



UNIVERSAL AND EQUAL RIGHTS

Everyone has an equal right to protection, opportunity, and respect, including in the digital realm.



Article 1 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” This means that the rights of all members of the human family are equal, and every person must be respected, protected, and provided with an opportunity to fulfill their interests and realize their human rights.

Digital technologies and services provide historically discriminated-against groups with new opportunities to overcome dominant societal, cultural, traditional, and mobility barriers.

But if our digital selves are not afforded the same human rights as our physical selves, the very people who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and prejudice in the real world will continue to be subjugated and denied their human rights within the digital ecosystem, and be subjected to new and amplified forms of discrimination.

The systems and processes by which digital services and technologies are developed, accessed, and regulated must be underpinned by non-discrimination and equality to ensure that our fundamental human rights remain universally upheld – including in the digital world.

THE DIGITAL PRINCIPLES

- Everyone is equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of the law, including in the digital realm, its ecosystem, and the metaverse.
- Everyone is entitled to equal protection from all forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to, discrimination on the grounds of sex (including grounds related to pregnancy, childbirth, gender identity, intersex status, and sexual orientation), race, ethnicity, color, social or economic class, disability, religion (with the understanding that such protections do not extend to defending/excusing discrimination against others on the grounds of sex and/or gender equality), language, political opinion, national origin, descent, veteran status, genetic information, marital status, and age.
- Human rights, as envisaged in international and national laws, shall be interpreted with a gendered and intersectional lens to ensure that they are enforced equally and fairly in the digital realm, so as to address any gendered digital discrimination and inequality.
- Equality by design principles should be included at the design stage of algorithmic decision-making systems and digital technologies to prevent discrimination and harmful biases being amplified and/or perpetuated.

