

# Media Coverage of Digital Public Infrastructure and Digital Public Goods in Eastern Africa

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October 2025

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a baseline study on media coverage of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Digital Public Goods (DPGs) across seven Eastern African countries in 2024: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Using a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative content analysis and key informant interviews, the study analysed 680 DPI- and DPG-related stories published in 28 major print and online outlets between January and December 2024. It assessed the volume, prominence, themes, sourcing patterns, and framing of stories and complemented the findings with interviews and focus group discussions involving journalists, editors, and experts.

The study reveals that while media in the region are actively reporting on digital transformation, the coverage is largely event-driven, government-centric, and male-dominated. It focuses primarily on the functional benefits of DPI, such as service delivery and innovation, while giving limited attention to critical issues of governance, data privacy, equity, and citizen inclusion.

## Key findings include:

- Uneven media attention to DPI and DPGs: Coverage varies significantly, with Tanzania (224 stories) and Kenya (199) leading, while South Sudan (53) and Rwanda (61) recorded the lowest volumes.
- Superficial and reactive reporting: The vast majority of stories are short, factual “hard news” reports triggered by official announcements. In-depth investigative, explanatory, or enterprise journalism is rare.
- Narrow sourcing and framing: Government officials are the dominant newsmakers and sources, accounting for over half of all voices. Perspectives from civil society, independent experts, and ordinary citizens are marginal.
- Significant gender imbalance: On average, men constitute 80% of all human sources, with Ethiopia recording no female sources in the stories monitored.
- Thematic Gaps: Coverage emphasises digital IDs, payment systems, and online portals, but under-reports on data privacy, policy governance, and equity.

Despite these challenges, the study found pockets of innovation and promise. Kenya’s engagement with civic-tech actors such as KICTANet and Open Institute, Tanzania’s community-oriented enterprise journalism, and Rwanda’s comparatively gender-sensitive coverage demonstrate that more balanced and explanatory DPI journalism is possible. These examples highlight the potential for regional learning, collaboration, and capacity-building.

The report calls for a whole-ecosystem response involving:

- Journalists and editors: to diversify sources, pursue enterprise and investigative stories, and develop expertise in digital governance.
- Media owners and donors: to invest in newsroom capacity, fellowships, and cross-border collaboration.
- Civil society and academia: to provide resources, data, and training that improve accuracy and depth.
- Policymakers: to ensure transparency, access to information, and inclusion of the media in digital policy processes.
- Private sector actors: to engage openly with the media beyond product promotion, supporting informed public dialogue.
- The public: to engage with credible journalism and demand accountability and balanced reporting on digital transformation.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is reshaping governance, service delivery, and civic life across the globe. Central to this transformation are Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Digital Public Goods (DPGs).

DPI refers to foundational, interoperable digital systems and services that enable delivery of essential services in the public interest. They typically include digital ID, digital payments, and data exchange systems. What distinguishes DPI from other digital systems is that it is:

- Publicly governed or accountable, even if implemented by private actors;
- Widely adopted and trusted by the public;
- Designed to safeguard privacy and promote inclusion;
- Built with interoperability, transparency, and scalability in mind;
- Deployed for public service delivery and rights-respecting innovation, not profit alone.

DPGs, on the other hand, are open-source digital solutions—such as software, data sets, standards, Artificial Intelligence (AI) models, and content—that are freely accessible, designed to promote inclusion and innovation, and adhere to privacy, equity, and security standards. They are often used to solve global development challenges and must be:

- Openly licensed
- Privacy-protecting
- Scalable and adaptable across contexts

This study analyses how the media in Eastern Africa covered DPI and DPGs in 2024, focusing on seven countries in the region, namely Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The study is part of the DPI Journalism Fellowship for Eastern Africa, a regional initiative launched in early 2025 by the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), in partnership with Co-Develop. The Fellowship programme aims to build the capacity of journalists in the region to investigate, report on, and shape discourse around DPI and DPGs from a point of knowledge.

As part of the fellowship, CIPESA conducted this baseline media monitoring study to assess how DPI and DPGs are covered in national media across selected countries in the region. The findings were expected to inform fellowship training and media support, contribute to public understanding, and guide future media monitoring work in the region.

Media coverage plays a pivotal role in shaping how citizens, policymakers, and development actors understand and debate digital transformation. Do journalists merely amplify official narratives of progress or do they critically interrogate not only how digital systems impact livelihoods but also how they affect privacy, equity, and inclusion? The media have a responsibility to facilitate informed public dialogue on who benefits, who is excluded, and what governance safeguards exist around the deployment of DPI and DPGs. Robust, informed media reporting helps to build public trust in digital systems, enhances transparency, and promotes democratic oversight of technological change.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Study

- i. To establish a baseline on how DPI and DPGs are covered in the media across Eastern Africa.
- ii. To inform the design and content of the DPI Journalism Fellowship curriculum.
- iii. Serve as a resource for learning and reflection by journalists, editors, media trainers, and researchers interested in the role of media in digital governance.
- iv. Guide future media monitoring and capacity-building efforts in the region.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the volume, distribution, and prominence of media coverage of DPI and DPGs across selected media outlets in nine Eastern African countries during the study period.
- ii. To analyse the thematic focus, article types, journalistic styles, and diversity of sources (including gender and occupational representation) in DPI/DPG-related stories.
- iii. To examine institutional, editorial, and contextual factors influencing the nature and quality of coverage, including publication triggers, and temporal trends.

# 2.0 BACKGROUND

## 2.1 Regional Overview

The African Union has noted that “Africa is at the cusp of a digital transformation that has the potential to greatly improve lives across the continent.”<sup>1</sup> In response, in 2020 the regional body launched the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030), which provides “a vision and a roadmap for harnessing technology and innovation” to meet the continent’s development goals. A key pillar of the strategy is the promotion and harmonisation of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Digital Public Goods (DPGs) across member states to drive service delivery, inclusion, and digital sovereignty. Complementary regional initiatives, such as the Smart Africa Alliance and the AU digital strategies for education, health, and agriculture, aim to strengthen institutional capacity, interoperability, and shared learning across borders.

In Eastern Africa, the East African Community (EAC) has prioritised cross-border connectivity through its Broadband ICT Infrastructure Network, which seeks to establish a regional broadband backbone to support e-government, trade, and digital payments. Member states have since rolled out national broadband and digital transformation frameworks that provide for the establishment of DPI—such as Uganda’s National Backbone Infrastructure, Kenya’s National Digital Master Plan (2022–2032), and Rwanda’s ICT Sector Strategic Plan (2018–2024).

Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate a growing policy convergence around digital inclusion, open standards, and interoperability. The regional landscape is now characterised by increased investment in digital identity systems, electronic payment platforms, and e-government service portals, supported by enabling legal and policy frameworks on data protection, cybersecurity, and digital economy governance.

Eastern Africa’s progress, however, remains uneven. While Kenya and Rwanda have consolidated robust digital ecosystems, countries such as South Sudan and DRC are still laying foundational systems. Common challenges persist across the region, including limited rural connectivity, affordability barriers, digital literacy gaps, and concerns about data privacy and trust.

## 2.2 Country Developments

Countries in the sub-region have *developed* various legislation and policy frameworks on digital transformation, the digital economy, and broadband roll-out.



Kenya continues to lead the region in advancing Digital Public Infrastructure and Digital Public Goods. Kenya’s Digital Economy Blueprint (2019) and National Digital Master Plan (2022–2032) provide a comprehensive framework for digital transformation, focusing on five pillars: digital services, infrastructure, innovation-driven entrepreneurship, data management, and digital skills.

Core DPI initiatives include the Huduma Namba digital identity system (The Huduma Programme Digitalisation Plan, 2023–2026), the eCitizen portal for accessing government services, and the National Payment System, which together aim to improve service efficiency and transparency. Although the Huduma Namba rollout has faced legal and public trust challenges over data protection and surveillance, it represents a significant attempt at harmonising citizen identity for seamless service delivery.

Kenya’s DPG ecosystem is equally vibrant, with initiatives such as Open Data Kenya, which promotes transparency and civic engagement; Ushahidi, a globally recognised open-source platform for crisis mapping; and Kolibri and MwalimuPLUS, which enhance access to digital learning resources. These innovations align with Kenya’s commitment under the Global Digital Compact and illustrate how open technologies can strengthen equity and inclusion.



Tanzania’s digital transformation has been shaped by successive frameworks, notably the National ICT Policy (2016), e-Government Strategy (2013), and the ongoing *Digital Tanzania Programme*. Together, these aim to build a secure, inclusive, and citizen-centred digital ecosystem.

The National Identification Authority (NIDA) administers a national digital ID system that underpins access to services such as financial inclusion, telecommunications, and health care. Complementing this is the Government Electronic Payment Gateway (GePG), which centralises public payment systems and enhances efficiency and transparency. In the health sector, the Government of Tanzania Hospital Management Information System (GoTHOMIS) exemplifies sectoral DPI integration.

Tanzania also embraces open-source DPGs, such as OpenStreetMap through the Ramani Huria project for urban mapping and disaster management, and Kolibri for offline digital education. Together, these demonstrate how DPGs support innovation and inclusion in resource-constrained environments.

<sup>1</sup> <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20231121/powering-africas-digital-future-au-ministerial-meeting-set-ignite-digital#:~:text=Africa%20is%20at%20the%20cusp,to%20meet%20Africa's%20development%20goals>.



## Uganda

Uganda’s digital ambitions are guided by the Digital Uganda Vision 2040, which envisions a “digitally empowered society and knowledge-based economy.” The strategy rests on five pillars—digital infrastructure, services, cybersecurity, skills, and innovation—and is implemented through complementary frameworks such as the ICT Policy (2014), Broadband Policy (2018), and e-Government Policy (2019).

The *National Backbone and E-government Infrastructure* and UGHub serve as key DPI enablers, connecting over 1,000 government offices through shared digital platforms and data exchange systems. The country’s legal environment, anchored by the Data Protection and Privacy Act (2019) and Computer Misuse Act, provides a regulatory foundation, though enforcement and coherence remain weak.

A growing digital entrepreneurship ecosystem is emerging from innovation hubs like Innovation Village, Hive Colab, and Outbox. However, limited digital literacy, urban–rural divides, and persistent public concerns about surveillance continue to affect trust in government-led digital initiatives.



## Rwanda

Rwanda is often cited as a continental leader in building a coherent, integrated digital governance framework. Its progress is anchored in the ICT Sector Strategic Plan (2018–2024), the Smart Rwanda Master Plan, and the National DPI Strategy (2024–2029).

The country’s biometric ID is seamlessly integrated with the Irengo platform, offering citizens access to over 100 public services online. The Rwanda Integrated Payment Processing System (RIPPS) facilitates real-time interbank payments, while mobile money penetration exceeds 90%. Foundational registries such as e-Tax and the Rwanda Land Management Information System (RLMIS) enable interoperable data exchange.

Rwanda’s adoption of Digital Public Goods—notably DHIS2 and OpenMRS in health, Mifos and Mojaloop in finance, and Moodle in education—demonstrates strong institutional alignment with open standards. The Personal Data Protection Law (2021) and the National Cyber Security Authority (NCSA) together provide a regulatory environment that balances innovation and digital rights protection.



## DRC Democratic Republic of Congo

The DRC’s digital transformation is guided by the National Digital Plan “Horizon 2025”, which seeks to accelerate digitisation, promote inclusion, and modernise public administration. Implementation is led by the Ministry of Digital Affairs, supported by sectoral ministries and private telecoms.

Key DPI initiatives include the Population Identification Project (IDP), which launched biometric IDs in 2023 targeting 10 million citizens, and the ongoing digitisation of land registries and public data management systems. The Digital Code (2021) and Cybersecurity Law (2022) establish a legal framework for data protection and cybercrime prevention.

The DRC’s mobile money ecosystem has grown rapidly, with over 10 million subscribers and strong private sector participation from operators such as Vodacom and Airtel. However, persistent governance challenges, weak infrastructure, and limited digital literacy continue to constrain progress.

## Ethiopia



Ethiopia’s digital transformation is guided by the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy, launched in 2020 as part of the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda. The strategy envisions a vibrant digital economy that promotes inclusive growth, job creation, and improved public service delivery. Implementation is led by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MIiT), in collaboration with the Ethiopian Communications Authority (ECA), National ID Programme, and Information Network Security Administration (INSA).

The National Digital ID project (Fayda) is at the core of Ethiopia’s emerging DPI, providing unique digital identities for residents and enabling access to financial and government services. Complementary efforts include the Digital Payments Strategy (2021–2024), which supports interoperability among banks, microfinance institutions, and mobile money providers such as Telebirr. The National Data Centre and inter-ministerial data exchange systems are strengthening e-government capabilities under the Digital Governance and Transformation Roadmap.

Ethiopia’s DPG landscape is supported by partnerships in open-source and civic technology. Tools such as DHIS2, OpenMRS, Mifos X, and OpenSRP are used across health, microfinance, and social protection sectors. A growing innovation ecosystem—anchored in Addis Ababa’s startup hubs and universities—continues to build locally relevant open technologies.

The policy and legal environment, anchored in the Computer Crime Proclamation (2016), the draft Data Protection Bill, and the National Cybersecurity Strategy (2023), is designed to promote a secure and rights-based digital environment.

Persistent challenges include limited rural connectivity, low digital literacy, and occasional network shutdowns, which constrain inclusive participation in the digital economy.



## South Sudan

South Sudan’s DPI ecosystem remains nascent but evolving. The Ministry of ICT and the National Communication Authority oversee emerging efforts to establish digital foundations. A recent milestone was the legalisation of mobile money services by the Bank of South Sudan, alongside the expansion of Starlink broadband connectivity into rural regions.

While no national digital ID system yet exists, the country uses open-source DPGs such as DHIS2, KoboToolbox, and OpenIMIS in health and humanitarian data management. These tools, primarily deployed by NGOs and development partners, provide a base for potential national adoption.

Persistent challenges include low internet penetration (around 11%), lack of a data protection law, limited electricity, and widespread digital illiteracy. Nevertheless, donor-supported projects and growing telecom investment offer a foundation for future DPI development.

## 2.3 The Media and DPI

The digital transformation landscape described above reveals a region in motion but marked by uneven progress. A common thread, however, is that the technical architecture of DPI—digital ID, payments, and data exchange—is rapidly becoming the invisible infrastructure of citizenship itself. From accessing health care in Rwanda to registering a business in Uganda, these systems are no longer futuristic concepts but present-day realities shaping how people interact with the state and economy.

Yet, as the country snapshots also hint, the path of digital transformation is not pre-ordained. The legal and governance frameworks meant to guide it are often playing catch-up with deployment. It is at this critical juncture that the media's role, not just as a chronicler of events, but an essential pillar of democratic accountability, comes into play.

The media is the primary arena where the abstract promise of DPI meets the lived experience of citizens. Journalists are uniquely positioned to translate complex technical and policy debates into the public interest questions that matter most: Who benefits from this system? Who is being left behind? Who loses? Are the safeguards for privacy and equity keeping pace with the drive for efficiency and scale?

Robust, informed reporting can illuminate whether a new digital ID system is genuinely inclusive or creates new barriers for the marginalised. It can investigate whether public-private partnerships are serving the public good or merely extracting value. It can hold powerful institutions—both state and corporate—accountable for how they manage sensitive citizen data.

In essence, the media's role is to ensure that Eastern Africa's digital transformation is not just observed, but scrutinised; not just documented, but democratically debated. This study, therefore, moves from mapping the "what" and "where" of DPI development to analysing the "how" of its coverage. The next section introduces the research questions that guided our investigation into how well the media in Eastern Africa are rising to this challenge.

# 3.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What was the volume of stories related to DPI and DPG in selected eastern Africa media during the research period?
2. How were DPI and DPG stories distributed across selected media outlets in each of the seven countries covered?
3. How prominent were DPI and DPG stories in the selected media?
4. What types of articles (e.g., news reports, features, opinions) were used to present DPI and DPG topics?
5. What reporting formats and journalistic styles (e.g., event-based, investigative, explanatory) dominated DPI/DPG coverage?
6. What were the dominant topics or themes in DPI and DPG stories, and how diverse were they?
7. What factors prompted the publication of DPI and DPG stories (e.g., press releases, events, editor initiatives, citizen submissions)?
8. What institutions dominated media coverage?
9. Who were the newsmakers?
10. Which voices (types of human sources) dominated coverage?
11. What was the gender distribution of the sources in DPI and DPG coverage?
12. What explains the nature of coverage (What institutional, economic, or editorial factors influenced the nature and quality of DPI/DPG coverage in the media)?

# 4.0 METHODOLOGY

The study relied on a mixed methods approach that applied mainly quantitative content analysis and informant interviews.

## 4.1 Content Analysis

The study focused mainly on analysis of manifest content. “Manifest content refers to what is explicitly stated and draws on the objective and replicable qualities of quantitative methods”.<sup>2</sup> However, where appropriate and necessary, qualitative analysis of latent content<sup>3</sup> was also conducted.

Content analysis was employed to provide an all-round sense of the nature of coverage in terms of both quantity and quality. Stories were coded and analysed based on a detailed coding sheet that contained a number of variables that are necessary to answer the research questions. The variables included the following:<sup>4</sup>

1. Publication [name, type, etc]
2. Volume of DPI/DPGs articles or stories
3. Prominence/placement of DPI/DPGs stories
4. Type of DPI/DPG stories published
5. DPI/DPGs story prompts or origins
6. Reporting triggers
7. Reporting formats employed
8. Topics or themes in the coverage
9. Use of background and context in DPI/DPG stories
10. Newsmakers
11. Institutions of focus
12. Number of sources
13. Occupation of sources
14. Gender of sources

## Sampling

In each country, the national researcher selected four major print or online media outlets through purposive sampling.

**DRC:** Le Potentiel, Actualité.cd, 7sur7.cd, Radio Okapi

**Ethiopia:** Addis Zemen, Reporter, Addis Standard, Ethiopian Insider

**Kenya:** Daily Nation, The Star, Citizen Digital, Tuko.co.ke

**Rwanda:** Igihe.com, The New Times, KT Press, Taarifa News

**South Sudan:** The Dawn, Eye Radio, City Review, Catholic Radio Network

**Tanzania:** Daily News, The Citizen, Jamii Forums, The Chanzo

**Uganda:** The New Vision, Daily Monitor, Uganda Radio Network (URN), ChimpReports

The researchers then undertook a census of all stories on DPI/DPGs from 1 January to 31 December 2024. Table 1 presents the stories published in each country by the various publications analysed.

<sup>2</sup> Hilton, S. & Hunt, K. (2010). UK newspaper representations of the 2009-10 outbreak of swine flue: one health scare not over-hyped by the media? Research Report, J Epidemiol, Community Health

<sup>3</sup> See, Krippendorff, K. (2004). Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

<sup>4</sup> A full list of the variables and their definitions are detailed in the final coding sheets.

 Uganda		
Media house	Frequency	Percentage
New Vision	36	39.5
Daily Monitor	27	29.7
URN	14	15.4
Chimp reports	14	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100</b>
 South Sudan		
Media house		
The Dawn	30	57
Eye radio	12	23
City Review	6	11
Catholic Radio Network	5	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>
 Kenya		
Media house		
Daily Nation	158	79.4
The Star	21	10.6
Citizen Digital	12	6.0
Tuko.co.ke	8	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100</b>
 Ethiopia		
Media house		
Addis Zemen	89	78.8
Reporter	19	16.8
Addis Standard	4	3.5
Ethiopian Insider	1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.0</b>
 Tanzania		
Media house		
Daily News	109	48.7
The Citizen	47	21.0
Jamii Forums	39	17.4
The Chanzo	29	12.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100</b>
 Rwanda		
Media house		
Igihe	26	42.6
The New Times	15	24.6
Taarifa News	10	16.4
KTPress	10	16.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>
 DRC		
Media house		
Le Potentiel	40	44.9
Actualite.cd	20	22.5
Radio Okapi	20	22.5
7sur7.cd	9	10.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 4.2. Key informant interviews

Researchers conducted interviews with reporters and editors to provide context or get a better understanding of the findings.

## 4.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group and expert panel discussions with journalists, civil society, private sector, and government officials complemented the interviews.

**Table 1.** Distribution of DPI/DPG Stories in Sampled Media Outlets

# 5.0 FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from the seven Eastern African countries covered by the study.

The section shows the extent, nature, and framing of media coverage, identifying trends in themes, sources, tone, and representation across the region. It also examines how different actors—governments, civil society, private sector, and citizens—feature in the media discourse on DPI and DPGs.

By documenting similarities and divergences across national contexts, the findings provide a regional snapshot of media engagement with digital transformation, revealing both promising practices and systemic gaps.

## 5.1 Volume of coverage

Coverage of DPIs and DPGs in 2024 varied significantly across the countries studied. Tanzania (224 stories) and Kenya (199 stories) registered the highest volume of reporting while South Sudan (53 stories) and Rwanda (61 stories) recorded the lowest.

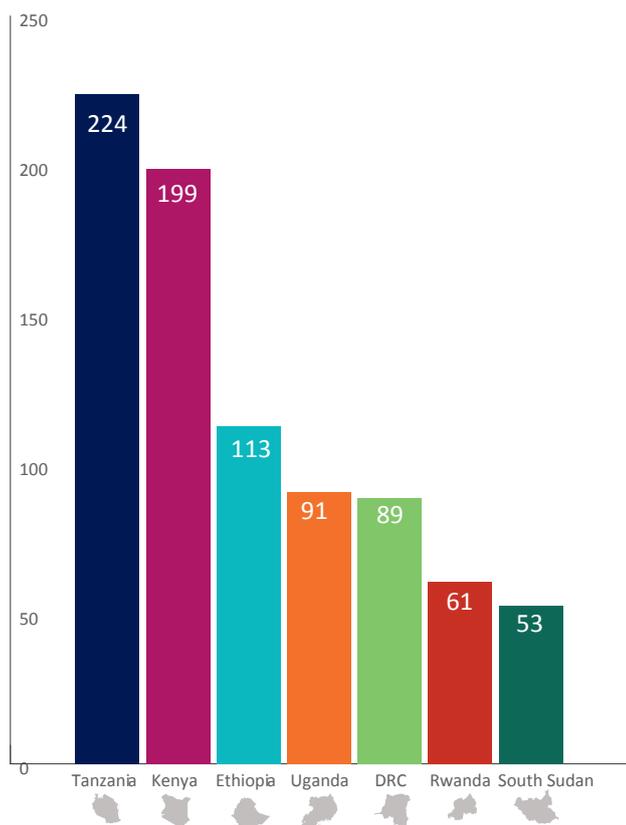


Image 1. Number of Stories per Country

This distribution suggests notable disparities in media attention to DPI and DPGs across eastern Africa, likely reflecting differences in media capacity, national priorities, and the maturity of digital ecosystems.

## 5.2 Topic of Coverage

In all the countries studied, the media paid significantly greater attention to DPI than to DPGs. However, Kenya and DRC registered relatively higher levels of reporting on DPGs compared to other countries in the region.

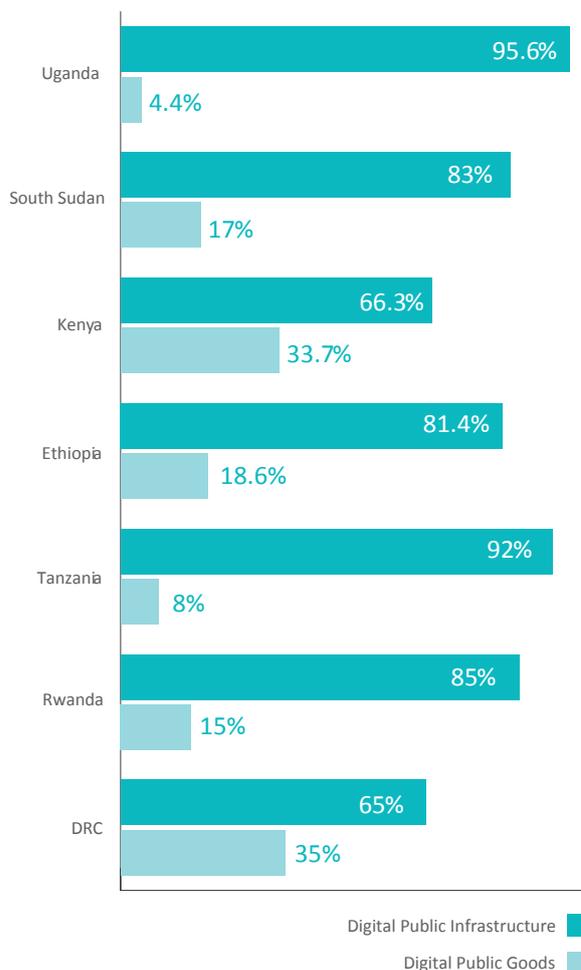


Image 2. Topic of Coverage

Sub-topic	Uganda	South Sudan	Kenya	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Rwanda	DRC
Data Exchange Systems	49.5	12.7	5.5	0.9	5.4	3.2	1.1
Digital Identification (ID) Systems	17.6	14.1	9.2	16.8	4.4	9.5	12.4
Online portals for public services	15.3	5.6	7.6	17.7	7.4	33.3	3.4
Digital Payment Systems	11	16.9	22	19.5	22.5	28.6	3.4
Innovation	2.2	7.0	10.4	7.1	13.7	4.8	34.8
Policy, legislation and Governance	1.1	9.9	12.0	5.3	9.8	0.0	5.6
Data Privacy and Security	1.1	9.9	6.4	7.1	12.7	4.8	1.1
Equity and Inclusivity	1.1	1.4	8.6	6.2	16.2	1.6	16.9
Economic Impact	1.1	11.3	11	12.4	5.9	6.3	18.0
Citizen/Public Participation	0	2.8	7.3	2.6	2.0	0.0	1.1
National Security	0	4.2	0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.1
Other	0	4.2	0	3.5	0.0	7.9	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2. Sub-Topics Covered

Media attention to specific DPI sub-topics varied considerably across countries. In most cases, digital identity systems, online portals for public services, digital payment systems, innovation, and the economic impact of DPIs/DPGs, received significantly more attention than areas such as policy, legislation and governance, data privacy, equity and inclusion, and citizen participation. This pattern points to a concentration on the functional and service delivery aspects of DPI, rather than governance, rights, or equity dimensions.

### 5.3 Types of Stories

Across the region, the coverage of DPIs/DPGs was dominated by news reports, with feature stories and opinions coming a distant second and third respectively on average. Except for Ethiopia, Q&A interviews and profiles (which could provide richer insights into the actors behind digital transformation) were rare. Editorials addressing DPI or DPG issues were also scarce, suggesting that editors have yet to prioritise these topics as key agenda-setting issues.

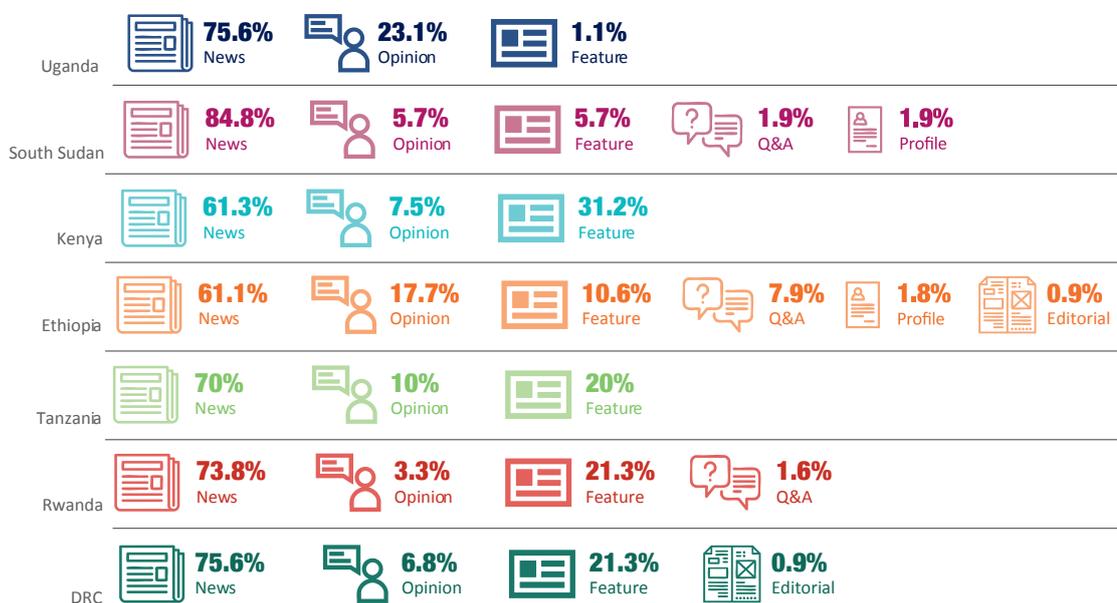


Image 3. Sub-Topics Covered

## 5.4 Story Placement and Prominence

### Story Placement By Page

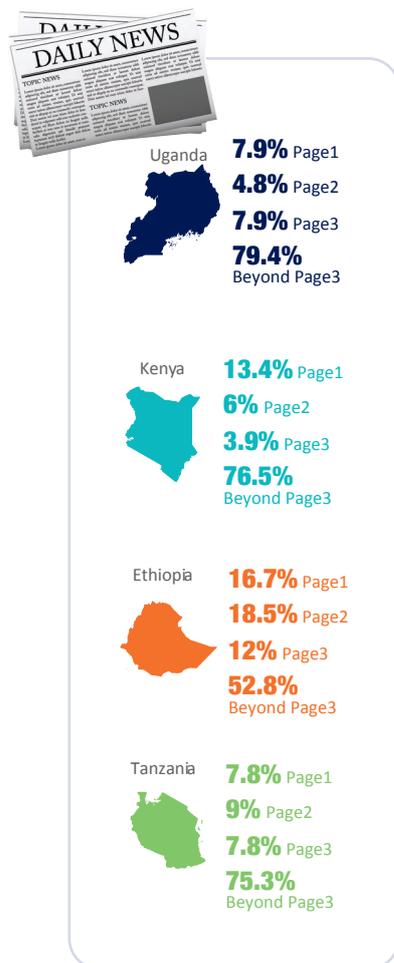


Image 4. Page Location

Story prominence was assessed by examining where DPI- and DPG-related articles appeared within print publications—whether they were placed on the front page, second page, third page, or elsewhere. This indicator provides insight into the editorial importance assigned to digital transformation issues within national news agendas. The variable was applicable only to print outlets monitored in the seven countries.

Overall, the findings show that while DPI stories occasionally received front-page treatment, they were generally positioned in secondary or inner pages, suggesting that digital transformation remains a marginal rather than a leading editorial priority.

### Story Placement By Location on the Page

An additional measure of story prominence examined the specific part of the page where DPI-related stories appeared—whether in the upper, middle, or lower section. This, arguably, provides an indication of the visual weight accorded to such stories within print layouts.

Findings show that in most of the countries where this variable was assessed, DPI stories predominantly appeared in the upper sections of pages, suggesting a moderate level of editorial importance. In Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania, at least four in ten stories were positioned at the top of the page, a placement typically associated with higher visibility and reader attention.

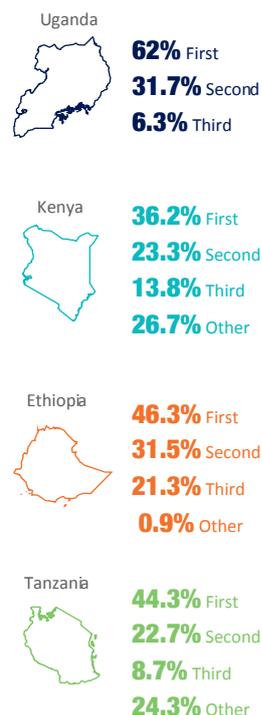


Image 5. Prominence

## 5.5 Reporting Formats

Here the study sought to establish the common approaches or reporting styles applied to DPI and DPGs, focusing on three typical formats—conventional hard news, enterprise and interpretive style, or investigative reporting.

*Fact-finding is the dominant posture under the conventional reporting format, with common characteristics such as the following: spot or hard news that tends to focus on events; neutral and often uncritical transmission of facts; tendency to assign equal weight to all positions; faithful recording of the observed event or issue; suppression of the journalist’s prior knowledge of the subject; depends largely or entirely on material provided by others; and tends to be event-centred.*

*Under the enterprise reporting format, the story is usually of the journalist’s own initiative and effort. The coverage follows more leads than the usual straight news story and depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter’s independent efforts. Enterprise stories tend to explore issues in greater depth usually with the aid of narrative or literary techniques. These stories are traditionally presented as features. Instead of focusing on breaking news, enterprise stories focus on the forces that shape the events that may or may not be in the news.*

*Exposition is the dominant posture under the investigative reporting format, with common characteristics such as the following: the story is the journalist’s original initiative; reporting depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter’s own effort; reporting uncovers information that an individual or entity may have tried to conceal from public scrutiny or information that an individual or entity may have had an interest in keeping out of the public domain; resources and evidence used by the journalist are clearly discernible; there is evidence of strong documentation (the paper trail) and sourcing.<sup>5</sup>*

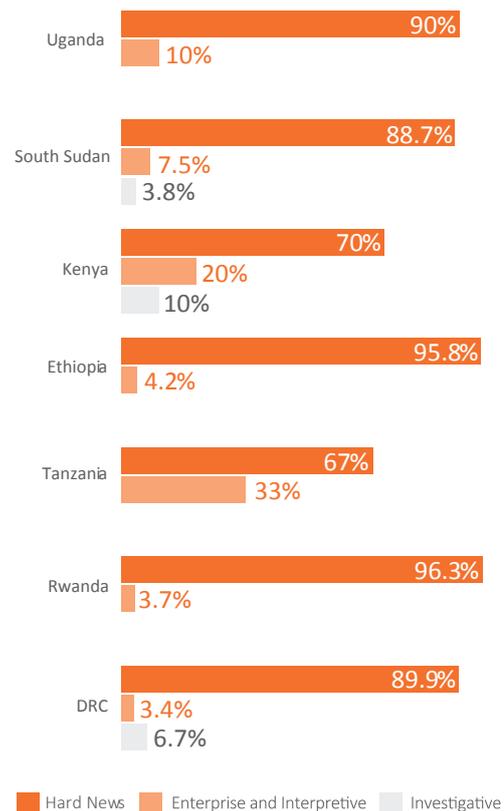


Image 6. Reporting Format

Conventional hard news reporting overwhelmingly dominated coverage of DPI/DPGs in all countries studied. On average, nine out of 10 stories on DPI/DPGs were conventional hard news reports prioritising immediacy over depth. Enterprise and interpretive reporting did not feature significantly, except in Tanzania and Kenya, and investigative reporting was largely absent or extremely limited in all countries.

<sup>5</sup> African Centre for Media Excellence (2020). Research Report on Ugandan Media Coverage of the Covid-19 Pandemic and Other Public Affairs (May-September 2020).

## 5.6 Original Source of the Story

Across all countries studied, official events were the predominant sources of DPI/DPG stories reported by the media. These included government or company announcements, press conferences, and official launches. In DRC, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda at least eight out of every 10 stories on DPI/DPGs originated from official events. By contrast, Tanzania (31.3%) and Kenya (27.7%) exhibited higher proportions of stories based on independent reporting, suggesting, arguably, stronger journalistic initiative in those countries.

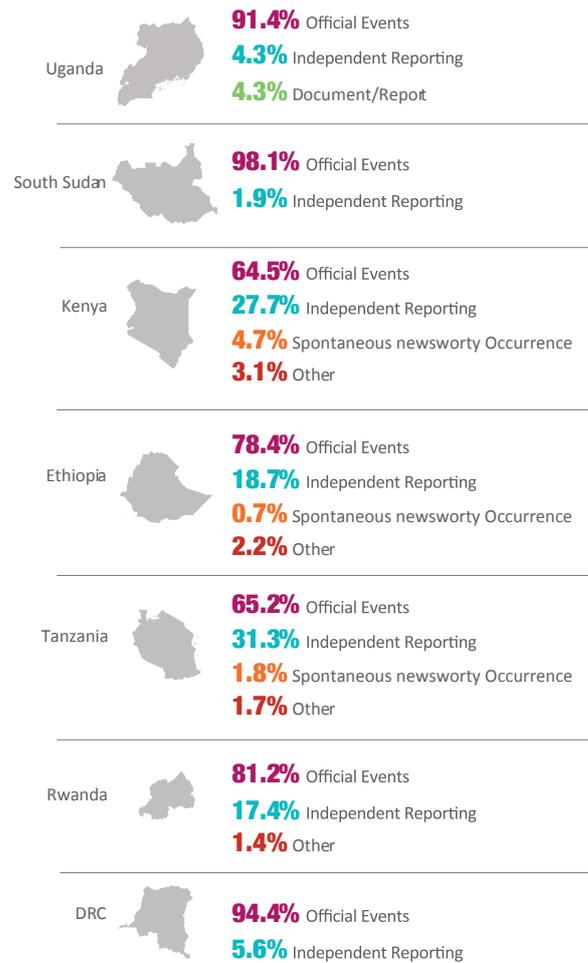


Image 7. Original Source of the Story

## 5.7 Newsmakers

Newsmaker	Uganda	South Sudan	Kenya	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Rwanda	DRC
	Central government official	36.2	22.8	14.6	10.5	12.9	13.5
Business representative	21.7	8.6	10.0	18.4	10.3	39.2	37.1
Minister	15.9	24.3	15.1	31.6	20.5	5.4	25.8
Regulator (Official from regulatory authority)	11.6	15.7	11.1	8.8	12.5	8.1	0.0
President	5.8	1.4	11.6	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
Expert (Academic, Independent researcher and consultant)	4.3	0.0	4.5	2.6	10.7	9.5	10.1
Civil society representative (Local NGO and international NGO rep)	2.9	17.1	9.5	1.8	6.3	1.4	0.0
Diplomatic representative	1.4	5.7	5.5	0.0	5.4	8.1	0.0
Ordinary Person (in individual capacity)	0	1.4	4.5	5.3	6.3	2.7	0.0
Politicians	0	0	13.6	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0
Law Enforcement Representative	0	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.4	0.0
Local Government Official	0	1.4	0.0	3.5	7.1	1.4	0.0
Member of Parliament	0	0	0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Prime minister	0	0	0.0	9.6	0.0	4.1	0.0
Other	0.2	0.2	0.0	4.4	0.9	5.2	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3. Dominant Newsmakers on DPI across the countries studied

Government officials were the dominant newsmakers on DPI across all the countries studied. On average, they accounted for more than 55% of the newsmakers covered. Civil society actors, ordinary citizens were marginal players across the region, while academics and experts were also generally underrepresented among DPI newsmakers. This pattern reflects a narrow framing of DPI issues through official voices rather than a broad societal lens.

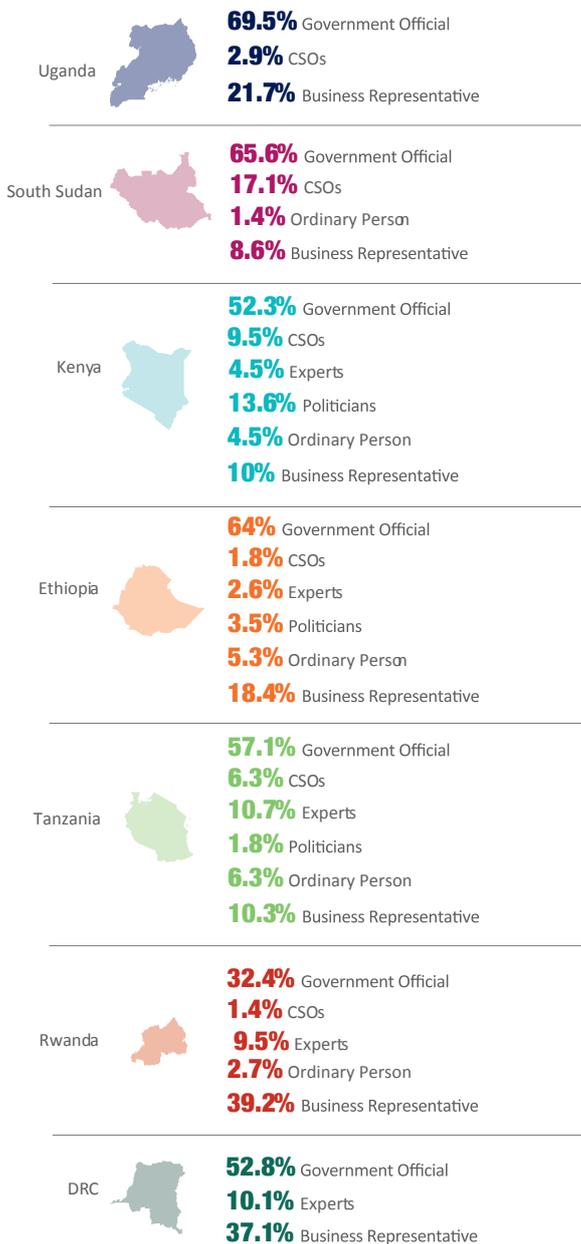


Image 8. Newsmakers

## 5.8 Institutions of Focus

Institution	Uganda	South Sudan	Kenya	Ethiopia	TanzaniaR	wanda
Central Government Organ	52.9	35.4	28.1	50.4	61.2	31.7
Private sector or Business	20	22.8	14.1	20.4	16.1	23.8
State-owned Enterprise or Parastatal	18.6	0	0.0	5.8	0.0	31.7
International Public Organisation	2.9	12.7	6.5	0.0	6.3	0.0
Executive	1.4	6.3	0.0	13.9	0.0	0.0
Indigenous NGO or Private Organisation	1.4	2.5	10.6	1.5	5.8	0.0
Parliament	1.4	0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0
International NGO or Private Organisation	1.4	15.2	0.0	2.2	0.0	9.5
Local government Organ	0	5.1	11.1	2.2	7.1	1.6
Ordinary Persons	0	0	9.1	0.0	0.9	0.0
Political party	0	0	5.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
Academic and Research Institutions	0	0	6.0	0.0	1.8	0.0
Judiciary	0	0	9.5	0.7	0.4	1.7
Other	0		0	1.4	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4. Institutions of Focus in DPI/DPG coverage

In terms of institutions of focus in DPI/DPG coverage, media attention was overwhelmingly directed at state agencies across all the countries. On average, six out of every 10 DPI stories in the region focused on central government organs and other state agencies. The private sector or companies ranked a distant second, while local and international NGOs, political parties, and academic institutions attracted minimal attention. This imbalance underlines the dominance of official narratives in shaping public discourse on DPI and DPGs.

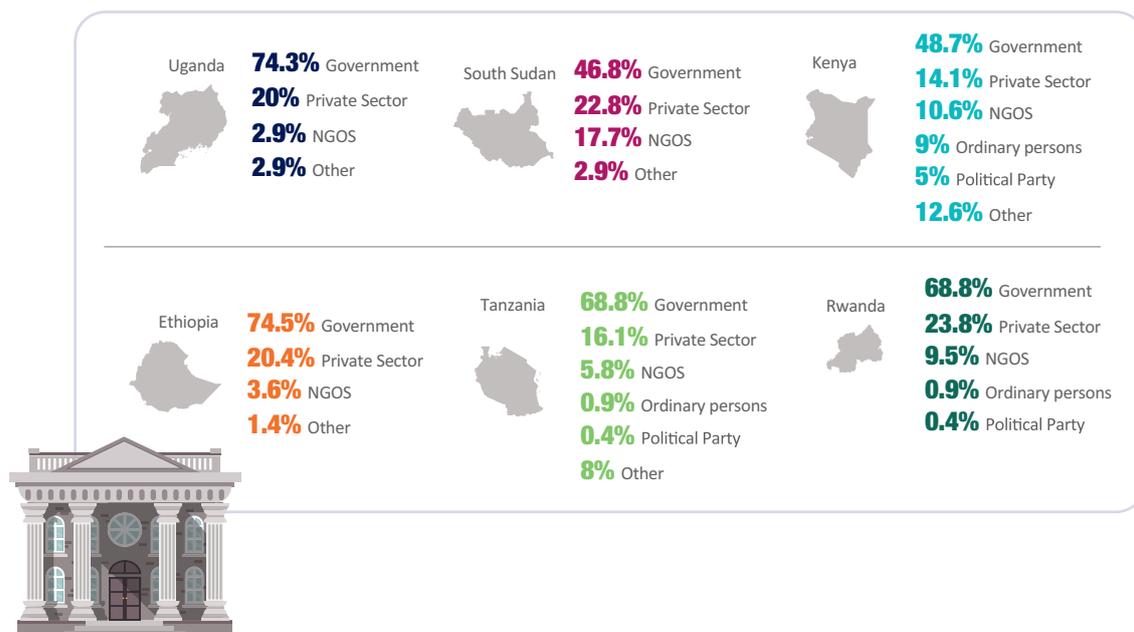


Image 9. Institutions of focus

## 5.9 Human Sources

Sources	Uganda	South Sudan	Kenya	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Rwanda
Central Government Official	30.70	0.1	6.2	10.52	1.9	19.1
Business Representative	25.91	4.7	15.41	7.0	23.43	9.3
Minister	12.72	0.6	33.81	6.3	10.92	7.0
Ordinary Person Quoted in their Individual capacity	8.5	2.9	3.1	14.2	6.3	14.6
Expert (Academic, Independent researcher and consultant)	6.9	11.84	0.61	5.8	6.3	0.0
Civil society representative (Local NGO and international NGO rep)	4.8	8.8	0.8	9.1	3.1	0.0
Member of Parliament	4.2	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
President	2.1	2.9	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0
Diplomatic Representative	2.1	2.9	0.0	1.6	9.4	0.0
Local Government Official	1.6	0.0	2.3	0.0	1.6	0.0
Law Enforcement Representative	0.5	0.0	0.8	0.2	3.1	0.0
Regulator	0	17.60	0.09	0.31	0.60	0.0
Politician	0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0
Military/Security Representative	0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Religious Leader	0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
Prime Minister	0	0.0	7.7	0.0	3.1	0.0
Others	0	14.91	1.5	1.8	9.3	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4. Human sources cited in DPI coverage across the region

On average, nearly half of the human sources cited in DPI coverage across the region were government officials. Business or company representatives also received a fair share of attention, though less consistently.

Ordinary citizens and civil society representatives as well as experts featured infrequently, reflecting limited diversity in sourcing and potential knowledge gaps in journalistic coverage.

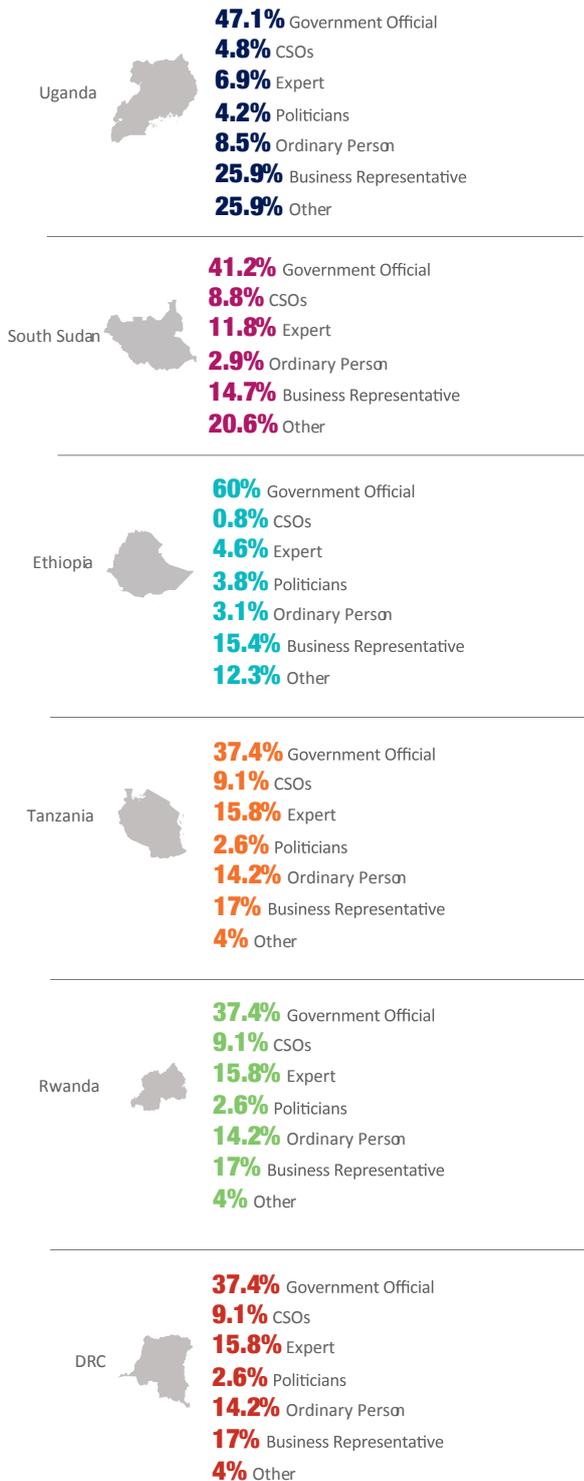


Image 10. Sources

### 5.10 Gender of Sources

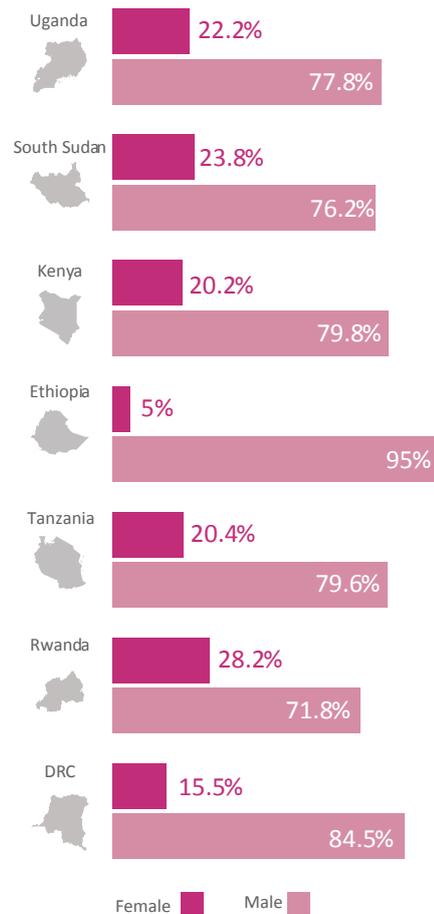


Image 10. Gender Sources

Gender representation was strikingly uneven. On average, eight out of every 10 sources cited in DPI coverage were men. Ethiopia recorded the most extreme gender imbalance, with about 5% female sources cited in the stories reviewed.

### 5.11 Number of Sources

In the countries where this variable was examined, a majority of DPI stories relied on one or two sources, limiting depth and plurality of perspectives.

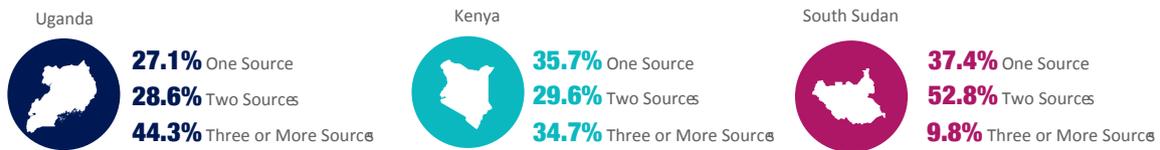


Image 10. Number of Sources per Story

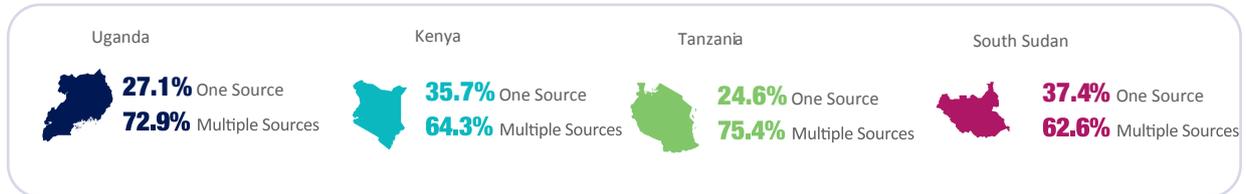


Image 11. Number of Sources per Story

### 5.12 Background and Context

Across all the countries studied, a majority of stories contained at least some basic background or context to help audiences navigate the new developments reported. However, Ethiopia (20.4%) and Uganda (17.1%) recorded a high proportion of stories lacking background and context.

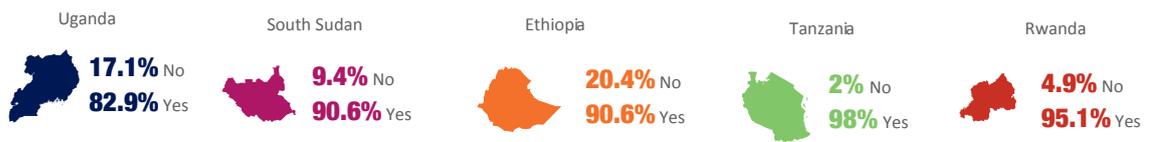


Image 12. Basic background or context

### 5.13 Conclusion

Overall, the findings show that while the media in eastern Africa are reporting on DPI-related developments, coverage remains event-driven, government-centric, male-dominated, and uneven across countries. Deeper, more inclusive and analytical reporting on DPI and DPGs remains limited.

# 6.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section interprets the findings presented earlier by examining the underlying patterns, drivers, and implications of how media in seven Eastern African countries covered DPI and DPGs during 2024. The analysis reveals a media landscape that is actively reporting on digital transformation but is characterised by significant imbalances in thematic focus, journalistic depth, and sourcing diversity. It highlights both the contextual differences and regional similarities, addressing not only what the data reveal but also why these trends matter for journalism and public debate on digital transformation.

## 6.1 Regional Patterns in Media Attention and Story Distribution

The study shows substantial disparities in the volume of DPI and DPG coverage across the region. Tanzania and Kenya accounted for the largest share of stories (accounting for over 60% of all stories analysed), followed by Ethiopia and Uganda, while Rwanda, DRC, and South Sudan recorded comparatively low levels of reporting.

These differences could be partly explained by variations in media ecosystem maturity, national digitalisation agendas and priorities, and access to information.

In Tanzania and Kenya, government-led digital transformation programmes such as the digital ID rollout, the e-citizen portal expansion, and the push for cashless transactions appear to have generated sustained news interest.

By contrast, in South Sudan, the relatively limited implementation of digital infrastructure projects, coupled with a smaller and less resourced media sector translated into fewer stories.

Rwanda is intriguing given that the government has been very active in implementing digital projects. Perhaps the country's focused, government-driven digitalisation narrative has resulted in fewer, but more centralised news stories.

In Ethiopia, despite an expanding ICT policy environment, most coverage emerged around official launches and government pronouncements rather than continuous engagement with DPI policy debates. Uganda's output was modest and event-driven, reflecting an active but constrained media environment where state announcements dominate the digitalisation narrative.

This uneven landscape suggests that public awareness and discourse on DPIs may be developing at different speeds across the region, potentially widening the digital knowledge gaps among citizens of different countries.

## 6.2 Thematic Emphasis and Framing of DPI and DPG Narratives

Across all countries, the framing of DPI and DPG issues leaned heavily toward the functional and service-oriented aspects of DPI at the expense of equally critical issues of governance, equity, and rights (data protection, privacy, inclusion).

Kenya and DRC stood out for having relatively higher proportions of stories referencing DPGs, often through coverage of open data platforms, civic tech, and digital innovation hubs. In Kenya, this was linked to a vibrant civil society and technology ecosystem that produces regular commentary on open government and data use.

Tanzania's framing reflected a service delivery orientation, emphasising the utility of DPI in enabling e-services, mobile payments, and public efficiency. This coverage highlights national policy narratives that position digitalisation as a tool for development rather than a domain requiring oversight or ethical debate.

In Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, DPI coverage overwhelmingly adopted event-based, descriptive frames—reporting on new systems and projects but seldom interrogating issues of inclusion, governance, or citizen impact.

In Rwanda and DRC, DPI was often presented as evidence of government progress in innovation and efficiency, reinforcing technocratic narratives rather than democratic ones.

These trends point to a regional framing bias toward progress and technology optimism, at the expense of critical inquiry into the governance, privacy, or equity implications of digital systems. This “surface-level” engagement with digital transformation reflects both the influence of official communication and limited journalistic initiative or lack of confidence in interpreting complex digital policy debates. The media are effectively reporting what new digital services are being launched, but are far less engaged in questioning how these systems are governed, who they include or exclude, and what data rights citizens possess. This creates a risk where citizens are informed consumers of digital services, but not informed about their digital rights.

### 6.3 Reporting Depth

The study reveals a significant lack of depth and journalistic enterprise in DPI reporting. The findings show that event-driven news reporting dominated coverage across all seven countries. Most stories were short, factual, and reactive to official announcements, with little evidence of enterprise or investigative journalism.

Kenya and Tanzania again showed relative exceptions. Tanzanian outlets such as The Citizen and Mwananchi produced a small but notable number of interpretive and feature stories exploring the implications of digital reforms. In Kenya, journalists associated with specialised technology desks or civil society partnerships produced longer analyses that placed DPI developments within governance or human rights contexts.

In Uganda, most stories remained brief and focused on government or donor-led events, while Ethiopia and South Sudan exhibited the lowest levels of contextualisation and sourcing depth. Ethiopia's coverage, for instance, often lacked background information, which limited public understanding of how new systems, such as digital IDs or data exchanges, fit into broader policy frameworks.

Across the region, key informants attributed this pattern to limited newsroom capacity, time pressures, lack of specialised skills, and the absence of dedicated technology beats.

The reliance on single sources (mainly government officials) further reduced diversity of perspectives, while a scarcity of female voices exacerbated representational gaps.

The findings collectively highlight the need to strengthen journalists' analytical and data interpretation skills to enable more explanatory and evidence-driven storytelling. Otherwise, the public is left with a fragmented understanding of digital transformation, devoid of critical context needed to appreciate its long-term implications.

### 6.4 Sources, Voices, and Representation: The Predominance of Official Narratives and Stark Gender Imbalance in Sourcing

The coverage of DPI in Eastern Africa is predominantly framed through the perspectives of official and corporate actors, limiting the plurality of voices in public discourse on digital transformation. Central government agencies were the primary focus of stories, meaning the public is not always informed about DPI ecosystem developments led by private institutions and individuals, or the advocacy driven by civil society organisations on human rights issues such as inclusion, data protection and privacy, and governance principles such as transparency.

Government officials dominated as both primary sources and news subjects, shaping the tone and scope of public conversation on DPI and DPGs. In Uganda, DRC, and South Sudan, over 70% of stories cited government voices exclusively, while citizen or civil society perspectives were rare.

Kenya and Tanzania provided slightly more diversity in sourcing. Kenyan journalists regularly quoted civil society organisations such as the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) and open data advocates, while Tanzanian media occasionally featured voices from business and innovation ecosystems.

The gender disparity in sourcing is one of the most pronounced and concerning findings. On average, men constituted approximately 80% of all human sources in DPI stories. The case of Ethiopia, where only about 5% of sources were female, suggests deep gender disparities in both access to expertise and journalistic routines, and is an extreme example of a region-wide problem.

This imbalance reflects and reinforces the gender gaps prevalent in the technology, government, and business sectors in Eastern Africa. By overwhelmingly quoting male experts, officials, and executives, the media inadvertently perpetuates the notion that digital policy and infrastructure are male domains. This not only skews the perspective presented in stories but also fails to highlight women's roles in, and experiences with, digital transformation, thereby undermining the core DPI principle of equity and inclusion.

Rwanda's coverage, though also government-centric, reflected a more gender-sensitive media environment, achieving the highest proportion of female sources (28%).

This narrow sourcing environment has implications for credibility and inclusivity. When DPI narratives are dominated by official voices, media risk reproducing government priorities rather than reflecting public concerns. The lack of gender and stakeholder diversity also undermines journalism's watchdog and representational functions in debates about technology and governance.

The heavy reliance on official sources frames DPI as a top-down, technical project rather than a societal transformation that warrants public scrutiny and debate. The marginalisation of civil society and citizen voices represents a "democratic deficit" in the discourse, potentially stifling critical inquiry into issues of accountability, transparency, and the lived experiences of citizens interacting with these systems.

## 6.5 Institutional and Structural Determinants of Coverage

Beyond story content, structural and institutional dynamics within the media and policy environments appear to shape how DPI was reported.

Kenya appears to benefit from a relatively open information environment and active technology sector, leveraging partnerships between media and civil society that enable richer storytelling.

DRC and South Sudan, however, face serious capacity constraints, including limited internet access, scarcity of experts, and political restrictions that discourage critical reporting.

Across the region, most journalists lacked access to data-driven resources or independent experts who could help interpret complex issues such as data protection or interoperability. Consequently, official press releases often became primary sources of information. In some countries, editorial caution around politically sensitive topics—such as surveillance or data privacy—led to self-censorship.

These structural realities explain why much of the regional coverage remains descriptive and government-centric: not necessarily out of bias, but due to limited institutional capacity and a policy environment that privileges official narratives.

## 6.6 Implications for Journalism, Policy, and Public Understanding of DPI

The findings from all seven countries converge on a critical insight: Eastern Africa’s media landscape is covering DPI, but not yet interrogating it. While journalists are increasingly aware of digital transformation, most reporting treats DPI as a development achievement rather than a governance domain requiring accountability.

The implications are threefold. First, for journalism, there is an urgent need to invest in specialised training, cross-border collaborations, and sustained mentorship to cultivate analytical and data storytelling capacity. Kenya’s example of linking reporters with civic tech experts could be replicated regionally.

Second, for policy and governance, the media’s current focus on government voices limits public scrutiny and citizen understanding of how DPI systems affect rights, privacy, and inclusion.

Third, for public debate, the absence of investigative and gender-balanced coverage risks normalising one-dimensional narratives of progress, leaving citizens as passive consumers rather than informed participants in digital governance.

Nevertheless, promising examples exist. Kenya’s engagement with civic technology and data communities, Tanzania’s growing use of enterprise and interpretive reporting, and Rwanda’s relatively stronger gender representation demonstrate that more balance and analytical DPI journalism is achievable. These experiences show that with the right mix of capacity-building, editorial commitment, and collaboration DPI discourse can be deepened.

## 6.7. Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that while Eastern Africa’s media are increasingly engaging with the digital transformation agenda, their treatment of DPI and DPGs remains narrowly framed. Coverage tends to describe digital progress rather than interrogate its governance, social, and ethical dimensions.

What emerges from the cross-country comparison is a media landscape that is aware but not yet empowered: journalists are reporting digital milestones but rarely explaining their implications for rights, accountability, and inclusion. The dominance of official voices reflects structural dependencies and knowledge gaps rather than deliberate bias.

At the same time, examples from Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda show that greater depth and diversity are achievable where editorial commitment, partnerships, and subject-matter expertise exist. These cases suggest that improving DPI journalism is less about access to technology and more about building confidence, competence, and curiosity among journalists and editors.

Ultimately, media coverage of DPI will need to evolve from chronicling events to interpreting transformations. This means connecting policy to lived experience, highlighting both opportunities and risks, and enabling citizens to participate knowledgeably in digital governance.

This evolution calls for sustained investment in capacity-building, stronger cross-sector collaboration, and a deliberate effort to make digital reporting a core pillar of public-interest journalism in Eastern Africa.

# 7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section interprets the findings presented earlier by examining the underlying patterns, drivers, and implications of how media in seven Eastern African countries covered DPI and DPGs during 2024. The analysis reveals a media landscape that is actively reporting on digital transformation but is characterised by significant imbalances in thematic focus, journalistic depth, and sourcing diversity. It highlights both the contextual differences and regional similarities, addressing not only what the data reveal but also why these trends matter for journalism and public debate on digital transformation.

## 7.1 Conclusions

The study shows that while the media in Eastern Africa are increasingly reporting on digital transformation, coverage of DPI and DPGs remains largely event-driven, government-centric, and uneven across countries. The overall pattern reflects not only differences in national digitalisation agendas and media capacity but also the influence of official communication in shaping the news agenda.

The findings further reveal that media framing of DPI issues is dominated by functional and service delivery narratives (emphasis on efficiency, innovation, and progress) at the expense of governance, equity, and rights-based considerations such as inclusion, data privacy, and accountability.

Official voices overwhelmingly dominate coverage, while civil society, independent experts, and ordinary citizens remain marginal. The gender imbalance is stark, with male sources accounting for approximately four out of every five voices cited.

Across the region, coverage is characterised by descriptive reporting, minimal enterprise journalism, and limited investigative depth. This stems from structural constraints within newsrooms, including inadequate technical knowledge, subject complexity, lack of specialist technology beats, and scarce editorial resources. In some cases, restrictive media environments and political sensitivities around issues such as surveillance and data governance have further discouraged critical inquiry.

Nevertheless, promising examples exist. Kenya's engagement with civic technology and data communities, Tanzania's growing use of enterprise and interpretive reporting, and Rwanda's relatively stronger gender representation demonstrate that more balanced and analytical DPI journalism is achievable. These experiences show that with the right mix of capacity-building, editorial commitment, and collaboration, the media can evolve from merely chronicling digital developments to active interpreters and watchdogs of digital transformation shaping meaningful, evidence-based public discourse.

A knowledgeable, diverse, and independent media will be indispensable for ensuring that Eastern Africa's digital future remains equitable, rights-respecting, and genuinely public in both spirit and practice.

Building a media ecosystem that reports on DPI and DPGs from a point of knowledge requires concerted action by all actors. Journalists and editors need capacity and resources; policymakers must guarantee transparency and access to information; civil society should amplify citizen perspectives; academic institutions can bridge research and practice; and development partners can provide sustained support for skills development and collaboration.

## 7.2 Recommendations

### For Journalists and Newsrooms

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- i. Invest in strengthening subject-matter knowledge on DPI and digital systems generally, and accompanying rights such as data protection, privacy, and inclusion, as well as governance principles such as transparency and accountability to support explanatory and investigative storytelling.
- ii. Diversify story types beyond straight news to include analytical features, explainers, and investigative follow-ups that unpack implications for citizens and governance.
- iii. Work to proactively broaden sourcing to include civil society, academic experts, innovators, and citizens, with deliberate attention to gender balance and inclusion.
- iv. Collaborate across borders through joint investigations or shared coverage of regional DPI issues (e.g., interoperability, data exchange, and privacy regimes).
- v. Adopt narrative and solutions-oriented approaches to show how DPI initiatives impact daily life.
- vi. Pursue professional integrity by reducing reliance on promotional materials and sponsored content or subjecting them to editorial scrutiny.

### For Editors and Media Owners

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- i. Recognise DPI as a strategic public interest beat and assign dedicated reporters or desks for technology and digital governance.
- ii. Invest in newsroom capacity for in-depth, data-driven, and enterprise journalism.
- iii. Embrace media support interventions that aim to strengthen independent journalism.
- iv. Institutionalise diversity policies that promote gender balance in sourcing.
- v. Forge partnerships with civil society, academia, and tech experts to strengthen accuracy and contextual depth.
- vi. Encourage regional peer-learning between editors to share strategies for building digitally literate and independent newsroom cultures.

### For Civil Society Organisations

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- i. Engage proactively with media by providing background materials, expert spokespersons, and easy-to-use resources on digital rights and governance.
- ii. Offer story grants, training, and mentorship to support journalists to produce in-depth DPI and DPG coverage.
- iii. Promote inclusion and accountability narratives that centre marginalised groups and citizens' experiences with digital systems.
- iv. Build media–civil society coalitions that jointly monitor and track digital governance reforms.
- v. Support media literacy initiatives that empower citizens to engage with DPI-related issues in informed ways.

### For Policymakers and Regulators

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- i. Promote transparency and access to information through open data, timely communication, and inclusive consultations.
- ii. Treat media as partners in promoting public understanding of digital transformation rather than as passive channels for official announcements.
- iii. Strengthen media relations and public communication capacities of government agencies to improve how they convey complex DPI initiatives.
- iv. Ensure enabling policy environments by enforcing media freedom, freedom of information, and data protection guarantees.
- v. Integrate communication and feedback mechanisms into national digital strategies to sustain informed public engagement.
- vi. Include civil society, academia, and media representatives in multi-stakeholder bodies overseeing DPI design and implementation.

### For Donors and Development Partners

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- i. Invest in long-term capacity-building for journalists and editors, focusing on digital governance, investigative reporting, and data analysis.
- ii. Support journalism fellowships and collaborative story grants.
- iii. Encourage partnerships between media, academia, and civil society to bridge research and reporting gaps.
- iv. Fund gender-responsive programmes that advance women's participation in digital journalism.
- v. Provide small grants for innovation and experimentation, such as multimedia storytelling, podcasts, or explainers that reach wider audiences.
- vi. Include independent media monitoring in donor-funded digital transformation projects to assess how public communication affects transparency and accountability.

### For Academic and Training Institutions

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- i. Integrate digital governance and data literacy into journalism curricula and continuous professional development.
- ii. Conduct applied research on media coverage and its impact on public understanding of digital transformation.
- iii. Develop locally relevant case studies and training resources, potentially as Digital Public Goods, for use across the region.
- iv. Offer targeted short courses in data journalism, tech reporting, and digital ethics to address gaps identified.

### For the Private Sector, Including Technology Companies, Developers, and Innovators

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- i. Enhance openness and communication with the media by providing timely, accurate, and contextual information on digital innovations and infrastructure projects.
- ii. Develop media engagement strategies that go beyond product promotion to include public education on how digital systems work and their societal implications.
- iii. Support journalist training and access by offering background briefings, demos, or expert interviews that help reporters interpret complex technical developments accurately.
- iv. Collaborate with media and civil society to counter misinformation about digital services and promote responsible use of technology.
- v. Highlight local innovation stories and showcase how technology solutions address public challenges, helping the media to tell more balanced and constructive digital narratives.
- vi. Invest in inclusive communication initiatives, ensuring that women and marginalised groups are visible in stories about innovation and tech entrepreneurship.

### For the Public

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- i. Engage actively with media content on digital transformation by reading, sharing, and discussing credible journalism on DPI and DPG issues.
- ii. Provide feedback and story leads to journalists about how digital systems affect everyday life.
- iii. Participate in media and civic dialogues (including radio talk shows, call-ins, online discussion forums) to make public voices part of the national digital conversation.
- iv. Demand accuracy and accountability from media, public officials, and the private sector by questioning misinformation and one-sided reporting on digital initiatives.
- v. Collaborate with citizen journalism and fact-checking initiatives that promote transparency and credible public communication about digital transformation.





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