and real-world digital rights challenges faced by journalists, activists, women, minorities, and youth in Nepal. The report aims to serve as a resource for policymakers, researchers, civil society, and international partners, while contributing to informed public discourse on digital governance.

KEY THEMES AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The Summit will feature two high-level panel discussions:

Panel 1:

Social Media Regulation Post GenZ Movement: From Strict Regulation to Rights-Respecting Framework

This panel will explore the evolving discourse around social media regulation in Nepal, particularly in the aftermath of GenZ movement and civic engagement. The discussion will critically examine regulatory proposals and enforcement trends, their alignment with constitutional guarantees and international human rights standards, and pathways towards rights-respecting, transparent, and accountable regulatory frameworks.

Panel 2:

Ensuring Free and Fair Elections in a Hyper-Digital World

This panel will focus on the growing role of digital platforms, data-driven campaigning, and online information ecosystems in shaping electoral processes. It will assess risks related to misinformation, disinformation, political advertising, data misuse, and online harassment, while also exploring opportunities for strengthening democratic participation through rights-based digital governance.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of the Digital Rights Summit 2025 include:

- Increased dialogue and trust among stakeholders from government, civil society, media, and the tech sector.
- Concrete recommendations for rights-respecting social media regulation and digital electoral governance.
- Greater visibility and uptake of the State of Digital Rights Report 2025.
- Strengthened networks and collaboration among digital rights actors in Nepal.

CONCLUSION

The Digital Rights Summit 2025 will serve as a critical national space for reflection, collaboration, and collective action. By building on the success of the January 2025 Summit and responding to evolving digital challenges, the Summit seeks to advance a shared vision for a democratic, inclusive, and rights-respecting digital future in Nepal. Through dialogue, evidence, and collaboration, the Summit aims to contribute meaningfully to shaping Nepal's digital governance priorities for the years ahead.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

ORGANIZER

Digital Rights Nepal (DRN) is an organization leading in the advocacy of issues related with digital rights spaces in Nepal. It works to promote freedom of expression, privacy, access to information, gender justice, and rights-respecting digital governance in Nepal. DRN engages in research, policy advocacy, strategic litigation, digital literacy, and multi-stakeholder dialogue to ensure that digital transformation in Nepal remains inclusive, democratic, and human rights-centered.



IN COORDINATION WITH

The Digital Rights Action Group is a collective of digital rights advocates, researchers, and practitioners committed to strengthening civic space and advancing rights-based approaches to digital governance through collaboration, research, and public engagement.

