

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

HUMAN RIGHTS AND NEW AND EMERGING DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGIES

Simulation: United Nations Human Rights Council

Welcome to WIMUN New York 2026,

We are very pleased to introduce you to the most authentic simulation of the Human Rights Council in the world; and hope to contribute to your understanding of the organisation, its mandate, and its critical role in global affairs.

Through a series of pre-conference webinars that will be offered and documents – like this resource guide – we aim to educate you not only about the global issues on the UN agenda, but also about the ways and means through which those topics are discussed, debated and negotiated by real UN diplomats.

This resource guide will provide you with a head start in doing research to gain a deeper understanding of the global issue that you will be discussing and the actions that the government you have been assigned recommends that the international community should take to address this issue. To make the research process a bit easier, the resource guide has been divided into sections and sub-sections to assist you in researching these two components. We strongly recommend you to give a careful look through the sources listed below so that the interaction with your peers is as exciting as possible.

We wish you all the very best in this journey of learning!

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

“The outcome of the our future, whether it stands as a testament to scientific achievement or serves as a warning, hinges on our decisions in the present moment.”

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is the main UN body responsible for protecting and promoting human rights worldwide. In today’s world, one of the biggest challenges it faces is how to deal with new and emerging digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), facial recognition, surveillance tools, and social media platforms. These technologies are changing how societies work, but they also raise serious questions about privacy, freedom, fairness, and equality.

Over the past decade, the UN has made clear that human rights must be protected online just as much as offline. Technology is not neutral—it can empower people by giving them access to information, education, and healthcare, or it can increase inequality by enabling discrimination, censorship, or surveillance. This makes the balance between innovation and regulation one of the toughest debates for governments today.

Private companies also play a huge role. Tech companies control platforms, personal data, and algorithms that affect billions of people every day. This gives them enormous influence over fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, and privacy. But international rules to hold them accountable are still weak and inconsistent, and most regulation is left to individual countries, which apply different standards.

To respond, the Human Rights Council has called for international cooperation and multi-stakeholder governance—meaning that governments, tech companies, experts, and civil society must all work together. Some of the key areas under discussion include:

Artificial Intelligence (AI): How do we prevent biased algorithms from discriminating against people?

Surveillance: When does security cross the line into violating privacy rights?

Data Flows: Who controls personal data that moves across borders, and how can it be kept safe?

Digital Inclusion: How do we make sure developing countries and marginalized groups aren’t left out of the digital revolution?

The Council has also emphasized the need for human rights impact assessments—a way of testing how new technologies affect people’s rights before they are rolled out. The ultimate goal is to build a digital future that is innovative, inclusive, and democratic—a future where technology protects human dignity instead of threatening it.

Key Points and Main Issues

1. Ensuring the simultaneous evolution of both, Human Rights and Digital Technologies

States must reaffirm foundational human rights protections within rapidly changing digital ecosystems, thereby bringing about a harmonious balance between the evolution of both spheres. Delegates must focus on, however not limit themselves to:

- Integration of international human rights law into digital governance frameworks,
- Routinely updating national legislations to reflect challenges in the realm of digital-specific rights,
- Mandating a critical human rights impact assessment for new technologies, thereupon establishing a more structural principle for subsequent developments.

2. Bridging the Global Digital Divide

Focusing on the principle of equity, this area aims to ensure that digital transformation benefits all populations, not just the technologically advanced, in due consideration of the already existing inequalities in the global community. Delegates must focus on, however not limit themselves to:

- Universal, affordable, and meaningful internet access for all regions,
- Closing gaps in digital literacy and technological infrastructure, while intricately focusing on digital capacity-building for developing States,
- International cooperation, in terms of confidence building & information sharing mechanisms and/or practices.

3. Addressing State and Corporate Surveillance Practices

This area tackles the legal and ethical boundaries of surveillance in the name of security, governance, or commerce in consideration of the covert interests which often overshadow the shared responsibility to work towards the maintenance of international peace and security. Delegates must focus on, however not limit themselves to:

- Establishing independent oversight mechanisms for surveillance systems
- Defining legal thresholds for lawful interception and surveillance
- Ensuring transparency and accountability in corporate data practices

4. Ensuring Algorithmic Accountability and Fairness in AI Systems

Artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven systems can replicate or worsen historical injustices when built on biased data or trained without ethical constraints. This has direct implications for the rights to equality, non-discrimination, due process, and access to remedy. Delegates must focus on, however not limit themselves to:

Key Points and Main Issues (cont.)

- Biased predictive models in public decision-making: AI is increasingly used in welfare eligibility, visa approvals, credit scoring, and predictive policing. When these models rely on biased datasets, they institutionalize discrimination and restrict life opportunities for marginalized populations. Delegates can consider mandatory algorithmic audits, public registers of AI use in governance, and disaggregated impact assessments.
- Opacity and lack of contestability: Individuals often do not understand how decisions are made or how to challenge them. Resolutions may propose the development of AI explainability standards, user notification requirements, and effective grievance mechanisms.
- Digital exclusion through inaccessible systems: Automated platforms often fail to accommodate persons with disabilities, non-dominant languages, or indigenous knowledge systems. Delegates may advocate for universal design standards, inclusive datasets, and intersectional human rights review processes.

5. Securing Digital Civic Space and Online Democratic Participation

Digital technologies have enabled new forms of political expression and social mobilization. However, the same tools are also being used to surveil dissenters, manipulate public debate, and limit access to truthful information—undermining democratic governance and civic participation. Delegates must focus on, however not limit themselves to:

- Online censorship and information control: Legislation targeting disinformation, hate speech, or "fake news" is often vague and overly broad, enabling States to suppress political opposition, minority voices, and investigative journalism. Delegates should consider operative clauses that promote clear legal definitions, prohibit overreach, and protect media freedom in digital spaces.
- Digital repression of human rights defenders and journalists: Activists—particularly women, LGBTQI+ individuals, and ethnic minorities—are frequently subjected to online harassment, doxxing, cyberbullying, and coordinated digital threats. Resolutions could call for special protections for digital defenders, investment in digital safety training, and platform accountability for abuse facilitation.
- Algorithmic amplification of divisive content: Automated content ranking often rewards polarizing, violent, or misleading posts due to higher engagement. This distorts the public sphere and undermines informed civic participation. Delegates might advocate for algorithmic transparency standards, user-control features, and research access to platform data to enhance accountability.

Key Points and Main Issues (cont.)

6. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Populations in Digital Environments

Children's rights in the digital environment are an urgent and evolving issue. As digital natives, children face unique risks—ranging from online grooming and exploitation to algorithmic profiling and targeted manipulation. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 25 (2021) emphasizes that children's rights apply equally online and offline. Delegates must focus on, however not limit themselves to:

- Online sexual exploitation and abuse: Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), livestreamed abuse, and grooming have risen sharply, often facilitated by encrypted platforms and anonymity. Delegates could propose global cooperation on CSAM detection, mandatory reporting protocols, and child protection oversight boards.
 - Commercial exploitation through data harvesting and microtargeting: Children are routinely exposed to behavioral advertising and algorithmic manipulation on educational and entertainment platforms. Delegates may encourage bans or strict regulation on surveillance-based advertising to minors, alongside digital literacy curricula in schools.
 - Unequal access to digital education and participation: The digital divide also affects children's rights to education and expression. In some regions, lack of connectivity or devices has hindered learning continuity and civic engagement. Resolutions might address infrastructure investment, inclusive EdTech design, and gender-sensitive access strategies.
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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, Ana Brian Nougères **2025**

Summary: Report A/HRC/58/58 sets out a plan for how to regulate neurotechnology and handle “neurodata” while protecting the right to privacy. It describes neurodata as very sensitive personal information and highlights key principles such as consent, mental privacy, human dignity, fairness, accountability, and safe data use. The report also calls for ethical design, open decision-making, and strong human rights standards to guide the future of neurotechnology.

Digital space and human rights **2025**

Summary : This web-resource explains how digital technologies reshape how people share information, form opinions, and claim rights. It also shows how online tools can hurt rights—through surveillance, censorship, harassment, and bias—especially for marginalized groups. The page reports that OHCHR works by raising awareness, publishing expert reports, and pushing for laws and oversight that protect rights online. It aims to help governments, companies, civil society ensure that human rights matter in the digital world.

Human Rights Due Diligence for Digital Technology Use – Call to Action for Human Rights **2024**

Summary : This report urges governments, companies, and organizations to use digital technology responsibly and protect human rights. It explains that technology can help people connect and access information, but it can also harm rights through misuse, bias, or surveillance. The report calls for clear rules, open communication, and fair systems that prevent harm and protect everyone’s privacy and freedom. It serves as a guide for taking simple, practical steps to make digital technology safe and rights-respecting.

Governing AI for Humanity

2024

Summary: This report outlines 7 key recommendations to shape the future of AI Governance. The members of the Body, made up of global leaders with experience in public policy, science, technology, anthropology, and human rights, call on all stakeholders to support these recommendations. It explains how human rights and digital technology can work together in practice.

Global Digital Compact

2024

Summary: The Global Digital Compact, adopted in 2024 as part of the “Pact for the Future,” sets a shared global plan for digital cooperation. It aims to use technology to advance sustainable development, human rights, and equality. The Compact focuses on closing digital gaps, improving online safety, and building fair digital economies. It also promotes better rules for data and AI, encourages teamwork among governments, businesses, and civil society, and sets measurable goals such as universal internet access by 2030. The agreement stresses transparency, human oversight, and respect for international law.

OHCHR’s report on digital tech and civic space in South-East Asia

2023

Summary: This report draws attention to the many recent laws and regulations governing online space in South-East Asia, several of which appear to reinforce and expand pre-existing restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and privacy.

A/HRC/RES/53/29: New and Emerging Digital Technologies and Human Rights.

2023

Summary : This resolution directs states, UN bodies, and private actors to uphold human rights when deploying new technologies. It calls for risk assessments, safeguards, capacity building, and global cooperation. The text emphasizes that digital tools must respect privacy, freedom of expression, equality, and non-discrimination. It provides a normative basis for applying due diligence and accountability in the digital sphere.

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Internet shutdowns **2022**

Summary: In the present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 47/16, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provides an overview of trends in Internet shutdowns. It contains an analysis of their causes and the legal implications and the subsequent impact on human rights.

A/HRC/51/17: The right to privacy in the digital age **2022**

Summary: This report, submitted under Human Rights Council resolution 48/4, reviews recent trends and challenges to the right to privacy. It focuses on three areas: (a) the misuse of hacking tools; (b) the importance of encryption in protecting privacy and other rights; and (c) the growing monitoring of public spaces. The report warns that widespread surveillance and control could weaken open and rights-based societies.

Report of the Secretary-General: Question of the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in all countries: the role of new technologies for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights **2020**

Summary: In the report, the Secretary-General identifies the opportunities and potential held by new technologies for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and other related human rights, and for the human rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also identifies risks associated with technological changes in exacerbating gaps and inequalities, and highlights particular challenges that they pose for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

Statement by France in UNSC Arria-Formula Meeting related to Artificial Intelligence**2025**

Summary: This statement will not only provide a detailed understanding of the current scenario of developments with regards to AI, but also will shed light on France's opinion on an amicable and humanitarian approach in terms of formulation of regulatory frameworks.

India-France Declaration on Artificial Intelligence **2025**

Summary: In view of their shared commitments to Agenda 2030, both the nations came up with certain key points in understanding how human rights ought to be integrated within the spectrum of international humanitarian law.

Countering the Use of Artificial Intelligence and New Technologies for Terrorist Purposes by Italy **2024**
Ambassador

Summary: This statement draws the nexus between AI and Terrorism. Through this statement, delegates can develop an understanding of the efforts made by the United Nations as a part of their counter-terrorism measures.

Risk Management Profile for Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights by United States of America **2024**

Summary: Delegates can use this resource to understand USA's approach towards integrating human rights protections into artificial intelligence governance. This document emphasizes transparency, accountability, stakeholder participation, and the need for context-specific safeguards.

Summary record of the 37th meeting Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva

2023

Summary: Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 14 July 2023, this meeting of the HRC included the presentation of the Draft resolution A/HRC/53/L.27/Rev.1 on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights, and these records contain the statements made by several Member States before the decision.

Rio de Janeiro Declaration- Strengthening Global South Cooperation for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance

2025

Summary: This will help delegates to gather an in-depth knowledge about the Global South's commitment to Cooperate for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance. The Declaration advocates inclusive AI frameworks, launches initiatives like the BRICS Climate Research Platform and AI governance, and positions BRICS as a strategic driver for fairer global governance rooted in solidarity and sustainability.

Digital Decade 2025: Country reports

2025

Summary: This provides a data-driven assessment of how each of the 27 EU Member States is progressing toward the 2030 Digital Decade goals in areas including digital skills, infrastructure, public services, SME digitisation and emerging technologies.

European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles

2022

Summary: This will help delegates to gather an in-depth knowledge about how the EU's core values extend unequivocally into the digital sphere; it sets out a vision of digital transformation that places individuals at the centre, promotes democratic integrity, solidarity, inclusion, universal connectivity, algorithmic transparency, privacy, sustainability, and digital sovereignty.

Possible elements of a legal framework on artificial intelligence, based on the Council of Europe's standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law

2021

Summary: Adopted in December 2021, this report outlines a plan for a legally binding framework to govern AI in both public and private sectors.

ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025

2021

Summary: ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 (ADM2025) lays out a bold regional vision for ASEAN through secure, inclusive, and high-quality digital services, infrastructure and ecosystems. It defines eight Desired Outcomes backed by concrete enabling actions, metrics, and governance structures to steer ASEAN's digital transformation.

The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)

2020

Summary: This presents a comprehensive, continent-wide roadmap to harness digital technologies for inclusive socio-economic development and integration. Crafted through multi-stakeholder collaboration, the strategy is structured around certain foundational pillars and critical sectors like industry, trade, governance, health, education, agriculture, etc.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND TECHNOLOGY

2024

Summary: This article aims to provide a very general and wide understanding of the entire subject matter, while highlighting case studies. Delegates can use this to develop a preliminary understanding of the elements revolving around the agenda, before moving into a more detailed analysis.

Digital Security and Human Rights Defenders in the Asia-Pacific

2023

Summary: This report examines the digital surveillance threats facing human rights defenders across the Asia-Pacific, detailing legal repression, internet disruptions, mass data collection, and government-linked “cyber-troops,” and evaluates how National institutions can more effectively support defenders by strengthening digital threat monitoring, enhancing advocacy and stakeholder engagement, building institutional capacity, and fostering regional collaboration to safeguard online civic space.

Digital Technologies and Human Rights: a Legal Framework

2022

Summary: This briefing paper is aimed at contributing to the understanding of the international human rights legal framework applicable to the design, development and use of new digital technologies. This briefing paper is a useful tool in advocacy efforts aimed at reforming legal and policy frameworks applicable to the design and application of such technologies in a human rights compliant way.

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Governance of Digital Technologies and Human Rights **2022**

Summary: This will help delegates to gather an in-depth knowledge about how a 2022 multi-stakeholder consultation led by the Geneva Academy, OHCHR's B-Tech Project, and the Centre for Democracy & Technology stresses that human rights must be central in technology regulation, proposes a "UNGPs check" tool aligning tech-sector laws with UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and highlights the role of both voluntary and mandatory measures to ensure tech companies conduct due diligence, protect against online harms, and uphold international human rights law

The Concept of Human Right in the Digital Era: Changes and Consequences for Judicial Practice **2022**

Summary: This journal examines how digital technologies are reshaping human rights and legal systems. It explores emerging ideas of "digital human rights," showing how online platforms, AI, and court decisions affect privacy, freedom of expression, and equality. It highlights risks such as algorithmic bias, barriers to digital court access, and social media's influence on legal outcomes, calling for more transparent, accountable, and rights-based legal frameworks.

Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights: Corporate Responsibility in AI Governance Initiatives **2022**

Summary: This article addresses these uncertainties from a governance perspective and against the backdrop of the public/private divide; it views laws as instruments of governance, which comprises activities by many public and private actors. It briefly assesses the current framework of IHRL regarding AI and businesses, while providing certain key recommendations.
