

18th Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum

October 8 (Sun) - 12 (Thu), 2023



Attending a special session on AI at IGF Kyoto 2023, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio remarked, "In order to promote the distribution of reliable information, it would be effective to develop and promote the diffusion of technologies that can prove and confirm the originator of the information. The international community as a whole must share that understanding and deal with those issues with a sense of solidarity."

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL ERA: THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF FACT-CHECKING

The Existing Practices against Disinformation, or EPaD, which constitute a collection of the existing practices on countering disinformation compiled by Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, were announced in October 2023. Their emergence highlights the need for international collaboration among multiple stakeholders for fact-checking, which is the process of verifying the factual accuracy of publicized information.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, disinformation has become commonplace. At the same time, various issues related to human rights violations and copyright infringements have begun to

emerge along with such advances in technologies as generative AI. We therefore live at a time when everyone recognizes the importance of checking facts' accuracy.

The Japanese government encourages voluntary efforts in private-sector fact-checking. As

part of those efforts, Japan hosted October's Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Kyoto 2023. The IGF is an annual forum in which many different stakeholders—from government and the private sector to technical and academic communities, as well as civil

society groups—come together to engage in dialogue on an equal footing on various issues related to the Internet.

The EPaD, announced at IGF Kyoto 2023 as a collection of existing practices on countering disinformation, were prepared by various stakeholders, including private companies and civil society groups. Since Japan was this year's G7 Chair, its Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications compiled the list, which was first declared in April 2023 in the Ministerial Declaration of the G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki City, Gunma Prefecture.

The EPaD were made public at one of the IGF Kyoto 2023 sessions, Sharing "Existing Practices against Disinformation (EPaD)"—hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications—at which participants engaged in lively discussion on international collaboration and cooperation. The moderator of the session was FURUTA Daisuke, editor-in-chief of the Japan Fact-check Center, which is one of three fact-checking organizations in Japan certified by the International Fact-Checking Network.

Furuta believes that the public release of the EPaD has enabled advanced cases from the G7 and European countries to be more widely shared with those engaged in fact-checking, and that everyone involved has learned a great deal. Reflecting on the significance of holding the session at IGF Kyoto 2023, he says, "Speakers from the Philippines and Indonesia

shared the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation and media information literacy education including the development of grassroots fact-checkers. The technical cooperation described by the speaker from Microsoft was also encouraging."

Fact-checking takes a huge amount of time and effort. As Furuta states, "That is why it is vital to have collaboration among multi-stakeholder groups such as the media industry, experts, and public institutions, as well as among international fact-checking organizations. It is important to learn from the best practices in other countries and regions and to build on the strengths of each organization, such as strong expertise in AI analysis or

educational initiatives."

Voicing his thoughts about the future direction that Japan should take in the field of fact-checking, Furuta goes on to say, "As an Asian country that continues to maintain a stable democracy, Japan should establish a greater presence in the field of countering the misinformation and disinformation that threaten society. Japan also could serve as a hub for fact-checking and education in Asia."

The Japanese government will continue to work to increase awareness of the EPaD initiative, which it has led as the G7 Presidency, as well as to communicate the importance of international cooperation beyond public, private, and academic frameworks. ●

Right: FURUTA Daisuke, editor-in-chief of the Japan Fact-check Center. After working at Asahi Shimbun and serving as the founding editor of BuzzFeed Japan, Furuta established "media-collab" as its CEO. He currently works as a journalist and media consultant. JUN TSUBOIKE
Bottom: Screenshots from the session on Sharing "Existing Practices against Disinformation (EPaD)" at IGF Kyoto 2023. Seen in the upper left image (from left to right) are FURUTA Daisuke, editor-in-chief of the Japan Fact-check Center, Aribowo Sasmito, co-founder of MAFINDO in Indonesia, and YAMAGUCHI Shinichi, executive research fellow and associate professor at the Center for Global Communications of the International University of Japan. The upper right image shows Madeline Shepherd, Digital Safety Lead at Microsoft Operations Pte Ltd in Australia, and Chay F. Hofleña, editor of Rappler in the Philippines, appears in the one below.

