Section 6 Promotion of ICT usage

1. Summary

(1) Initiatives so far

Since the establishment of the Information and Communication Technology Strategy Headquarters in 2000 and the enactment of the Basic Act on the Formation of an Advanced Information and Telecommunications Network Society (Act No. 144 of 2000)[1], Japan has been promoting the utilization of ICT through various national strategies such as the e-Japan Strategy and the Comprehensive Strategy for the Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation. Based on these policies, MIC has been promoting the utilization of ICT in various fields, including the digitalization of local communities and the revitalization of society through the use of new information and communication technologies and data circulation, in order to address social and economic issues such as the declining workforce due to a declining birthrate and aging population, the increase in medical and nursing care costs, and the exacerbation of natural disasters, as well as new issues arising from the expansion of digital spaces.

(2) Future challenges and directions

Japan faces a challenging economic environment, including a declining workforce due to a declining birthrate and aging population and a projected shrinkage of the domestic market. Additionally, there are mounting challenges such as coping with severe and frequent disasters and addressing the aging public infrastructure that has been in place for over 50 years.

For the solution of these issues, digitalization has the potential to significantly enhance the productivity and convenience of local communities, improve the quality of industries and livelihoods, and enhance the attractiveness of regions. The Government of Japan established the "Headquarters for Creating New Regional Economies and Living Environments" in FY2024 and started to examine large-scale regional revitalization measures to boost Japan's economic growth based on the idea that local regions are the main drivers of growth. The basic policy on Regional Revitalization 2.0 and the basic concept for Regional Revitalization 2.0 identify the thorough utilization and social implementation of new technologies such as AI and digital technologies as one of the pillars.

On the other hand, issues such as defamation, slander, and dis-/mis-information have become apparent in the information circulated on the Internet, while services provided by social media platform operators contribute to the improvement of daily convenience. Additionally, the emergence of new information and communication technologies such as generative AI and the metaverse is significantly transforming the digital space.

Considering these challenges, it is important to promote digital transformation (DX) to contribute to the revitalization of local communities and economies. Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure the soundness and drive the growth of the digital space and build a safe and secure environment for the use of information.

2. Promotion of DX to contribute to stimulate local communities and economy

Local communities and economies are facing a range of challenges, including declining workforce due to decreasing birthrate and aging population, shrinkage of the domestic market, frequent natural disasters and aging infrastructure. As mentioned in 1. (2) above, the Government of Japan identifies the thorough utilization and social implementation of new technologies, such as AI and digital technologies, as one of the pillars for regional revitalization in the "Basic Approach to Basic Approach to Regional Revitalization 2.0" (decided by the Cabinet on October 11, 2024) and in the "Basic Concept for Regional Revitalization 2.0" (decided by the Cabinet on June 13, 2025).

In order to maintain and further develop regional economy, thereby supporting the lives of local residents, it is necessary to solve regional issues through the full-scale use of AI and other digital technologies (regional community DX) and create more value through innovation. To this end, it is important for companies making effective use of digital technologies to receive support in developing their business in response to local needs as the core players for regional community DX.

In recognition of these requirements, the MIC has been consulting the Information and Communications Council on the information and communications policies to foster regional community DX since February 2025. In response, the council has been identifying the issues regarding the information and communications policies for regional community DX in consideration of the situation of Japan's local communities and economies and the latest trends of AI and other digital technologies to examine the direction of necessary measures.

[1] This act was abolished by the Basic Act on the Formulation of a Digital Society (Act No. 35 of 2021).

(1) Effective use of digital technologies to solve social issues more speedily

A Regional Community DX Promotion Package Project

In order to solve regional issues through the social implementation of digital technology (regional community DX) and realize Regional Revitalization 2.0, the MIC started implementing the "Regional Community DX Promotion Package Project" in FY2024. Under this project, the ministry aims to create good examples of digital implementation and speed up the practical application of digital technologies nationwide through comprehensive measures such as those to support the (1) securing of digital talent and systems, (2) the practical implementation of advanced solutions (pilot projects) and (3) establishment of regional communication infrastructure (subsidy programms). In particular for (1), the ministry is implementing multiple support measures that each municipality can choose according to their respective needs, including those to support the prefectures and others in establishing a sustainable regional DX promotion system, to identify and summarize regional issues toward the implementation of digital technologies, and to offer experts' advice on introduction and operation plans.

B Spread and promotion of the use of digital technologies

Issues including the following are identified as hindrances to the promotion of regional community DX by municipalities: lack of expertise, know-how and information, and the dispersion of information. For the solution of these issues, the MIC opened the "Local Community DX Navi" website[2] to centrally provide regional community DX-related information obtained by conducting surveys on advanced examples in each region in October 2024. By providing information on a continual basis through this website, the ministry is fostering the use of digital technologies by municipalities and local companies.

Also, in order to encourage the introduction of 5G equipment with ensured safety, reliability, supply stability and openness, the MIC treats certain local 5G equipment obtained by local 5G licensees preferentially in terms of fixed asset taxation. The main application target for this treatment has been revised to local 5G equipment used for the provision of residential Internet services, and the application period has been extended to the end of FY2026.

(2) Enhancement of support for regional digital talent and promotion of telework

A Fostering and securing talent to support regional community DX

(A) Regional informatization advisor dispatch system

Since FY2007, the MIC has been dispatching experts with knowledge and know-how in ICT (referred to as "Regional Informatization Advisors") to municipalities and other entities upon request. These advisors provide advice, recommendations, and information to promote the use of ICT in solving regional issues, thereby contributing to the creation of vibrant and attractive communities and fostering human resources who can play a central role in the region. Furthermore, in FY2025, the MIC started dispatching the Regional Informatization Advisors also to local companies on the condition that they were implementing projects jointly with municipalities as well as upon recommendation by municipalities.

In FY2025, 242 private sector experts with knowledge and know-how in regional informatization through research activities at universities, business activities in the region, NPO activities, etc., were appointed as "Regional Informatization Advisors," and 297 dispatches were conducted.

(B) Establishment of a digital talent hub (tentative name)

There are multiple sharing schemes for the dispatch of digital talent to regions, which differ in targets, periods, purposes and skills of the experts to be dispatched. In view of this fact, a "digital talent hub" (tentative name) is planned to be established within FY2025 to help regions in need of digital talent select schemes and personnel fitted for their own goals.

The main functions of the digital talent hub are as follows: support regions in selecting the schemes appropriate for their own goals from among the digital talent sharing schemes implemented by the MIC; and provide municipalities and regional areas in need of DX talent with information about the personnel that meet their needs from the lists of human resources provided by the schemes. The digital talent hub is thus expected to speed up regional informatization through appropriate matching.

B Promotion of telework

(A) Overview of telework

Due to the spread of COVID-19 since 2020, the telework introduction rate among companies reached 47.3%[3] at the national average in 2024. The introduction of telework has thus been promoted to some extent, but a trend towards returning to the office is observed in some companies. Also, there remain disparities between

[2] Local Community DX Navi website: https://dx-navi.soumu.go.jp/
[3] 2024 Communications Usage Trend Survey
https://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsusintokei/statistics/data/250530_1.pdf

urban and rural areas and between industries with regard to the introduction rate.

To foster momentum for telework, the Telework Month Executive Committee (comprising the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs in the Cabinet Secretariat, the Office for Promotion of Regional Revitalization in the Cabinet Office, the Digital Agency, the MIC, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the Japan Tourism Agency, the Japan Telework Association, and the Japan Telework Society) designates November each year as "Telework Month," a period for concentrated telework initiatives. During this month, surveys are conducted on the effects of telework (such as contributions to work style reform and operational efficiency), and events and seminars are organized by related ministries and agencies. Additionally, since 2015, the MIC has been giving commendation to companies with significant telework achievements to incentivize telework adoption and provide reference examples for other companies considering telework.

In 2024, considering the situation where the adoption of telework had become relatively widespread, the MIC selected and announced companies and organizations that not only implemented telework systems and achieved significant utilization but also demonstrated management effectiveness through telework or implemented unique and excellent measures to make effective use of telework for operational reforms and others in industries considered unsuitable for telework. These entities were recognized as "Telework Top Runners 2024," with the most outstanding initiatives receiving the "Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Award."

(B) Support for the promotion of telework

To support the adoption of telework among SMEs and in regional areas, where implementation rates remain low, the MIC has established regional consultation desks in collaboration with local chambers of commerce and local governments nationwide. These desks provide consultation services and other support. Additionally, the MIC offers free individual consultations by experts (telework managers) to companies considering the introduction or improvement of telework, aiming to promote the effective use of telework. Since FY2022, these support services have been operated in an integrated manner with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's labor-related telework consultation services and are now jointly implemented as the "Telework One-Stop Support Project."

Furthermore, to address the common concern of information security in telework, the MIC has developed the "Telework Security Guidelines" and the "Telework Security Handbook for SMEs (Checklist)" to serve as references for companies implementing telework.

(3) Promotion of the safe and secure use of important data

A Development of disaster information systems

Japan is one of the world's most disaster-prone countries, and each time a large-scale natural disaster occurs, it suffers significant social and economic damage. Given the ongoing predictions of large-scale natural disasters, such as the Nankai Trough Earthquake, it is crucial to efficiently utilize ICT to mitigate human and material damage caused by disasters.

(A) Development of a disaster-resilient fire and disaster prevention communication network

To collect and transmit information related to damage situations, a communication network that can reliably function even during disasters is essential. Therefore, the current infrastructure includes several key communication networks that connect the national government, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, local governments, and residents. These networks are: (1) the Central Disaster Prevention Radio Network for collecting and transmitting information within the government; (2) the Fire and Disaster Prevention Radio Network connecting the Fire and Disaster Management Agency with prefectures; (3) the Prefectural Disaster Prevention Administrative Radio Network connecting prefectures with municipalities; (4) the Municipal Disaster Prevention Administrative Radio Network connecting municipalities with residents; and (5) the Satellite Communication Network connecting the national government with local governments or between local governments. Additionally, efforts are being made to introduce high-performance and cost-effective next-generation systems for the satellite communication network.

(B) Deployment of mobile communication equipment for disaster response

The MIC lends mobile communication equipment for disaster response to local governments to ensure communication in affected areas even if mobile phone networks are disrupted. (As of May 2025, 1,065 simple radios, 179 MCA radios, and 100 satellite phones are deployed across the Regional Bureau of Telecommunications and other sites nationwide.)

Following the Noto Peninsula Earthquake, which occurred in January 2024, more satellite internet equipment and public safety mobile systems were installed. These devices are used to build communication environments in evacuation centers and to support the collection and transmission of disaster information, as well as the smooth execution of emergency recovery activities.

(C) Securing emergency communication means during disasters

To prepare for situations where public telecommunication services become difficult to use during disasters, the MIC has been deploying ICT units (attaché case type) to the Regional Bureaus of Telecommunications and other related agencies nationwide since FY2016. These units are lent to disaster-related organizations upon request to ensure necessary communication means. (As of May 2025, 25 units are deployed across the Regional Bureau of Telecommunications and other sites.)

(D) Stable operation of the Nationwide Instantaneous Warning System (J-Alert)

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency has established the "Nationwide Instantaneous Warning System (J-Alert)" to instantly transmit information on urgent situations, such as ballistic missile alerts, emergency earthquake warnings, and major tsunami warnings, from the national government to residents via emergency alert emails to mobile phones and municipal disaster prevention administrative radios. To ensure the rapid and reliable transmission of emergency information via J-Alert, municipalities are urged to thoroughly check the proper functioning of J-Alert-related equipment, and efforts are being made to promote the redundancy of J-Alert information transmission methods.

(E) Promotion of the use of L-Alert

The MIC promotes the use of the common platform (L-Alert) that allows local governments to simultaneously send disaster-related information, such as evacuation orders, to various media, including numerous broadcasters and internet service providers. L-Alert has achieved nationwide operation across all 47 prefectures and has become an essential part of the disaster information infrastructure.

Amid the intensification and more frequent occurrence of disasters, measures are being taken to increase the stability and reliability of L-Alert for the system to continue to play its role. Moreover, studies are being made for data linkage between L-Alert and other disaster control systems for contribution to the entire government's DX for disaster control. Furthermore, for more effective use of L-Alert, the MIC conducts seminars for users of the system, such as employees of municipalities.

B Promotion of ICT utilization in the medical field

Japan has entered a super-aging society, facing challenges such as increasing medical and nursing care costs and the uneven distribution of medical resources.

To address these issues, the MIC is working to build and enhance a foundation for utilizing medical, nursing, and health data to improve and streamline medical and health services. The main focus is on promoting "Telemedicine" and "Utilization of PHR[4] data."

Specifically, to promote the spread of telemedicine, which is expected to be a key solution to the uneven distribution of medical resources, the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) has been conducting R&D activities to support telesurgery by the use of robots since FY2022, with the results scheduled to be announced in the summer of 2025 in the form of the revised guidelines for telesurgery by the Japan Surgical Society. Since FY2023, research and development have been conducted to build a data distribution infrastructure necessary for obtaining PHR data required by doctors from various PHR services to enhance medical care and refine diagnostic content.

In addition, in consideration of the changes caused to the security measures for medical information systems and services due to the diversification and sophistication of cyberattacks on them and of the increased importance of agreements concluded between medical facilities and medial information system providers, the "Guidelines for Safety Management in Information Systems and Service Providers Handling Medical Information" (the MIC and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) were revised in FY2024. Furthermore, to promote the safe and secure use of PHR services, the "Basic Guidelines for Handling Medical Checkup and Related Information by PHR Service Providers" (MIC, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) were revised in FY2025 for the first time in about three years, following the diversification of PHR services and the revision of the security requirements.

C Promotion of ICT utilization in the education field

During the period from FY2021 to FY2022, in order to promote the utilization of ICT in the education field, the MIC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, formulated the necessary technical specifications (reference model) to realize the "Digital Education Platform" that enables data linkage between digital learning systems owned by companies outside schools.

Moreover, since FY2023, the MIC has been conducting studies to make effective use of PDS (Personal Data Store) in the education field towards the goal of providing individuals with optimal learning opportunities through the safe and secure use of educational data. Specifically, to this end, the ministry has checked and

[4] PHR stands for Personal Health Record. It generally refers to an individual's lifelong health and medical information, including health checkups, vaccination history, medication information, test results, and other medical-related information, as well as personal vital signs measured daily. It is expected to be accurately understood by the individuals as an electronic record and utilized for their own health promotion.

clarified the technical requirements to be met for PDS and identified the points to be noted for practical operation, while carrying out demonstration tests.

D Social implementation of information banks

From the perspective of promoting the appropriate utilization of personal data, including personally identifiable information, the MIC and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry established a study group on the certification scheme for information trust functions. In June 2018, they compiled the "Guidelines for Certification of Information Trust Functions ver1.0," which outlines a voluntary certification system for information banks by a private sector organization, with ongoing reviews of the guidelines. Based on these guidelines, the Information Technology Federation of Japan is serving as a certification body for information banks.

Continuously, in FY2025, the MIC is conducting studies on information banks and how to utilize them, in consideration of the changes made to services and businesses using personal data and their expansion.

(4) Discovery and development of ICT startups

In Japan, 2022 was designated as the inaugural year for startup creation, with the goal of increasing investment in startups tenfold over five years. This goal was set forth in the "Startup Development Five-year Plan" (decided at the New Capitalism Realization Conference in November 2022), aiming to create an ecosystem that fosters and nurtures startups.

The MIC has been implementing the ICT STARTUP LEAGUE project since FY2023, under which the public and private sectors are sharing roles to support startups throughout the process–from exploratory R&D activities through to commercialization–in an integrated manner for the development of next-generation industries by the creation and use of advanced ICT.

The MIC and the NICT host the "Entrepreneur Koshien" and "Entrepreneur Expo" to award and support excellent business plans from students aiming to start businesses and from startup companies, with the objective of solving regional issues and revitalizing the economy through the creation of ICT startups originating from local areas. At Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, the MIC and the NICT plan to organize an exhibition titled "Initiatives by ICT Startups Shaping the Future," featuring displays by past award winners from Entrepreneur Koshien and Entrepreneur Expo and others.

3. Responses to dis-/mis-information on the Internet

(1) Promotion of comprehensive measures

A Summary

Dis-/mis-information on the Internet, such as social media, circulates and spreads quickly and could exert serious influence on people's daily lives and socioeconomic activities. In light of this fact and related international trends, the MIC has been proactively implementing comprehensive measures against such information, including institutional measures, support for the development of countermeasure technologies, and the improvement of literacy across generations, while giving due consideration to freedom of expression.

B Institutional measures

(A) Information Distribution Platform Act and others

Illegal and harmful information has continued to be distributed on the Internet, and in view of the seriousness of the situation, the MIC has been continuously implementing measures in cooperation with relevant parties against a range of illegal and harmful information, including defamation, slander and piracy.

Due to the aggravation of issues related to defamation and slander on platform services, such as social media, the MIC is implementing the following measures in cooperation with related organizations and based on the policy package to deal with defamation and slander on the Internet compiled and announced in September 2020: (1) awareness-raising activity to improve information ethics and ICT literacy among users; (2) support for platform operators' voluntary measures and the improvement of their transparency and accountability; (3) disclosure of sender information; and (4) enhancement of consulting services.

Also, via the "Study Group on Platform Services"[5], the MIC interviewed platform operators and published the second summary on the future direction of measures against dis-/mis-information in August 2022.

Based on the discussion results, the "Working Group on Countermeasures against Illegal and Harmful Information such as Defamation and Slander," was organized in December 2022 for experts to discuss the following in a technical and intensive manner: (1) how to ensure the transparency and accountability regarding the deletion of information by platform operators and (2) roles to be played by platform operators to effectively prevent the distribution of illegal and harmful information. As a result of discussion made by this working group, it was deemed appropriate to require service providers offering services for interaction among unspecified users,

[5] This study group met during the period from October 2018 to January 2024 to discuss how to ensure the appropriate handling of user information by platform operators and how to deal with illegal and harmful information on the Internet (chaired by SHISHIDO George, Graduate School for Law and Politics, The University of Tokyo).

specifically those above a certain size to do the following with regard to the removal of illegal and harmful information, such as defamation and slander, including the establishment of legal arrangements: (1) make mandatory responses within a predefined period; (2) set criteria and disclose the operational situation for higher transparency.

In reference to the report made by this working group, the "Study Group on Platform Services" published the third summary in February 2024, based on which the Act to Partially Amend the Act on the Limitation of Liability of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers[6] was enacted in May 2024. Under this revised law, the Act on the Limitation of Liability of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers was renamed as the Act on Measures Against Rights Infringement, etc. Arising from Distribution of Information by Specified Telecommunications ("Information Distribution Platform Act").

In order to enforce this amended act, the MIC clarified what kind of information distribution constitutes an infringement of rights or a violation of laws and regulations, and formulated the "Guidelines on Illegal Information"[7] to provide examples of illegal information that large-scale specified telecommunications service providers should refer to when formulating the "standards for the implementation of transmission prevention measures."

In addition, as measures against piracy on the Internet, the MIC has been conducting the following activities based on the "Policy Menu of Anti-piracy Measures on the Internet" (December 2020): awareness-raising to improve information ethics and ICT literacy among users; promotion of the introduction of security software for access control; review of the sender information disclosure system; and enhancement of international collaboration through discussions at international forums such as ICANN.

Moreover, based on the summary report (in September 2022) made by the "Study Group on Measures to Suppress Access to Piracy Sites on the Internet," the MIC confirmed progress with the Policy Menu and initiatives implemented by related companies and others.

(B) Digital advertising

The number of investment scams on social media reported and the amount of damage caused by these scams reached 8,684 and about 114.9 billion yen, respectively, over two years from January 2023 to December 2024. Victims of these scams are cheated out of money, making payments for "investment" or for "withdrawal fees" to swindlers, who make the victims trust them through frequent online communication without meeting in person[8].

Banner ads for about 50% of all the means of initial contact for the purpose of investment scams on social media. In particular, SNS-based investment fraud, initiated through advertisements that impersonate well-known individuals or major corporations by using their names, photos and other materials without permission (spoofing-type "false advertisements") to induce users to participate in investment seminars and businesses, has become a serious issue.

In response, the MIC requested large-scale social networking service (SNS) operators respond to spoofing-type "false advertisements" on their platforms based on the "Comprehensive Measures to Protect People from Frauds" (decided by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime on June 18, 2024)[9].

In October 2024, after the request was made, the "Working Group on Digital Advertising," held under the "Study Group on Addressing Issues Related to Information Distribution in the Digital Space" (hereinafter, "Study Group") interviewed five platform operators to whom the request was made (ByteDance, Google, LINE Yahoo!, Meta and X) about their measures against spoofing-type "false advertisements" and published an evaluation report on the interviews in November[10]. In the evaluation report, the platform operators were requested to make further improvements regarding the advance screening of ads and the removal of spoofing-type "false advertisements". Also, the report stated that the MIC would monitor the measures taken by the operators in its effort to identify the measures that need to be implemented for the protection of users of social media and other services.

On the distribution of digital ads, it is also required to implement measures to address risks caused by the placing ads unintendedly on the media that infringe copyright or provide dis-/mis-information. These risks include damage to the brand of the advertiser, waste of advertising costs and contribution to the spread of dis-/mis-information. In order to deal with these risks, the MIC published the "Guidance on the Appropriate and Effective Distribution of Digital Ads for Advertisers" on June 9, 2025, based on the recognition that it is important for those in charge of ads and the management team to raise their awareness of the risks concerning digital advertising.

[6] Act to Partially Amend the Act on the Limitation of Liability of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers for Damages and the Right to Demand Disclosure of Sender Identification Information (Act No. 25 of 2024)
[7] Guidelines on Article 26 of the Act on Measures Against Rights Infringement, etc. Arising from Distribution of Information by Specified Telecommunications (Enacted on March 11, 2025)
[8] Number of special frauds, investment scams via social media and romance scams reported and the number of arrests for these crimes in FY2024 (data finalized by the National Police Agency)
https://www.npa.go.jp/bureau/criminal/souni/tokusyusagi/hurikomesagi_toukei2024_teisei.pdf
[9] https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01ryutsu02_02000411.html
[10] https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000978858.pdf

(C) Further examination for institutional improvement

As mentioned above, the Healthiness Study Group made recommendations related to institutional measures. However, the environment surrounding the distribution of information in digital space has continued to change, making it necessary to examine measures against new issues, such as those concerning the posting of messages on social media to recruit people for illegal part-time jobs. Based on the fact that trials and errors were repeated also outside Japan to deal with issues concerning the distribution of information in digital space, the "Working Group on Institutional Measures for the Distribution of Information in Digital Space" was organized in January 2025 under the Study Group to discuss how to improve the systems related to the distribution of information in digital space.

The working group plans to identify the desirable direction of institutional improvement by the summer of 2025 based on the results of surveys conducted on relevant trends in foreign countries and of interviews with platform operators.

C Development and demonstration of technologies to address the issues

Effective use of generative AI, which is featured with the speed of technological innovation, contributes to the solution of social issues and greater industrial competitiveness. However, it can also cause risks to people's daily lives, and in order to deal with dis-/mis-information on the Internet, it is necessary to be prepared for further elaboration and sophistication of generative AI and other technologies.

Accordingly, the MIC is working on the development and demonstration of technologies to check whether or not images posted on the Internet were created by generative AI and to ensure the authenticity and reliability of information senders.

(2) Promotion of ICT literacy for a wide range of generations

A Development of awareness-raising materials

To address changes in the ICT environment, including the expansion of opportunities for ICT use across a wide range of generations and the issue of the distribution of dis-/mis-information on the Internet, the MIC has been holding the "Study Group on Improving ICT Literacy for ICT Utilization[11]" since November 2022 and established the "Working Group on Improving ICT Literacy for Youth" in December 2022, advancing discussions on literacy required in the future digital society and on strategies for promoting literacy enhancement. Based on the results of discussions held by the groups, a "Roadmap for Improving ICT Literacy for ICT Utilization" was compiled and published in June 2023. The roadmap shows the direction of measures to be implemented on a short- and medium-term basis. In FY2023, as an initiative to be implemented on a short-term basis, the competencies necessary to improve literacy for ICT utilization were identified, and learning content to deal with issues shared by a range of age groups was developed. Subsequently in FY2024, awareness-raising materials were developed in consideration of the features of different age groups (the youth, their parents and the elderly) as an initiative to be implemented on a medium- to long-term basis.

On the "Let's Use the Internet Wisely! - A Guide to Safe and Secure Internet Use –" website, which is intended to raise awareness for safe and secure use of the Internet[12], content for pre-school children, parents of these children, the youth, their parents and teachers, and the elderly is posted to help them improve their ICT literacy.

In FY2024, against dis-/mis-information, the MIC revised its awareness-raising material, "How to Use the Internet: To Avoid Being Misled by Dis-/Mis-Information," created to prevent people from being deceived by such information[13], in consideration of the latest cases, impact of generative AI and others.

B Implementation of public-private collaboration projects to improve ICT literacy in a comprehensive manner

In 2025, the MIC launched DIGITAL POSITIVE ACTION as a public-private collaboration project in cooperation with platform operators, telecommunications carriers, IT-related companies, and other related organizations. Under this project, the MIC is collaborating with relevant companies and organizations to implement measures for the improvement of ICT literacy, including the opening of a website on measures taken by the public and private sectors and conducting a range of PR activities.

The slogan of this project, "DIGITAL POSITIVE ACTION" expresses the strong commitment of the national government, companies, organizations and individual citizens to taking actions one after another to make the digital society a positive one. This slogan, along with the slogan that states, "Create and protect a safe information society" in Japanese and a mark symbolizing the happiness of people constitute the logo of the project.**(Figure 2-2-6-1)**

[11] "Study Group on Improving ICT Literacy for ICT Utilization" https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/kenkyu/ict_literacy/index.html
[12] https://www.soumu.go.jp/use_the_internet_wisely/
[13] https://www.soumu.go.jp/use_the_internet_wisely/special/nisegojouhou/

Figure 2-2-6-1 DIGITAL POSITIVE ACTION logo and slogan

つくろう！守ろう！安心できる情報社会

(3) Promoting the use of AI and responding to associated risks

Recently, the development of AI technologies has been rapidly progressing, leading to the widespread use of AI services, including OpenAI's ChatGPT service, which was launched in November 2022. AI technologies, particularly generative AI, pose concerns and risks about the spread of dis-/mis-information, but are also expected to make great contributions to higher productivity and addressing labor shortage issues, attracting far more attention to the potential of AI across the world.

Furthermore, based on the outcomes of the G7 Hiroshima Summit held in May 2023, the "Hiroshima AI Process" was initiated to discuss issues related to generative AI and international rules on such AI.

In December of the same year, the "Comprehensive Policy Framework for the Hiroshima AI Process" was compiled and approved by the G7 leaders. The Hiroshima AI Process will continue to advance, led by the G7 countries and supported through cooperation with multilateral platforms such as the OECD, the GPAI, and the United Nations, under the "Work Plan to Advance the Hiroshima AI Process"[14].

Domestically, in response to the rapid changes in AI technology and international discussions, the national government established the AI Strategic Council in May 2023 as a command center to conduct intensive discussions with experts possessing a wide range of knowledge on various issues. Based on the "Tentative Summary of AI Issues" (May 2023) compiled by the AI Strategic Council, the MIC and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry formulated and announced the "AI Guidelines for Business[15]" Version 1.0 in April 2024. In line with the rule of updating them as necessary in consideration of the trends of AI, international discussions and other developments, the guidelines were updated to version 1.01 in November of the same year and again to version 1.1 in March 2025, taking into account the latest trends both in Japan and overseas, including the widespread use of RAG and multimodal AI.

Furthermore, as the development of rules regarding AI continued both in Japan and overseas, the first meeting of the AI Institutional Study Group[16] was held to discuss issues for institutional improvement, including the necessity of AI-related laws, in August 2024 under the AI Strategic Council. Then, an "Interim Report"[17] was compiled in February 2025, and based on this report, the Act on Promotion of Research and Development, and Utilization of Artificial Intelligence-related Technology was enacted at the 217th session of the Diet (ordinary session) (Act No. 53 of 2025). This law provides for the establishment of the Artificial Intelligence Strategic Headquarters for the national government to do the following to promote AI innovation while mitigating risks posed by it as its basic approach: formulate the Artificial Intelligence Basic Plan that shows the basic policy on AI measures to be implemented by the government, establish guidelines to ensure the appropriateness of AI in accordance with the international norms, and conduct research and studies, collect information and give advice to relevant companies.

Moreover, as mentioned above, in light of the fact that the development of AI technologies and the use of AI have been rapidly progressing both in the public and private sectors, the national government needs to promote the utilization of generative AI in its operations while controlling the associated risks. Accordingly, the Digital Agency made studies for the formulation of "The Guideline for Japanese Governments' Procurements and Utilizations of Generative AI for the sake of Evolution and Innovation of Public Administration" which were approved at the Council for the Promotion of a Digital Society Executive Board Meeting on May 27, 2025[18] for announcement.

(4) Promoting safe and secure metaverse utilization

Recognizing the need to ensure a safe and secure cyberspace, the MIC has been working to identify and organize new issues related to cyberspace, anticipating the future widespread adoption of the metaverse. In and after August 2022, meetings of the "Study Group on the Utilization of Metaverse toward the Web3 Era[19]" were held and a report[20] was compiled by the Study Group in July 2023.

[14] For discussions by G7 countries, refer to (1) "G7/G20," (2) "Hiroshima AI Process" and (10) "GPAI" in Section 8.5, Chapter 2, Part II.
[15] AI Guidelines for Businesshttps://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/kenkyu/ai_network/02ryutsu20_04000019.html
https://www.meti.go.jp/shingikai/mono_info_service/ai_shakai_jisso/20240419_report.html
[16] AI Institutional Study Group https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/ai/ai_kenkyu/ai_kenkyu.html
[17] Interim Report https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/ai/interim_report_en.pdf
[18] https://www.digital.go.jp/en/resources/standard_guidelines
[19] Holding "Study Group on the Utilization of Metaverse toward the Web3 Era" (Press release)
https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01iicp01_02000109.html
[20] https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000892205.pdf

Based on the report, a new "Study Group on Realizing Safe and Secure Metaverse[21]" was launched in October 2023 to examine principles based on the democratic values of the metaverse, follow up on technological trends, and contribute to international discussions on the metaverse toward the realization of safe and secure metaverse for users. In October 2024, this study group published "2024 Report"[22]which includes the first version of the "Principles of the Metaverse" that summarize the measures to be implemented by metaverse-related service providers to ensure the safety and security of users through the provision of democratic value of metaverse.

Based on "2024 Report," the MIC has been striving to realize and promote safe and secure metaverse utilization while implementing measures to build a common international understanding about the metaverse based on the first version of the Principles of the Metaverses. On the international front, the MIC introduced the outcomes of discussions held in Japan, such as the first version of the Principles of the Metaverse, at meetings including the OECD's Digital Policy Committee's meeting and the "Global Multistakeholder High Level Conference on Governance of Web 4.0 and Virtual Worlds" held from March to April 2025 by the European Commission. Also, in Japan, the MIC held a "Symposium on Considering the Promotion of Safe and Secure Metaverse Utilization"[23] in March 2025 for metaverse-related companies, organizations and researchers to discuss measures for users' safety and security, points to be noted for successful metaverse introduction, and the effect of introduction.

The "Study Group on Realizing Safe and Secure Metaverse" expanded its discussion target to include the use of the metaverse for various purposes other than the provision of VR for communication and entertainment between individuals, regardless of the details of technologies used for the realization and utilization of the metaverse. This was done in view of the advancement of devices for augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MX), the multipurpose use of metaverse, and the progress of the market. Also, in reference to the results of discussions held at the aforementioned symposium, the study group is continuing discussion for the revision of the first version of the Principles of the Metaverse.

4. Creation of the safe and secure environment of ICT usage

(1) Improvement of support for digital utilization by the elderly and others

As the digitalization of society progresses, the MIC has been working on the "Project on Digital Utilization Support for Users" since FY2021 to provide support through training sessions in the form of advice and consultations for the elderly and others who are anxious about using smartphones for online administrative procedures and other services, with the aim of eliminating the digital divide and creating an environment where everyone can benefit from digitalization. In FY2024, these efforts were expanded to include conducting training sessions at over 6,000 locations nationwide, mainly at mobile phone shops.

(2) Establishment of a safe internet environment for the youth

The MIC is promoting filtering to prevent the youth from accessing harmful information on the Internet and raising ICT literacy of children, parents, and others for the safe and secure use of the Internet by the children.

Specifically, the MIC has been conducting "e-Net Caravan" free outreach sessions at schools and other educational institutions for children, students, parents, and educators to ensure a safe and secure Internet environment. Additionally, the ministry created and published an "Internet Trouble Case Collection"[24] that summarizes methods for preventing Internet-related issues, and annually conducts the "Internet Literacy Assessment Indicator for Students (ILAS)"[25] test nationwide targeting first-grade senior high school students to visualize their ability to cope with risks and threats on the Internet and assess the current situation.

Also, the MIC is working to effectively raise the awareness of parental controls that can be set up in line with the growth stage of children and their Internet usage status[26], in light of the fact that the youth are sharing more information via the Internet and the lowering trend in the age of children using the Internet.

[21] Holding "Study Group on Realizing Safe and Secure Metaverse" (Press release)
https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01iicp01_02000121.html
[22] https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000974751.pdf
[23] Holding a "Symposium on Considering the Promotion of Safe and Secure Metaverse Utilization" (press release)
https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01ryutsu20_02000001_00012.html
Report on the "Symposium on Considering the Promotion of Safe and Secure Metaverse Utilization" by the MIC
https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000002.000157444.html
[24] Internet Trouble Case Collection (2025)
https://www.soumu.go.jp/use_the_internet_wisely/trouble/
[25] Survey on the Internet Literacy Assessment Indicator for Students (ILAS)
–ILAS (Internet Literacy Assessment indicator for Students)–
https://www.soumu.go.jp/use_the_internet_wisely/special/ilas/
[26] It means that parents oversee their children's internet use appropriately, considering their developmental stage and life cycle. This includes preventing troubles that may arise from children's information dissemination. Management methods are divided into technical means (such as filtering, billing restriction functions, and time management functions) and non-technical means (such as creating rules between parents and children). (General Principles for Child-Related Measures (Cabinet Decision on December 22, 2023), P50

(3) Support for research and development towards information barrier-free

The MIC provides partial subsidies to companies conducting research and development of technologies related to communication and broadcasting services for people with disabilities and the elderly, as part of the "Research and Development for Eliminating the Digital Divide" program. In FY2024, subsidies were provided to five entities.

Additionally, under the Act on Advancement of Facilitation Program for Disabled Persons' Use of Telecommunications and Broadcasting Services, with a View to Enhance Convenience of Disabled Persons (Act No. 54 of 1993), the NICT provides subsidies to companies and organizations developing and providing communication and broadcasting services for people with disabilities. In FY2024, subsidies were provided to four entities.

(4) Improvement of information accessibility

To make it easier for everyone, including the elderly and people with disabilities, to use public institution websites, the MIC conducted a partial revision of the "Guidelines for Operating Everyone's Public Websites" in FY2024. In the same fiscal year, the ministry conducted a survey on JIS compliance of public institution websites and online workshops for public institutions.

Efforts are also being made to promote the use of self-assessment forms for information accessibility among companies and organizations.

The "Information Accessibility Self-Assessment Form" is a tool for companies and organizations to publicly disclose the results of their self-assessment of whether or not their ICT equipment and services meet information accessibility standards, serving as a reference for companies, public institutions, and people with disabilities when selecting ICT equipment and services. This self-assessment form was created by the MIC, drawing on the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) used in the U.S. In the U.S., the law mandates that the government must procure accessible electronic information equipment.

The MIC has been promoting the use of these forms in both the public and private sectors through the establishment of support centers, seminars, and the collection of good practices, as well as the updating of guidebooks.

(5) Provision of telephone relay service as public infrastructure

The "Telephone Relay Service" is a service where sign language interpreters and other operators act as intermediaries, interpreting sign language and text from individuals with hearing impairments or other disabilities that affect auditory, speech, or vocal functions which make it difficult for them to communicate through spoken language, to facilitate communication via telephone between these individuals and those without such impairments.

To ensure the proper and reliable provision of the "Telephone Relay Service," the Act on Facilitating the Use of Telephones by Persons with Hearing Impairments, etc. (Act No. 53 of 2020) was enforced in December 2020. Subsequently, in July 2021, the Nippon Foundation Telephone Relay Service, which was designated as the provider of the telephone relay service, started to provide the telephone relay service as part of public infrastructure **(Figure 2-2-6-2)**. On January 23, 2025, under the service, the "Yometeru" phone voice transcription service began to be offered to callers who have hearing impairments but want to talk on the phone **(Figure 2-2-6-3)**, so that they can "read" what the receiver says. The MIC has been conducting PR activities in cooperation with related governmental agencies in order to further promote the use of the telephone relay service, and the number of users registered with the service reached 17,480 people as of the end of FY2024.

Figure 2-2-6-2　Promoting the use of the telephone relay service

Figure 2-2-6-3　Promoting the use of Yometeru