10th GIG-ARTS Conference

14-15th May 2026, Dublin

Digital Futures, Sustainable Freedoms: Rights, Responsibilities and Governance

Call for Papers Deadline: 19th January 2026

GIG-ARTS

The European Multidisciplinary Conference on Global Internet Governance Actors, Regulations, Transactions and Strategies (GIG-ARTS) gathers scholars and practitioners in an annual conference to debate the latest research on governing the global internet. Each conference highlights a main theme while also welcoming contributions on other aspects of global internet governance.

Earlier GIG-ARTS meetings have addressed themes such as "Global Internet Governance as a Diplomacy Issue" (Paris, 2017), "Overcoming Inequalities in Internet Governance" (Cardiff, 2018), "Europe as a Global Player in Internet Governance" (Salerno, 2019), "Online Information Governance" (Vienna, 2021), "Global Internet Governance and International Human Rights" (Nicosia, 2022), and "The Governance of Cybersecurity: Resilience, Human Rights and Democracy" (Padua, 2023), "Thirty Years of Multistakeholderism in Internet Governance: Assessments and Prospects" (The Hague 2024), "The Rise of Digital Sovereignty: Ambiguities and Challenges" (Salerno, 2025).

GIG-ARTS 2026

The Tenth GIG-ARTS Conference, to be held at the Dublin City University on 14th-15th May 2026, takes as its main theme "Digital Futures, Sustainable Freedoms: Rights, Responsibilities and Governance."

From artificial intelligence and cloud infrastructures to social media platforms and blockchain technologies, digital technologies are commonly presented as drivers of green strategies, economic growth and societal well-being. However, these systems also pose essential challenges to society and the environment. Indeed, the complex, resource-intensive supply chain of digital technologies has been underrepresented in dominant political narratives. Digital infrastructures demand high amounts of energy. The extraction of essential raw materials involved in the development of digital devices and the powering of data centres imposes further ecological burdens and creates geopolitical dependencies. Finally, the accelerated turnover of devices generates a concerning amount of e-waste on a global scale. These factors require us to consider whether the envisioned digital futures align with the pressing demands for ecological sustainability, democratic development, and the needs of future generations.

Amid an unprecedented AI boom, regulatory and policy frameworks have thus far focused on privacy, ethics and broad human rights compliance. However, limited attention has been given to the environmental impact of AI systems. More recently, the Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade of the European Union introduced a chapter discussing aspects of digital sustainability. Still, the jury is out on the true effectiveness of these soft law instruments. More importantly, the European AI Act has been criticised by scholars and civil society: while it establishes reporting obligations on AI systems, it falls short of fully integrating sustainability concerns into the regulatory framework of AI and digital technologies more broadly. This suggests that the digital and green transition have been approached as siloed, rather than truly interconnected processes.

The conference theme highlights the Janus-faced nature of digital innovation, equally generating opportunities and risks. On one hand, digital technologies have the potential to strengthen freedoms by enabling democratic participation, enhancing transparency, promoting and advancing sustainable development goals. On the other hand, pursuing digital progress without sufficient attention to its environmental and social implications risks compromising the very freedoms it aims to promote. Infrastructures created without sustainability considerations can exacerbate inequalities, exhaust natural resources, contribute to climate instability and enable a renewed wave of colonial and extractivist regimes of power.

These tensions underscore issues of responsibility and governance. Who must ensure that the enhancement and operation of digital technologies follow key principles of sustainability? How should governments regulate tech corporations whose activities have high environmental costs? What commitments should organizations undertake concerning the supply chain of technologies? How might individuals, communities, and civil society play a role in shaping digital ecosystems that both respect planetary boundaries and uphold human rights? How to reconcile technological progress with the rights of current and future generations?

Understanding digital rights requires a holistic approach that incorporates aspects of energy consumption, waste reduction, labour rights and the overall sustainability of our digital environments. Therefore, there is a need to balance the benefits and impact of technological development with ecological constraints and responsibilities.

The Tenth GIG-ARTS Conference seeks to foster a multi-disciplinary discussion regarding the intersections of digital development, environmental concerns, and transnational governance. We encourage contributions that resonate with both theoretical and practical perspectives, gathering insights from fields including law, political science, communication, policy studies, economics, technology studies, environmental research, and beyond. Participants are invited to examine the inconsistencies and synergies that arise between technological innovation, human rights, and environmental responsibility, and to develop governance approaches that can integrate digital rights with sustainable futures.

By gathering scholars and practitioners, the conference aims to enhance understanding of how digital futures can be created and governed in ways that conform with universal rights and values while addressing burning environmental challenges. It represents an appeal to revisit the equilibrium of rights and duties in our current digital society, and to devise governance approaches that can guarantee freedoms and wellbeing for future generations.

Therefore, the Tenth GIG-ARTS Conference especially welcomes papers that address the themes and questions listed below:

- Conceptualizing "digital sustainability" and "sustainable freedoms" in theory and practice
- Rights in a digital age: freedom of expression, privacy, and environmental responsibilities
- Measuring the ecological footprint of digital infrastructures (AI, data centers, cloud services, 5G/6G)
- Critical raw materials, supply chains, and the environmental costs of digital transformation

- The influence of digital innovation on international trade and investment dynamics
- Corporate responsibility for sustainable innovation in the tech sector
- Governance models for aligning digital policy with climate and environmental objectives
- Global inequalities in the digital–ecological nexus: extraction, waste, and digital colonialism
- Trade-offs between green innovation and the rebound effects of digital expansion
- Security, resilience, and sustainability in digital infrastructures
- The politics of "green" digital transitions: ambitions, contradictions, and global competition
- Sustainable standard-setting: interoperability, eco-design, and lifecycle management of technologies
- The circular economy of ICT: repair, recycling, and regulation of e-waste
- Climate accountability of digital giants: transparency, reporting, and regulatory oversight
- Community-driven and indigenous approaches to sustainable digital futures
- Feminist digital justice and sustainability: (Black, cis, trans, queer, Indigenous and minority) feminist perspectives on the ecological and social dimensions of digital transformation
- Synergies and tensions between climate law, digital law, and human rights law
- Youth and intergenerational perspectives: digital futures for a livable planet
- Fragmentation or cooperation in global sustainable digital governance

As always, alongside the main theme, the GIG-ARTS conference also welcomes papers on other aspects of internet governance. We aim to publish a selection of contributions in a journal special issue and/or an edited volume.

Submission information

Authors are invited to submit their extended abstracts (no longer than 500 words), describing their research question(s), theoretical framework, approach and methodology, expected findings or empirical outcome. Submitted abstracts will be evaluated through a peer-review process. Abstracts and authors' information should be submitted through

https://conftool2026.gig-arts.eu

Key dates

- Deadline for abstract submissions: 19th January 2026

- Notification to authors: 27th February 2026

- Deadline for author registration (at least one author must register for a selected presentation to appear on the programme): 13th March 2026

- Programme publication: 10th April 2026

- Registration deadline: 17th April 2026

- Conference dates: 14-15th May 2026

Co-Sponsors

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Internet & Communication Policy Center https://www.internetpolicyresearch.eu

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Venue

GIG-ARTS 2026 will be held at Dublin City University, Ireland.

Conference Registration and Fees

Registration fees for the Tenth GIG-ARTS Conference are 150€ for regular participants and 75€ for students showing proof of status. Conference fees (non-refundable) cover a participant kit as well as coffee breaks, lunches, and reception. Registration deadline is 30th April 2026.

Communication Channels

- Website: www.gig-arts.eu

- Email for information: events@gig-arts.eu

- Submissions: https://conftool2026.gig-arts.eu

- X/Twitter: @GigArtsEU - Hashtag: #GIGARTS26

- Mailing list for updates: https://gig-arts.eu/mailman/listinfo/mailinglist_gig-arts.eu