

Preface

On the Publication of the 2025 White Paper on Information and Communications in Japan



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The year 2025 marks a quarter of the 21st century. In 2000, just before the 21st century, the number of broadband subscribers in Japan was only 0.635 million, but it has since spread rapidly and has significantly transformed Japan's social economy.

Today, the digital ecosystem continues to expand, playing an important and essential role in the social economy, including not only telecommunication services but also cloud services and social networking services (SNS).

In addition, the explosive progress of AI technology over the past few years has been remarkable, with new technologies and services being announced every day, having a major impact on our daily lives and economic activities.

Meanwhile, looking at the world, the global situation is becoming increasingly uncertain, and the natural environment is changing, with abnormal weather and disasters becoming more severe. Looking at the domestic situation, Japan's declining birthrate and aging population are becoming increasingly serious, with the number of births expected to fall below 700,000 for the first time in 2024.

There are also concerns that challenges in the digital ecosystem will grow as digital technologies and their use advances, including dependence on overseas resources for important digital infrastructure, dis-/mis-information on the internet, and the risks of AI.

2025 is a milestone year, and at the same time it is also a crossroads toward 2050. A major key to our future lies in how well we can mitigate the risks posed by advancing digital technologies and their growing role as social infrastructure, and in whether we can effectively address the issues through the use of digital technologies.

Taking into account this current situation, the Special Feature of this year's White Paper on Information and Communications in Japan is titled "Digital Technologies as Spreading 'Social Infrastructure,'" providing an overview of the expansion of the digital ecosystem, which is demonstrating its functioning as a social infrastructure, the advancement of AI, and the rise of overseas businesses in the digital field while sounding the alarm about Japan's sluggish situation. Based on this, Special Feature looks ahead to the challenges brought about by digital technologies and the role that digital technologies can play in resolving social issues in Japan.

Based on the analysis of this White Paper, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) will promote digital transformation (DX) in local communities through the thorough utilization of digital technologies, including AI, develop digital infrastructure that supports an AI society, and strengthen the competitiveness and overseas promotion of core technologies and systems. The MIC will also actively work on comprehensive measures to combat dis-/mis-information on the internet.

This White Paper is the 53rd edition since its first publication in 1973. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all citizens for their cooperation in the field of information and communications administration. I hope that this White Paper will be widely used by everyone to help further deepen their understanding of information and communications, as well as digital technologies.

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