

DIGITAL ACCESS FOR ALL

Everyone has a right to access the digital realm and to be free to participate in digital life.

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The full realization of human potential requires universal rights to education, to freedom of expression and information, to assembly and association, and to full participation in and enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political life.

To participate fully in the modern world, everyone requires equal access to the internet and digital technologies. However, around 3.7 billion people – comprising nearly half of the world's population – do not enjoy such access. People living in remote areas are less likely to use the internet than those in more urban areas, and people who face intersectional inequalities are more likely to be excluded from using digital technologies and services.

This is an issue that particularly affects women, girls, and other discriminated-against groups and marginalized people, who are more vulnerable to coercive control and unequal power relationships. On average, women's access to digital and mobile technology is about 85% of the level for men, while globally, about 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone and access to mobile internet.

The ability to freely engage with the digital world is negatively affected by factors including misogyny, hate speech, identity theft, defamation, online sexual exploitation and harassment – all of which disproportionately affect women, girls, and other discriminated-against groups and marginalized people.

THE DIGITAL PRINCIPLES

- Everyone has the right to participate in the digital realm and to access, regardless of their geographical location, universally available internet services and digital technology at an affordable price.
- States should enact policies promoting universal and equal access to the internet, including recognizing and addressing existing gender and intersectional inequalities.
- States should enact policies prohibiting the arbitrary and deliberate slowing and/or cutting off of the internet on any grounds, including public order or national security grounds.
- Interfaces, content, and applications must be designed inclusively to ensure accessibility for all, including people with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities, people who are not literate, and people who speak minority languages. The principle of inclusive design and the use of assistive technologies must be promoted and supported to allow persons with disabilities to benefit fully and on equal terms.

