

THE DIGITAL ACTION OF LINSIGHTS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to The Digital Agenda Insights Monthly Newsletter

the Across world. governments are accelerating national digital systems. What identity began as simple ID cards has become vast databases of biometric markers such as fingerprints, facial scans and irises, promoted as "secure" but entrenching permanent surveillance.

At the same time, Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) are advancing, with national ID numbers positioned as the master key for every transaction and essential service. Together, these systems risk concentrating unprecedented power in the hands of a few, presented

as innovation but designed

for control.

At the Digital Agenda we believe moment is a crossroads. Technology either can God's higher reflect purposes, serving people, preserving dignity expanding freedom, or it can become a tool of fear. and centralised control power.

That's why the **Digital Agenda Insights Newsletter** exists. We pause where the world rushes.

OUR CORE VALUES









We ask questions others avoid:

- Who truly benefits from these systems?
- What freedoms are quietly being traded away?
- Where is the line between innovation and manipulation?

Through sharp analysis and bold commentary, we highlight both risks and possibilities. champion technologies that make life fairer and humane. calling out those that reduce people to numbers. This is not about rejecting progress but insisting with progress purpose.

The digital future is being written now. Will it serve humanity, or will humanity serve it? Stay awake, stay discerning, stay fully human. If this vision moves you, consider standing with us.

Warm regards,

Jilian Agaba Nabwebale

For DIGITAL AGENDA FORUM



Uganda's Google Confrontation Signals Africa's Shift to Data Sovereignty

When Uganda's Personal Data Protection Office (PDPO-Ug) ruled on 18 July 2025 that Google LLC had violated the country's data protection laws, it sent a message louder than any press release or summit speech. Africa is no longer sitting on the sidelines of digital governance but stepping onto the field and taking charge.

The case began when four Ugandan citizens filed a complaint citing two key violations. Google had failed to register with the PDPO-Ug as a data controller or processor, and it had transferred Ugandans' personal data abroad without consent, legal basis, or safeguards. In short, one of the world's most powerful tech companies had ignored Uganda's law.

Uganda's Data Protection and Privacy Act of 2019, which aligns closely with global standards like the European Union's GDPR, collecting and profiting from the data of Ugandan users is enough to trigger legal obligations, even without a local office. This principle of commercial nexus is now central to how digital jurisdiction is being asserted worldwide.

The PDPO's ruling was clear. Google must register, appoint a Data Protection Officer, and provide a compliance framework for cross-border data transfers. If the company fails to comply, it faces daily fines or even imprisonment under Regulation 48.

Although the PDPO does not currently have the authority to award compensation, this legal move is far

from symbolic. It establishes precedent, forces new conversations, and shows regulators across Africa that legal accountability is possible. Most importantly, it challenges a long-standing imbalance. For years, global tech firms have treated African markets as data-rich but regulation-light. That era is coming to an end.



This case is not just about Google. It is about digital sovereignty and Africa's right to shape its own data governance. The ruling signals a major shift in mindset. Data is no longer just a technical issue; it is a national resource, much like oil or minerals. It must be protected and regulated in the public interest.

The decision also empowers digital rights advocates, who have long raised concerns about unchecked data exploitation. Their calls for justice now have legal backing, not just moral urgency.

Challenges remain. Uganda's enforcement capacity is still limited. The country depends heavily on Google services for education, advertising, and productivity tools. Global tech firms have



the resources to influence, delay, or weaken regulations through lobbying and backdoor agreements.

To make this ruling effective, Uganda must strengthen the PDPO's legal powers, ensure courts can award meaningful damages, and back these efforts with clear political and diplomatic support. Without this, the ruling could remain largely symbolic, a bold declaration that lacks the means to be enforced.

Uganda may be the first, but it will not be the last. Regulators in Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa are watching closely. As more countries take similar positions, we could witness the development of an "African GDPR," representing a continent-wide agreement on data protection and digital accountability grounded in African priorities.

This is how global standards change. Not always through treaties, but through brave local decisions that set new norms.

Uganda's ruling is not an attack on foreign companies. It is a demand for fairness. If global platforms wish to benefit from African users, they must also respect African laws.

For too long, Africa has been seen as a consumer of foreign technology, with little say in the rules. That is beginning to change. Uganda's stance shows that the continent is ready to help shape the digital future, on its own terms.

That is a future worth fighting for.

By Lilian Agaba Nabwebale, Information Scientist

PARTNER WITH US Join Us in Shaping the Future of Digital Technology!

Welcome to the **Digital Agenda Forum**, a place for insights on technology's intersection with society, policy, and power. Here, experts, leaders, and innovators come together to shape conversations, influence policy, and promote technology that does not control, but serves people and respects human values.

Are you an expert or enthusiast in digital technology? The Digital Agenda Forum is looking for knowledgeable individuals (Technology Experts, Policy Makers, Legal Experts, Regulatory Bodies, Academics and Researchers, Civil Society Representatives, International Organisations, Ethics Experts, Industry Associations and Data Protection Authorities)

Join us in building a digital future that works for everyone.

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Digital IDs: Who's Really in Control?

DIGITAL AGENDA FORUM TOWN HALL

Topic: <u>Digital IDs: Who's Really in</u> Control?

Held: 30 October 2024, 7:00 - 9:00 PM (EAT) on X (Twitter) Spaces

Moderators: Lilian Agaba Nabwebale (Information Scientist) and Claire Babirye (Data Scientist)

Panelists: Ritah Habasa (Legal Counsel), Baker Birikujja (Personal Data Protection Office, Uganda [PDPO-Ug]), Eng. Rogers Ahabwe (Computer Engineer & Cybersecurity Expert) and Apostle Emmanuel Mwasa (Minister of the Gospel & Social Worker)

1. The Core Question

This Town Hall was convened to global investigate the push centralised digital identity (ID) systems. While digital IDs (like passwords or biometrics for online services) are already part of daily life, the discussion focused on the new drive governments and international bodies centralised mandatory, create systems. The central question was: Who truly governs these systems, and at what cost to citizen privacy, autonomy, and rights?

2. The Key Influencers: Who is Pushing and Why?

The panel identified three major forces behind the digital ID push:

 International Organisations: The World Bank (ID4D initiative), World Economic Forum ("Known Traveler" project), and United Nations are powerful influencers. they frame digital IDs as essential for development (linking them to UN SDG 16.9) and provide funding with strings attached, pressuring developing nations to adopt their standards.

- Private Sector Corporations: Tech giants like Microsoft, IBM, and Google develop the underlying technologies. This raises concerns about profit motives overriding public interest, data ownership, and security, as seen in breaches like the 2017 Equifax incident.
- National Governments: While holding formal authority, governments often succumb to external pressure and implement systems without sufficient public consultation, robust legal frameworks, or digital literacy infrastructure.

3. Major Risks and Concerns Raised

- **Privacy & Security:** Centralising vast amounts of biometric data (fingerprints, facial scans) creates a high-value target for hackers. Engineers like Rogers Ahabwe stressed that without strong data protection laws, systems are vulnerable to devastating breaches.
- Exclusion & Discrimination:
 Technical failures can lock ock
 vulnerable, rural, or elderly
 populations out of essential
 services like banking and
 healthcare, as seen in India's
 Aadhaar system.
- **Surveillance & Control:** The potential for state surveillance

and societal control is significant



The system could be used to track citizen activities without consent.

 Lack of Accountability: As Ritah Habasa noted, governments are often reluctant to take liability for system failures or data misuse, leaving citizens with little recourse.

4. The Situation in Uganda & East Africa

- Birikujja Baker explained that Data Protection Uganda's and Privacy Act (2019) provides a legal framework to hold both government and private entities for data misuse. accountable Citizens can lodge complaints with the PDPO.
- However, a significant challenge is digital literacy. The panel questioned how the government will protect citizens who are unaware of data risks, like those who carelessly leave copies of their National ID at photocopying stalls.
- The consensus was that the infrastructure and public awareness in developing nations are not yet ready for secure and inclusive centralised digital ID systems. It was argued that this should not be a current priority.

5. A Spiritual and Ethical Perspective

 Apostle Emmanuel Mwasa provided a biblical lens, drawing on the books of Daniel and Revelation. warned that such technology, if left unchecked, has the potential to kind facilitate the of autocratic control and economic exclusion prophesied in scripture. He urged leaders to look beyond human logic and consider the spiritual implications of these systems on human freedom.

Key Takeaways & Conclusion

The panel agreed that while digital IDs offer benefits like convenience, their implementation must be approached with caution.

- Digital IDs are not inherently bad but centralised, mandatory systems pose severe risks if implemented without safeguards.
- Citizen involvement is nonnegotiable. Policies must be developed transparently with public input.
- Governments prioritise must citizens' rights over external pressure. Investment should first go toward strengthening building protection laws, cybersecurity and capacity, advancing digital literacy.
- Accountability is key. Clear mechanisms must be established for citizens to seek redress in case of data breaches or misuse.

Key recommendations

- Strengthen data protection laws and ensure transparent governance.
- Involve citizens in policy design and implementation.
- Prioritise digital literacy and infrastructure development.
- Balance technological advancement with ethical considerations and human rights.

The Forum agreed that Digital IDs should not be a priority for developing nations like Uganda without first establishing strong data safeguards, reliable infrastructure, and public trust. It was concluded that the journey toward ethical Digital IDs is long and caution must override the rush to adopt.

By Digital Agenda Forum



Find the full recording of the discussion here



or Visit YouTube @DigitalAgendaT

https://youtu.be/GEvb9Rj20-k? si=VMjvlEw0lEDxLuUF





#DataProtection



Digital IDs should not be a priority for developing nations like Uganda without first establishing strong data safeguards, reliable infrastructure, and public trust. The journey toward ethical Digital IDs is long and caution must override the rush to adopt.

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Code, Credit, and Control: What Singapore Can Teach East Africa About Governing AI

The banker leaned back as the algorithm rendered its verdict: a green light for one borrower, a red line for another. No human explained why. Across the world, such quiet decisions by machines are remaking finance. Loans are approved or denied seconds, transactions flagged as fraudulent, billions shuffled in milliseconds on trading screens. The spread of artificial intelligence into finance has been breathtaking, but so too are the risks bias baked into data, opaque reasoning no one can decipher, and the terrifying possibility that themselves markets might destabilized by code. Governments from Washington to Brussels scrambling to impose order, but in a small corner of Asia, Singapore has building auietly been something different: a set of tools to audit the algorithms themselves. The city-state's experiment has now drawn global attention, not because it is perfect, but because it represents one of the first serious attempts to turn lofty ethics into practical governance.

Singapore's with story begins principles. In 2018, its financial regulator, the Monetary Authority of Singapore, introduced guidelines built Fairness, four words Ethics, Accountability, Transparency. The acronym, FEAT, was meant to guide banks as they embraced AI. A year later, the Model AI Governance Framework added more detail. But Singapore did not stop at broad declarations. It began developing tools to put those principles into practice. AI Verify was created as a testing framework, letting firms check

whether their systems lived up to standards. The Veritas Toolkit, an open-source project built with leading banks and technology companies, gave institutions a way to test models for fairness and explainability. More recently, projects with names like Moonshot and MindForge have taken aim at the new risks posed by large language models and generative AI. These efforts mark a shift from regulation as exhortation to regulation as measurement.

The rationale is simple. Algorithms now decide who qualifies for credit, which transactions are blocked, and how markets move.

The rationale is simple. Algorithms now decide who qualifies for credit, which transactions are blocked, and how markets move. Without scrutiny, bias can creep in, locking out groups of borrowers or unfairly flagging transactions. Auditing promises to change that, subjecting models to checks much like financial statements are tested by auditors. The aim is not merely compliance but trust: for developers, a way to refine their systems; for executives, a way to manage risk; for regulators, evidence of oversight; and for the public, assurance that life-altering decisions are not left to inscrutable code.

What makes Singapore's approach distinctive is its collaboration. Projects like Veritas were codesigned with banks such as HSBC



and Standard Chartered alongside tech firms like IBM. The tools are openinviting adoption source, and beyond Singapore's adaptation far borders. By embedding regulators in the process of development, the city state has created not only guidance but buy in from the industry it supervises. This approach also signals a move from reactive oversight to anticipatory governance using AI to monitor AI, spotting risks before they metastasize into crises.

Still, the model is not without flaws.
Participation is voluntary.
A bank may choose to run its

systems through the Veritas checks, but it is under no legal compulsion to do so. Critics worry that without mandates, adoption could be selective or symbolic. Moreover, auditing AI is more complex than auditing balance sheets. There are no universal standards for fairness, and definitions vary across cultures. What one jurisdiction views as equitable treatment might be viewed differently elsewhere. In short, the experiment is promising but incomplete.

East African regulators could adapt Veritas-style fairness tests to mobile credit scoring, requiring lenders to publish model cards that explain how decisions are made and to demonstrate that outcomes are not skewed by gender, region, or income type. AI Verify-like attestations could be built into licensing and renewal procedures for digital lenders. Moonshot-style monitoring could be used to catch anomalies in mobile-money fraud detection systems before they spiral.

Crucially, while Singapore's model is voluntary, East African authorities could make such audits mandatory, using existing powers of licensing and supervision.

East African regulators are not blind to these challenges. Kenya has introduced regulations for digital credit providers and established a data protection authority that has already penalized companies for misuse of personal data. The African Union has adopted a continental AI strategy, and Kenya has drafted a national AI strategy. These like are important steps, but early principles, Singapore's they remain broad.

What is missing are the operational instruments that translate high-minded ideals into measurable safeguards. Here Singapore's example may prove invaluable. By publishing benchmarks, they could create transparency that benefits consumers and reassures investors.

The rise of artificial intelligence in finance is not just a technical shift; it is a story about trust and fairness. In Singapore, regulators and bankers sit together, testing the logic of machines and turning principles into practice.

In East Africa, a farmer waits to see if her loan is approved, a trader hopes her transaction clears without error. For them, the algorithm is not abstract it is opportunity or denial. Singapore's tools are not perfect, but they are signposts. The challenge for the rest of the world is simple: to ensure the code serves humanity, not the other way around.

By Quency Otieno, Advocate, Inhouse Counsel at Parliamentary Commission of Kenya



THE DIGITAL DESTINY OF NATIONS: LESSONS FROM SILICON VALLEY

In every generation, there is a place that seems to hold the keys to the future. Once, it was the ports that opened the world to trade. Later, it was the factories that supported the industrial revolution. Today, that place is Silicon Valley, a small area in California that has grown into the heart of the digital world.

From the phones in our hands to the platforms that shape our conversations, Silicon Valley's inventions influence how we live, what we believe, and even how nations govern. Artificial intelligence is no longer science fiction; it is helping doctors detect diseases, power self-driving cars, and at the same time raising concerns about jobs and surveillance. Social media is not just about staying in touch; it has become a battleground for truth, politics, and public opinion. Even money itself is being turned digital through digital currencies and blockchain.

To some, the rise of Silicon Valley was not unexpected. Years ago, it was spoken of as more than just an innovation hub but as a place whose influence would extend to the entire globe. And looking at today's headlines, it is hard to deny.

Policies on digital control, AI ethics, online safety, and fair competition can ensure technology serves people rather than controlling them.

This reality puts nations on the edge. Before, power belonged to governments through their armies, factories, or natural resources. Today, however, a few companies, run by people who never stood for elections, shape economies and societies. Think of how Twitter (now X) has influenced the recent USA elections or how Facebook influenced the ones before. A single change in an app's algorithm can decide which voices are heard and which are silenced.



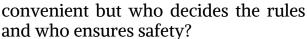
This influence is human too. When a farmer in Uganda uses mobile money to sell her produce, she depends on a platform designed thousands of miles away. When a teenager in Rwanda learns about climate change on TikTok, their understanding of the world is being managed by systems built in Silicon Valley. When a family in Europe worries about privacy, their concern is not with their local government, but with how much data tech companies collect and who controls it.

So, will nations simply react to these changes, or will they make sure to guide them as they unfold? Waiting to regulate only after harm has been done leaves citizens vulnerable. Policies on digital control, AI ethics, online safety, and fair competition can ensure technology serves people rather than controlling them.



If left unchecked, the digital future may be one where control belongs less to nations and more to these corporations.

Imagine a world where healthcare, education, and even identity cards are all managed by private apps. It is



If left unchecked, the digital future may be one where control belongs less to nations and more to these corporations. Imagine a world where healthcare, education, and even identity cards are all managed by private apps. It is convenient but who decides the rules and who ensures safety?

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank demonstrated exactly how fragile this reliance can be. As prophesied by Prophet Elvis Mbonye in December 2022, before it happened, it was more than a financial shortfall, it was a sign, a precursor to "Babylon has fallen." It was a revelation that nations cannot place their trust in technological giants or financial systems. And that very quickly, the world's digital backbone can tremble and be no more.

That is why there is need for citizens not to surrender their autonomy into the hands of something so frail and the Digital Agenda Forum calls for exactly this, a time where technology does not dominate people, but serves them, where innovation is guided not only by profit, but by values, freedom,



dignity, and humanity.

Destiny is not written only in code or algorithms; but in divinity too and in the choices we make together. The rise of Silicon Valley and its influence have been undeniable but the story of the digital future is shaky if it isn't grounded in a firm foundation. It is up to nations, leaders, and citizens to look at these systems and also at God who revealed their crashing before hand and decide which of the two is dependable.

By Mariagorreti Batenga, Director at Dopamine Ace Ltd., an Incorporator, and a writer

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THE CODE OF THE UNCHAINED

The shocking death of Charlie Kirk on September 10, 2025, sent shockwaves around the globe. The 31-year-old activist, founder of Turning Point USA, was shot while speaking at Utah University during Valley "American Comeback Tour." Kirk was a fearless and polarizing figure, standing against the agendas of centralised power threaten that individual freedom, sovereignty, and the liberties that underpin society.

Kirk consistently warned of the dangers of Big Government overreach. censorship, and the erosion of personal liberty. He challenged narratives that sought to control populations under the guise of safety, climate, or global "reset." He understood that the most insidious threats are often disguised as progress or protection. His life, and now his death, raises urgent questions on who determines what freedoms are expendable, and at what cost?

2020: The Global Rehearsal

The year 2020 will go down as a pivotal moment in modern history. The COVID-19 pandemic brought entire nations to a standstill, revealing just how easily governments and platforms could manipulate populations through fear and compliance.

Entire communities, including religious institutions, were labelled "non-essential" and restricted from gathering. Churches that had stood for centuries were left nearly voiceless, while other sectors remained open. The world had been shown just how rapidly spiritual, social and civic freedoms could be

curtailed.

The pandemic also accelerated the adoption of digital systems designed to monitor and influence behavior, from digital contact tracing to centralised health records. These were early glimpses of a broader agenda: a future where identity, access, and freedom are increasingly mediated through technology.

Prophecy Before The Shaking

Some foresaw these shifts. In December 2018, Ugandan Prophet Elvis Mbonye spoke of how he'd spiritually seen a time where the year 2020 was marked out for global powers to attempt to consolidate control over economies, societies, and public life. He warned that 2020 would be a pivotal year, marking a rehearsal of a world brought under centralised influence. prophecy also contained direction, especially to the Body of Christ. It highlighted how the remnant world over -those determined to stand firm in faith and purpose- would arise and counter such onslaughts, much to the benefit of the church and world at large.

For the Church, 2020 was a wake-up call. The silencing of traditional gatherings and the labelling of spiritual practice as "non-essential" revealed the fragility of collective identity in the face of centralised power. The lesson on the importance of unity, clarity of purpose, and awareness became abundantly clear. If the world (globalists) did not have the best interests of the Church then, it never will.



The Tools of Control

Though the pandemic may feel like a thing of the past, today the systems of centralised control are more advanced, subtle, and pervasive than ever before. Take for example:

- Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs): digitised money systems capable of tracking spending, enforcing compliance, and restricting access based on behavior.
- Digital IDs and Biometric Systems: National and corporate programs are linking banking, travel, healthcare, and social services to a single, traceable identity. In the wrong hands, this creates unprecedented capacity to monitor, limit, or even punish noncompliance.
- Climate Narratives and "Emergency Powers": Calls for climate-related restrictions, often framed as thoughtful imperatives, could impose controls on consumption, travel, energy use, and daily life.
- The Great Reset: Persistent global narratives pushing for economic restructuring, social engineering, and centralised governance, all at the potential cost of individual freedom.

These are coordinated expressions of an emerging paradigm in which compliance, identity, and even faith are tightly intertwined. If 2020 was a rehearsal, the coming years will demand vigilance, awareness, and decisive action.



The Role Of The Vigilant Few

Throughout history, small groups of individuals have acted as the restraining force against overreach. In a spiritual context, the remnant is the salt and light, standing firm when the majority wavers. In a secular or civic context, these are the citizens, thinkers, and leaders willing to challenge control and defend autonomy.

Kirk's activism exemplified this. He was bold, unyielding, and principled. The modern remnant, whether spiritual, civic, or both, must network, organize, and prepare to uphold freedom, values, and identity in the face of growing technological and societal controls.

The future demands more than awareness; it requires strategy, unity, and courage to uphold autonomy, spiritual or civic, in the face of encroaching systems.

The world has tested compliance and control. The years ahead will test vigilance, resistance, and resilience. The "modern" remnant will determine whether freedom, conscience, and identity endure in the digital age.

By Digital Agenda Forum



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Contact Us

For further inquiries and information

Digital Agenda Forum

- Munyonyo, Kampala, UG
- **\+**256 782 408607
- info@thedigitalagenda.org
- P.O BOX 172431, Kampala
- www.thedigitalagenda.org