

# GHANA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM (GIGF)



**Theme:** Navigating the digital world: Empowering youth through meaningful connectivity for Responsible AI Use and Online Safety

📍 Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT (AITI-KACE)

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The fast-paced technological landscape requires continuous reskilling and upskilling, but many young people are excluded due to barriers like affordability, accessibility, and outdated teaching methods.

Technology hubs and community-based initiatives are helping to bridge this gap by training youth entrepreneurs to develop tech solutions for societal problems. These hubs regularly adapt their programs to stay relevant, and businesses emerging from these hubs contribute significantly to Ghana's economy.

Youth worldwide are increasingly adopting innovative technologies to solve problems, with this generation more involved in new tech than any before. In Ghana, where 57% of the population is under 25, there is a growing need to provide access to technological tools, internet resources, and capacity building to help young people thrive in the digital economy.

Around the world, youth are rapidly adopting innovative technologies to unleash their creative abilities in finding solutions to problems. Comparatively, the youth today are more involved with new technologies than any generation. The core of building technology and internet infrastructure is centered on their innovations and creative ideas.

Ghana comparably has a young age structure with approximately 57% of the population under the age of 25, there is, therefore, the need to redouble efforts for accessing technological tools, internet resources, and capacity building for youth to thrive in a digital economy and contribute to its advancement as one of the largest players in this new economy.

The fast-paced nature of the technological world requires constant reskilling and upskilling for the workforce to remain efficient and productive in various fields of which many young people are left out for reasons ranging from affordability, accessibility, policies, and the need to improve teaching methods, which moves from theoretical teaching to more hands-on.

It is nonetheless important to mention efforts to present a community-based approach to skill development in Information Communication Technology (ICTs) by technology hubs and spaces that train youth entrepreneurs in identifying societal problems and guide them to develop technological solutions to these problems.

Periodically, hubs review their procedures to restructure and stay relevant for the youth who engage in their activities. Most businesses churned out of the idea incubation from these hubs have proven to be beneficial not only for interfacing customers and users but play essential roles in growing Ghana's economy.



A key note speech was delivered by the Minister of Communication and Digitalisation, Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful at the Ghana Youth Internet Governance, 2024

In her keynote speech at the 2024 Ghana Internet Governance Forum, Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, Minister of Communications and Digitalisation, emphasized the importance of leveraging digital technologies to foster sustainable development and inclusive growth in Ghana. She highlighted the transformative power of the internet in sectors such as immigration, procurement, and judiciary services, noting that Ghana's digital initiatives aim to bridge the digital divide, particularly between urban and rural areas. The Minister also discussed the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving businesses, civil society, academia, and the public, to achieve the country's digital transformation agenda. She underscored the role of agencies like the National Information Technology Agency (NITA) and Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC) in building digital capacity and fostering inclusion.

Additionally, the government's commitment to maintaining robust telecommunications infrastructure through the National Communications Authority (NCA) and expanding connectivity with initiatives such as the approval of Starlink Broadband were highlighted. To enhance cybersecurity, the Cybersecurity Act of 2020 was introduced to protect critical infrastructure, regulate online safety, and manage cyber threats. The Ghana Domain Name Registry (GDNR) was also established to manage the .GH domain, promoting Ghana's online identity. The speech concluded with a call for continued collaboration among stakeholders to build a secure, inclusive, and innovative digital ecosystem in Ghana, with a special focus on empowering marginalized communities and ensuring access to digital opportunities for all.





A key note speech was delivered by the United Nations Secretariat for the Internet Governance Forum, Anja Gengo at the Ghana Youth Internet Governance, 2024

In her keynote speech at the 2024 Ghana Internet Governance Forum, Anja Gengo, United Nations Secretariat for the Internet Governance Forum, acknowledged the fact that digital technologies have been recognized as powerful accelerators of sustainable development. This has been reaffirmed through discussions at the IGF and acknowledged by the UN Secretariat. Initiatives such as Our Common Agenda, led by the UN Secretary-General, underscore the importance of ensuring that the internet is accessible, affordable, safe, and secure for all. Resilient digital infrastructure is essential for achieving sustainable development goals, as meaningful internet access enables individuals, communities, and stakeholders worldwide to harness the transformative power of digital technologies.



This agenda is not only crucial for individual communities but also for the world at large. We are at a pivotal moment, as global digital governance is set to be negotiated and, hopefully, adopted by member states. This process aims to establish shared values and guidelines that promote an open, inclusive, bottom-up, and transparent approach to digital governance, rooted in the multistakeholder model we all value. Additionally, the Global Digital Compact is gaining momentum, and we are actively preparing for the 20th anniversary of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) next year. This milestone presents an opportunity to reflect on two decades of collective efforts by this community to bring about revolutionary changes. The multistakeholder model, championed through the UN framework, has been pivotal in shaping inclusive and participatory digital governance.



## KEY NOTE SPEECH



The secretariat appreciated the efforts of 170 national, regional, sub-regional, and youth IGFs, the principles of this model have reached diverse corners of the world. The contributions of initiatives like the Youth IGF, which hosts dynamic and insightful discussions, alongside other regional and national efforts, are a testament to this collective commitment. These platforms play a crucial role in turning the vision of inclusive digital governance into a reality for people globally.



Looking ahead, we have an opportunity to define the long-term trajectory of the IGF. As digital technologies become deeply integrated into every aspect of our lives, the IGF will remain a critical space for addressing emerging challenges and ensuring that the principles of good internet governance are upheld.



I also wish to commend Ghana's IGF for its exemplary work in organizing remote hubs across various cities. This effort reflects your deep understanding of the IGF's vision and your unwavering commitment to advancing digital governance. Your contributions are recognized and celebrated on the global stage.





A key note speech was delivered by the Ghana Youth Internet Governance Forum Coordinator, Lily Edinam Botsyoe at the Ghana Youth Internet Governance, 2024

In her keynote speech at the 2024 Ghana Internet Governance Forum, Lily Edinam Botsyoe, Ghana Youth Internet Governance Forum Coordinator, shared youth perspectives that intersect with the theme: Empowering Sustainable Development for a Digital Future. This theme emphasizes the pivotal role digital technologies play in shaping the sustainable development of our society. However, as we build this future, it is crucial to include the voices and contributions of young people.

During the Ghana Youth IGF, we delved into topics that resonate deeply with us as young people and with the broader vision for Ghana. Our discussions centered around navigating the digital world, empowering meaningful connectivity, ensuring responsible AI use, and fostering online safety.

From our discussions, we identified three key areas that we wish to bring to everyone's attention:

**Empowering Digital Innovators:** We emphasized the importance of recognizing the role of young people as innovators in the tech space. It is time to move beyond seeing youth as mere consumers and to empower them as creators and developers in the digital ecosystem. This includes promoting ethical AI use and fostering inclusive digital design. We also stressed the need to enable youth to develop solutions that address both local and global challenges.

**Building Digital Resilience:** While regulatory frameworks exist, they must evolve to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies. We highlighted the need for updated regulations that prioritize the online safety of young people, particularly in the context of AI and digital platforms. Additionally, we underscored the importance of individual responsibility in safeguarding personal data and called for collaboration with institutions such as cybersecurity authorities to create a safer online environment.

### **Addressing Digital Inequality:**

Persistent digital divides remain a significant barrier, particularly between urban and rural areas. High internet data tariffs continue to limit meaningful connectivity for many. To fully empower young people, we must bridge this gap by providing affordable and reliable internet access. This is essential to ensure that no young person is left behind in the digital age.



A key note speech was delivered by the Chair of internet governance Forum Support Association, Amrita Choudhury at the Ghana Youth Internet Governance, 2024



In her keynote speech at the 2024 Ghana Internet Governance Forum, Amrita Choudhury, Chair of the IGF Support Association delivered a compelling keynote emphasizing the Association's commitment to fostering inclusive and equitable internet governance. Speaking on behalf of IGFSA, she highlighted the importance of supporting global, national, and regional IGF initiatives, particularly in the Global South, to strengthen multistakeholder internet governance dialogue.

the IGFSA plays a critical role in empowering global IGF efforts by providing financial and organizational support to regional and national IGFs. This includes a specific focus on the Global South to ensure their voices are heard and their unique challenges are addressed. She also encouraged participants to become members of the IGF, reinforcing the importance of collective action in advancing internet governance discussions.

the inclusion of topics such as protecting children and women online and addressing internet security in the program are essential for creating a safer and more inclusive digital environment for all.

We hope that the outcomes of the Ghana Youth IGF, including summaries and key deliberations, would contribute meaningfully to the global IGF.

Young participants Should continue raising their voices and contributing to nuanced internet governance policies that reflect their unique experiences and challenges.

encouraged young participants to continue raising their voices and contributing to nuanced internet governance policies that reflect their unique experiences and challenges.



A key note speech was delivered by the Deputy Director General Technical Operations, (NCA), Prof. Ezer Osei Yeboah-Boateng at the Ghana Youth Internet Governance, 2024

The National Communications Authority (NCA) is honored to be part of this significant gathering focused on shaping Ghana's digital future. Gratitude is extended to the Ghana Domain Name Registry and the Internet Society for their pivotal role in organizing this forum under the theme "Empowering Sustainable Development for Our Digital Future." This theme reflects the progress made and underscores the challenges ahead in integrating technology to promote sustainable development.

The NCA has spearheaded transformative efforts in Ghana's digital infrastructure, including:

**Advancing Digital Infrastructure:** Licensing the NextGen Infra Company in March 2024 to deploy 5G and 4G services, enabling a shared, low-cost broadband platform inspired by India's digital model. Expanding ECOWAS roaming, with seamless service trials ongoing in Togo and Benin. Introducing technology neutrality to encourage consumer choice and investment in 4G networks.



**Promoting Inclusivity:** Supporting initiatives like the Girls in ICT program to bridge the gender gap in technology and empower young women in the digital economy. **Enhancing Resilience:** Preventing major internet disruptions during the March 2024 submarine cable outages by mandating redundancy measures since 2020. Licensing Baobab, the operator of the Two Africa Cable, with a capacity of 180 Tbps, to strengthen internet reliability by late 2024. Expanding satellite broadband services to improve connectivity for households and businesses.

The Digital Ghana Report shows 69.8% internet penetration, highlighting the internet's vital role in Ghana's economy and daily life. However, the March 14 outage demonstrated the urgent need for a resilient infrastructure to safeguard economic and social stability.

The Digital Ghana Report shows 69.8% internet penetration, highlighting the internet's vital role in Ghana's economy and daily life. However, the March 14 outage demonstrated the urgent need for a resilient infrastructure to safeguard economic and social stability.

The NCA remains committed to enhancing regional integration, reducing communication costs, and fostering connectivity across ECOWAS countries. It advocates for a multistakeholder approach to ensure Ghana's digital development is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.



the NCA calls for partnerships, policies, and innovations that will build a digital future benefiting all while preserving the environment. Together, we can achieve a technologically advanced, equitable, and sustainable digital landscape for generations to come

A key note speech was delivered by the Executive Director of Ghana Domain Name Registry, Nana Kofi Asafu-Aidoo at the Ghana Youth Internet Governance, 2024



As Chair of the Ghana IGF Steering Committee, I am honored to address you at the 2024 Ghana Youth IGF. This year's event continues the tradition of integrating the Ghana IGF, Youth IGF, and Global IGF under the theme, Empowering Sustainable Development for Our Digital Future. Convened by the Ghana Domain Registry in collaboration with the ISOC Ghana Chapter, this forum aims to foster multistakeholder engagement on internet governance in Ghana.

The IGF was born out of the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, where the UN identified the need for a multistakeholder platform to discuss internet-related public policy issues. Since then, the IGF has provided an open and inclusive space for dialogue. In 2024, the UN has furthered this vision by releasing the second revision of the Global Digital Compact, a document outlining an ideal digital future centered on closing the digital divide, ensuring inclusivity, and prioritizing security, safety, and human rights.

Since its inception, the IGF has played a pivotal role in shaping global conversations about the challenges and opportunities of the digital world. This journey, catalyzed by transformative inventions such as the World Wide Web by Tim Berners-Lee, has brought governments, civil society, private sector actors, and the technical community together.

In Ghana, the impact of digital technologies has been accelerated through the tireless efforts of the Ministry of Communications and Digitization, led by Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful. Initiatives such as 5G deployment, national roaming, rural telephony, DNS forums, and the development of the local internet community have significantly improved connectivity. These efforts have resulted in over 24 million internet users in Ghana, with numbers continually rising.

As we navigate this digital journey, the rapid growth of technologies replicating human cognitive and creative capabilities, such as AI and quantum computing, presents both opportunities and challenges. These innovations promise a transformative future but also raise concerns such as data privacy, security, algorithmic bias, and ethical implications.

To harness the full potential of these technologies while mitigating their risks, it is imperative that we continue proactive conversations. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, we can ensure these advancements are utilized effectively, ethically, and safely, shaping a sustainable digital future for all.



The Ghana IGF remains a critical platform for addressing the complex issues of internet governance. Let us continue to work together to build an inclusive, secure, and innovative digital landscape that empowers every Ghanaian and contributes to sustainable development globally.

The **2024 Ghana Internet Governance Forum (GH-IGF)** focused on the theme, Empowering Sustainable Development for Our Digital Future. It brought together key stakeholders from government, the private sector, civil society, and academia to discuss various aspects of internet governance, misinformation, cybersecurity, and digital equity. The forum aimed at shaping a sustainable digital landscape for Ghana, tackling challenges such as misinformation during elections, online safety, and digital infrastructure gaps.

The **GYIGF** featured a variety of sessions, including keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and hackathons with the following tracks;

**Beginner's Guide to Internet Governance**, which took place virtually on August 30, 2024, at 12:00 PM UTC. This session provided participants, especially newcomers, with foundational knowledge on internet governance.

**The official opening plenary** followed, centered around the theme “***Navigating the Digital World: Empowering Youth through Meaningful Connectivity for Responsible AI Use and Online Safety.***”

This plenary session included opening remarks from key organizers, solidarity messages from various partners and stakeholders, and a keynote address that highlighted the importance of responsible AI use, online safety, and the need to empower youth with meaningful digital connectivity. After the plenary, two workshops were conducted.

The opening plenary emphasized the importance of equipping youth with essential technological skills, positioning them as future designers and contributors to the digital world.

It highlighted the need for young people to understand and advocate for the ethical use of AI, encouraging their active participation in global initiatives like the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to shape responsible AI policies.

The discussion also touched on leveraging AI for positive impact, stressing the importance of governance, regulatory, and legal frameworks to ensure secure online engagement and meaningful economic opportunities.

Youth involvement in forums such as the IGF was seen as critical in contributing to global digital impact and advancing online human rights. In terms of communication, AI was acknowledged as a transformative force, revolutionizing how we communicate and think.

The session urged youth to use AI responsibly and be accountable for the information they share online. However, challenges were noted, particularly in AI accessibility.

Current AI interfaces are often not flexible enough for visually impaired individuals, and infrastructure limitations, coupled with the high cost of data, present significant barriers to AI adoption.



## EVENT STRUCTURE

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The plenary also underscored the need for more inclusive AI design, ensuring that the technology is accessible to diverse populations, while addressing concerns around misinformation and the transparency of AI tools.

Key issues raised during the discussion included the originality of AI outputs, the accessibility of source inputs in AI development, and the potential for AI to create employment opportunities.



Recommendations focused on the critical role of policymakers in protecting youth online by creating frameworks that eliminate AI bias, the importance of involving stakeholders in the AI policy-making process, and the role of parents in understanding technology and guiding their children toward safe and beneficial use.

Finally, the integration of AI into educational curricula was urged, promoting not only AI use but also the development of AI solutions by students.







The event also featured a lightning talk titled “**IT Job Ready**”, which provided practical advice for young people looking to build careers in the IT industry.

The presentation focused on the increasing digitization of jobs and the importance of acquiring the right skills to attract IT opportunities. In the AI job market, new roles related to AI ethics are emerging, emphasizing the need for policy development around AI use.

Following the presentation, a question-and-answer session was held, covering several key issues. These included how Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can integrate AI, the focus of AI ethics on creating ethical frameworks, opportunities, and challenges for young professionals entering the job market, and how rural and remote communities can navigate online safety.

Additional questions explored whether AI can understand sign language, the specific tech skills individuals need to learn, available sites for remote AI jobs, and how to bridge the digital divide between literate and illiterate populations. Another issue raised was how persons with disabilities can skill up faster in this digital age.



The recommended actions highlighted the need for deliberate government action to make IT more accessible. It was also emphasized that individuals should continuously upskill, train, and integrate new knowledge into their learning processes.

Personal responsibility for growth was urged, encouraging individuals to be intentional about asking the right questions and seeking opportunities for advancement

**Plenary session:** The panel discussed the challenges of disinformation and internet shutdowns during elections in Ghana, highlighting how misinformation creates information vacuums that are quickly filled with falsehoods. Internet shutdowns, as seen in some African countries during elections, exacerbate this issue by amplifying unverified news from alternative sources.

There was a strong call for legal frameworks to hold all citizens accountable for spreading false information, not just the media. To address this issue, it was recommended that digital literacy be prioritized, especially in schools, to combat misinformation at its source. Ghana was urged to consider adopting frameworks similar to Europe's Digital Services Act to regulate social media's role in disseminating false news. The presentation emphasized the need for collaborative efforts between the media, government, and civil society to develop effective solutions.



**Plenary session:** The panel emphasized the importance of the "4Ps"—Plan, Policy, Program, and Project—as key elements to guide Ghana’s digital transformation. The rapid advancements in digital technologies require a swift update of laws to ensure compliance with the evolving landscape of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It was highlighted that citizens must be more actively engaged in digital transformation initiatives.



The recommended actions included urging policymakers to expedite the implementation and enforcement of digital laws to align with global standards. Additionally, digital sustainability practices should be tailored to the local context while remaining consistent with international norms

## EVENT STRUCTURE

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**Plenary Session:** The panel emphasized the need to focus on marginalized groups in discussions about digital equity, stressing that community-driven initiatives are essential for closing the digital divide. The divide is particularly noticeable in terms of internet accessibility and digital skills, as many schools lack the necessary resources to provide internet access and promote responsible digital usage.

To address these issues, it was recommended to increase internet accessibility for students and develop locally relevant digital content to help them navigate the digital world responsibly. A

Additionally, support should be given to community-driven efforts that empower marginalized groups by highlighting their experiences and ensuring their inclusive participation in the digital economy



## EVENT STRUCTURE

**Plenary Session:** the panel discussion focused on the significance of Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) in protecting the integrity and authenticity of DNS data, especially in the context of Ghana and Africa. The conversation highlighted DNSSEC's role in preventing cyber threats such as DNS spoofing and cache poisoning, which can disrupt internet services and expose sensitive information. Key points included the current slow pace of DNSSEC adoption due to challenges like costs, technical expertise, and awareness, as shared by panelists from organizations like MTN and Inveteck Global.

Despite these obstacles, successful implementation cases were noted, demonstrating DNSSEC's positive impact on network security. Challenges in DNSSEC adoption, such as technical complexities and a shortage of trained professionals, were discussed, along with solutions like capacity building and cross-sector collaboration.





The need for ongoing training and research to support DNSSEC's effective implementation was emphasized. Looking ahead, the panel stressed the importance of DNSSEC evolving alongside other cybersecurity frameworks to address sophisticated threats, advocating for increased collaboration across industries, governments, and academia. The session concluded by calling for greater DNSSEC adoption in Ghana to strengthen the country's internet infrastructure, with hopes for ongoing dialogue and action in future forums.



**workshop:** “Demystifying AI for Youth: Building a Safe and Inclusive Digital Future,” aimed to simplify AI concepts for young participants and explored how youth can contribute to creating a safer and more inclusive digital environment.



The presentations discussed the potential for Artificial Intelligence (AI) to compete with humans, highlighting the roles of Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), and Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI) in improving machine learning, language models, and user productivity.

It was noted that AI tools and interfaces still lack features for full accessibility, particularly for underprivileged groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and called for parity in accessibility. The rise of AI has also introduced new career opportunities, such as prompt engineering, reshaping the work ecosystem.

AI's problem-solving capabilities were illustrated through examples like vaccine and cancer research in China. Key issues raised included the availability of data, which, although accessible, may be incomplete, and the representation and inclusion of local context, which is often lacking or discriminatory.



The need for significant computing power to train AI models was emphasized, with inefficiencies and power outages being barriers to smooth operations.

Internet availability, while better than in other countries, still poses challenges in rural areas, contributing to a digital divide that affects understanding between active and inactive users.

Furthermore, the bandwidth in certain areas is not sufficient for high-speed internet usage.

The presentations called for curriculum-based learning to integrate AI into educational systems, ensuring that resources, materials, and equipment are available to support students in learning AI for productive purposes.

Recommended actions included emphasizing education and upskilling to improve digital literacy, which is seen as essential to bridge the gap in AI understanding and application.

Additionally, it was noted that background knowledge of topics can help generate more favorable and accurate outputs, and chatbots are now able to provide detailed explanations to prompts and questions.

**workshop:** “Navigating Online Risks and Building Digital Resilience,” focused on educating participants about the potential risks they may face online and strategies to build resilience in a rapidly changing digital landscape.



In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, it is crucial for legislation to keep pace with technological advancements, particularly those involving artificial intelligence.

Internet users serve as the first line of defense in protecting the online ecosystem from privacy breaches, and it is essential for individuals to be aware of existing laws, such as those prohibiting harmful activities like blackmail.

Collaborations with institutions like the Cyber Security Authority were encouraged to promote a safer online environment. Additionally, promoting data literacy initiatives was emphasized, helping parents remain informed about their children's digital content and activities.

To protect personal data from unauthorized access by digital platforms, users must stay vigilant, reviewing and carefully considering the permissions they grant while engaging with online platforms.

Governments and regulatory bodies were urged to actively update and enforce cybersecurity policies to address emerging digital threats, ensuring that individuals and organizations can navigate the internet safely.

A key point was fostering a culture of responsible digital citizenship by educating users on privacy, security practices, and ethical behavior in online communities. Promoting responsible use of technology was highlighted as a way to collectively contribute to a safer and more respectful digital environment. Key issues raised included the subscription to unsolicited online packages without adequate attention, the prevalence of blackmailing, and the need to build a safe hub for internet use.

The recommended actions included encouraging citizens to educate themselves about digital platform legislation, data privacy, and cybercrime laws to protect themselves better.

Internet users were advised to be vigilant by reviewing permissions, privacy settings, and security measures, while governments were encouraged to foster partnerships between cybersecurity authorities, tech companies, and educational institutions to strengthen online safety efforts. Additionally, parents were urged to participate in data literacy programs to responsibly monitor their children's digital activities.

# ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

For the Ghana Youth Internet Governance Forum (GYIGF), attendance and participation play a crucial role in shaping the discussions and outcomes. Here's a breakdown of these aspects:

## **Attendance:**

1. **Diverse Representation:** The GYIGF saw a significant turnout from a diverse group of participants, including students, young professionals, persons with disability, and advocates from various sectors such as technology, policy, education, and civil society. This diversity ensured a wide range of perspectives on internet governance issues.

2. **Youth-Centric Focus:** The forum attracted a large number of youth participants, given its aim of empowering young people in the digital space. The majority of attendees were within the 18-35 age range, with many being university students, entrepreneurs, and tech enthusiasts.

3. **International and Local Engagement:** In addition to local attendees from Ghana, the event saw the participation of international delegates through virtual means. This blend of local and global insights contributed to a rich exchange of ideas, especially on the role of youth in internet governance.

4. **Active Support from Institutions:** Representatives from governmental bodies, private sector companies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were present, showcasing their support for youth engagement in shaping the digital future. Their participation also demonstrated the collaboration needed between youth and institutions.

# ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION



759

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

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276

PHISICAL PARTICIPANTS



483

ONLINE PARTICIPANTS

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23

SPEAKERS



10

SESSIONS



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