



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Digital Citizen Summit
Special Series 2026

Centring *People* in
Digital Public Infrastructure

Digital Empowerment Foundation, in collaboration with Centre for Development Policy and Practice and APNIC Foundation, invites experts, scholars, and practitioners working on Digital Public Infrastructure in the Asia Pacific Region to submit abstracts of research papers, essays, commentaries or case studies on the topic of 'Centring *People* in Digital Public Infrastructure'. These contributions will form a publication which will be released during the Digital Citizen Summit 2026, in December this year.

As Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) expands across the Asia-Pacific region, discussions have largely focused on technology, interoperability, and scale. This special series, Centring People in Digital Public Infrastructure, seeks to shift the focus towards 'people' for whom DPI is designed and implemented. The publication will centre scholarship on how DPI has been experienced, accessed, and governed across diverse social, economic, and geographic contexts by looking at both the opportunities and limitations of current approaches.

This special series will answer the larger question of how useful DPI is or can be for diverse communities in India and the Asia Pacific region.

Contributor Eligibility: Submissions are invited from scholars, experts, practitioners, and researchers in digital rights, digital inclusion, Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), digital governance, or related fields.

THEMATIC AREA

The theme of the series is **JanDPI: Centring People in Digital Public Infrastructure**. In doing so, we seek to imagine DPI as a people's infrastructure, grounded in equity, dignity, and accountability. It will place people at the centre of design, governance, and delivery of digital services and technology; this means that 'people' can use the software and platforms locally, affordably, and without exclusion, through shared access points, assisted services models, offline and low-tech options, present in regional languages, and follows socially inclusive design that responds to diverse user needs.

SUB-THEMES

Contributions may engage with, but are not limited to, the following themes:

1. Inclusive and Sustainable DPI

Explore frameworks, models, and approaches for designing and implementing inclusive and sustainable Digital Public Infrastructure. Contributions may critically examine existing or proposed DPI initiatives, detailing the lessons learned, challenges, and recommendations for better implementation.

2. Social Exclusion in Digital Public Infrastructure

Examine how DPI shapes inclusion and exclusion across different communities and contexts. Contributions may analyse barriers to access, unintended consequences of digital systems, or document experiences of individuals and communities affected by existing DPI models.

3. Governance of Digital Public Infrastructure

Investigate the governance of DPI, including the roles of governments, civil society, the private sector, and communities. Contributions may critically analyse existing data governance practices, institutional arrangements, standards, protocols, regulatory frameworks, and accountability mechanisms in one or more countries.

4. Data Practices and Community-Centred Approaches

Explore opportunities or issues related to community data governance, community internet infrastructures, privacy, safety, ethics, participatory design, and alternative or community-led approaches to DPI. Contributions may present empirical research, policy analysis, or case studies that can advance responsible and people-centred data practices.



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

We kindly request that you submit an extended abstract of approximately **1500 words**. The abstract should include a brief introduction to the research topic, clearly articulated research questions, the methodology employed, and if available, any initial findings or insights.

Submissions must be original work, not previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere. Authors are responsible for ensuring the originality of their submissions and should cite any sources appropriately.

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- **Name of author(s)/presenter(s)**
- **Affiliation**
- **Email ID and phone number**
- **Title of the paper**
- **Word limit: 1500 words**
- **Font style: Cambria**
- **Font size: 12**
- **At least 4 keywords**
- **Abstracts should be sent in MS Word File**
- **Types of Contributions: We welcome research papers, analytical essays, case studies, and evidence-based commentaries that engage with the theme of the compendium.**



Type of Contribution	Description	Example
Research Paper	A systematic study that answers a research question using original data (such as surveys, interviews, experiments, or datasets) or rigorous secondary data analysis. It aims to generate new knowledge or evidence.	"How has Digital Public Infrastructure influenced access to welfare schemes among women in rural India?" This could use household survey data, interviews with beneficiaries, and statistical analysis.
Analytical Essay	A critical examination of an issue using existing literature, theories, policies, and evidence. It develops an original argument or interpretation without collecting new data	"Why Digital Public Infrastructure alone cannot bridge the digital gender divide in India." The essay could analyse existing research, government policies, and scholarly debates to argue that social and structural inequalities remain important barriers.
Case Study	An in-depth examination of a specific programme, organisation, community, policy, or event to understand what happened, why it happened, and what lessons can be drawn.	"The implementation of Digital Public Infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh's public distribution system: Lessons for inclusive service delivery." The study could examine one state's experience using interviews, government documents, and field observations.
Evidence-based Commentary	A concise, evidence-informed opinion or policy argument on a contemporary issue. It does not present original research but uses credible evidence to support recommendations or critique current developments.	"Digital Public Infrastructure must prioritise accessibility for persons with disabilities." The commentary could draw on government reports, research studies, and disability rights frameworks to argue for more inclusive digital design.



GUIDELINES FOR FULL PAPER SUBMISSIONS

- Length: Manuscripts should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words, excluding references.
- Use of AI: Submissions must be original works of the author(s). The use of generative AI tools for drafting, copyediting, structuring or writing the manuscript is not permitted.
- Plagiarism: All submissions must maintain a plagiarism score below 10%.
- Writing Style: Authors are encouraged to write in the active voice and present arguments in a clear, concise, and engaging manner. Avoid unnecessary jargon and support claims with relevant evidence, examples, or case studies wherever appropriate.
- Readership: Contributions should be accessible to a broad interdisciplinary readership, including policymakers, researchers, technologists, civil society practitioners, and students.
- Author Information: Please include a 70-100 word author biography and a high-resolution headshot with your submission. These will be published as part of the contributor profiles in the compendium.
- Format: Submissions should be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format, following the American Psychological Association (APA 7) style guidelines for citations and references.
- Manuscript in MS Word, not PDF
- Author's full profile (designation, institution)
- Font Type: Cambria
- Abstract (not more than 200 words)
- Keywords (at least 4)
- British English
- In-text citation as per APA 7 style. Multiple authors in a citation to be arranged in alphabetical order (Mukherjee, 2020, pp. 4–8; Peterson, 2021; Singh et al., 2022)
- Oxford/serial comma
- Hyphen to be used only for hyphenated compound words: decision-making, old-fashioned, well-being, in-depth, high-tech, one-third, one-sided
- En dash for date, year, and page range. Eg: March 10–15, 2010–2012, pp. 10–15.
- Em dash for extended thought, idea, and explanation. Eg: All forms of public transport—trains, buses, metro—are shut until further notice.
- Full stop and comma inside quote marks. Eg: Amit said, “Hi,” at the top of his voice. Meeta told us, “Please do not talk in the library.”

- Tables and figures to be included only if directly relevant to the discussion, numbered properly, and kept at the end of the text, before the reference list. Format: MS Word, not images.
- Tables and data to be shared in an editable Excel file and Figures to be shared in an editable Word file, separately.
- Please do not use endnotes or footnotes. If endnotes are used, they are to be kept very minimal.
- Complete reference details (APA 7 style): Journal: full name (not abbreviated), volume no., issue no., year, page range. Books: full name of authors, complete title, publisher, and year.

TIMELINE

Call for Abstracts	August 10, 2026
Deadline for Abstract Submission	September 8, 2026
Acceptance Email of Abstracts	September 15, 2026
Submission of the 1st Draft of Chapters	October 5, 2026
Reviewed Drafts shared with Authors	October 15, 2026
Submission of Revised Drafts	October 30, 2026
2nd Round of Review by Editors	November 10, 2026
Final Draft Submission by Authors	November 15, 2026
Publication Release	December 10, 2026

Submissions must be directed to suruchi@defindia.org and lubna@cdpp.co.in with subject line of email - **Contribution for Digital Citizen Summit Special Series 2026**. All submitted papers will go through editorial review. The series will be published by CDPP with ISBN. It will be released at the **8th Digital Citizen Summit 2026** in **New Delhi** in **December, 2026**.

