IPIE

International Panel on the Information Environment

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW





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A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This has been a landmark year for the IPIE. We published ground-breaking research, convened world-leading experts, and deepened our partnerships with institutions that share our commitment to a healthier information environment.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our staff, the generosity of our funders, and the trust of the researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who engage with our work. We are proud of what we are building together.

As the information environment grows more complex and the stakes for governance higher, the IPIE's work has never been more urgent. For example, governments worldwide have been responding to the threats to minors from harmful content and predatory contact that the modern information ecosystem makes possible. The IPIE has advanced critical efforts to protect children online, providing scientific expertise on tools like recommendation algorithms, data harvesting, and the addictive engagement mechanisms that amplify harms. Our research has set new benchmarks for how scientific evidence can inform global policy debates.

We will continue to build on this year's work to equip policymakers and institutions with the evidence they need to preserve the information environment.



Professor Phil Howard
President of the IPIE

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR

Developments over the past year have demonstrated, beyond any doubt, why independent scientific bodies like the IPIE matter. The information environment grew more contested, and the pace of technological change accelerated. As a result, the demand for rigorous, trusted evidence has only intensified. The IPIE rose to meet that demand, and I could not be prouder of what this organization achieved.

Looking ahead, I am confident in the strength of the foundation we have built. Our Scientific Panels span some of the most pressing challenges of our time, from AI's impact on economic inclusion, to child protection online, to the integrity of climate information. We will continue to grow in reach and influence, ensuring our research gets to the policymakers, regulators, and institutions who need it most.

On behalf of the entire board, I want to express my profound gratitude to our partners, funders, and the global scientific community who make this mission possible.



Susan Doniz
Chair of the IPIE's Foundation Board of Trustees

ABOUT US



OUR VALUES

- Scientific Rigor
- Independence
- Transparency
- Global Collaboration

ABOUT US

The International Panel on the Information Environment (IPIE) is an independent and global science organization providing scientific knowledge about the health of the world's information environment.

Based in Switzerland, the IPIE offers policymakers, industry, and civil society actionable scientific assessments about threats to the information environment. The IPIE is the only scientific body systematically organizing, evaluating, and elevating research with the broad aim of improving the global information environment. Hundreds of researchers worldwide contribute to the IPIE's scientific assessments.



OUR MISSION

The International Panel on the Information Environment (IPIE) is a global science body dedicated to strengthening the information environment through applied research, scientific consensus, and real-world impact.



OUR APPROACH

Our growing network of experts investigates threats to the information environment and opportunities to strengthen its integrity. We draw on knowledge from many fields to find practical, science-based solutions.

> "We see you as our dispassionate doctors, PhDs, and professors checking up on the health of the information environment. I don't think anyone has ever done this before in this way."
>
> **Melissa Fleming**
> Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, United Nations

OUR GLOBAL NETWORK

Our affiliates represent **73 nationalities**, live in **59 countries**, and are associated with **313 universities** and institutions. The network spans **23 academic disciplines**, with more than half of all affiliates bringing expertise across multiple fields. 27.5% of our affiliates identify with an under-represented group and women make up 45% of our network.

490 research affiliates

73 nationalities

59 countries

313 institutions

> “We are living through a defining moment for the information environment, and the evidence we produce today will shape the decisions that matter most tomorrow.”
>
> **Professor Sebastián Valenzuela**
> Chief Science Officer, IPIE; Full Professor,
> School of Communications at Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

OUR BOARD

The IPIE's Foundation Board of Trustees governs the organization. The Board oversees strategy, policy, and compliance, and ensures effective management and alignment with our mission.



Susan Doniz, Chair
Chief Information and Digital Officer, The Walt Disney Company



Howard Rosen, Vice Chair
CBE, Founder, Howard Rosen Solicitors & RoseTrust AG



Phil Howard, President
PhD, and IPIE Co-Founder, Professor, University of Oxford



Inga Beale
DBE, Portfolio Director, Former CEO, Lloyd's of London



Sheldon Himelfarb
PhD, and IPIE Co-Founder, Founder & Former CEO, PeaceTech Lab



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Julian King
GCMG KCVO, Partner, Flint Global, Former EU Security Commissioner and Ambassador



John Momoh
OON, CEO & Chairman, Channels Media Group



Anna Sjöström Douagi
PhD, CEO, Science Village Scandinavia

We are grateful for our Trustees' deep personal commitment and individual financial contributions to the IPIE's mission.

OUR PARTNERS

Our diversified funding base preserves the IPIE's sustainability and independence, with a balanced portfolio of contributions from a variety of partners. **We thank the following philanthropic institutions for their generous support:**

Andrew Carnegie Foundation

CIFF Children's Investment Fund Foundation

Ford Foundation

Heising-Simons Foundation

William + Flora Hewlett Foundation

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

inthallo

Knight Foundation

Oak Foundation

Omidyar Network

Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Philanthropy for an Interdependent World

Safe Online

Simons Foundation International

In addition, the IPIE has benefited from invaluable in-kind and pro bono support from A&O Shearman, Latham & Watkins, McKinsey & Company, and Swiss Re.

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

OUR IMPACT

> “The IPIE has demonstrated leadership in ensuring that digital advances serve the public good.”

Honorable Bob Rae

Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN in New York



2025 IN FIGURES

2025 reflected a period of significant momentum, with the launch of new research panels tackling timely issues, the incorporation of a new diverse group of research affiliates, and a greatly expanded program of events. Alongside the publication of several new scientific assessments, these developments demonstrate sustained growth and a deepening contribution to insight, collaboration, and knowledge across critical areas.

14 funding partnerships

21 events & briefings hosted

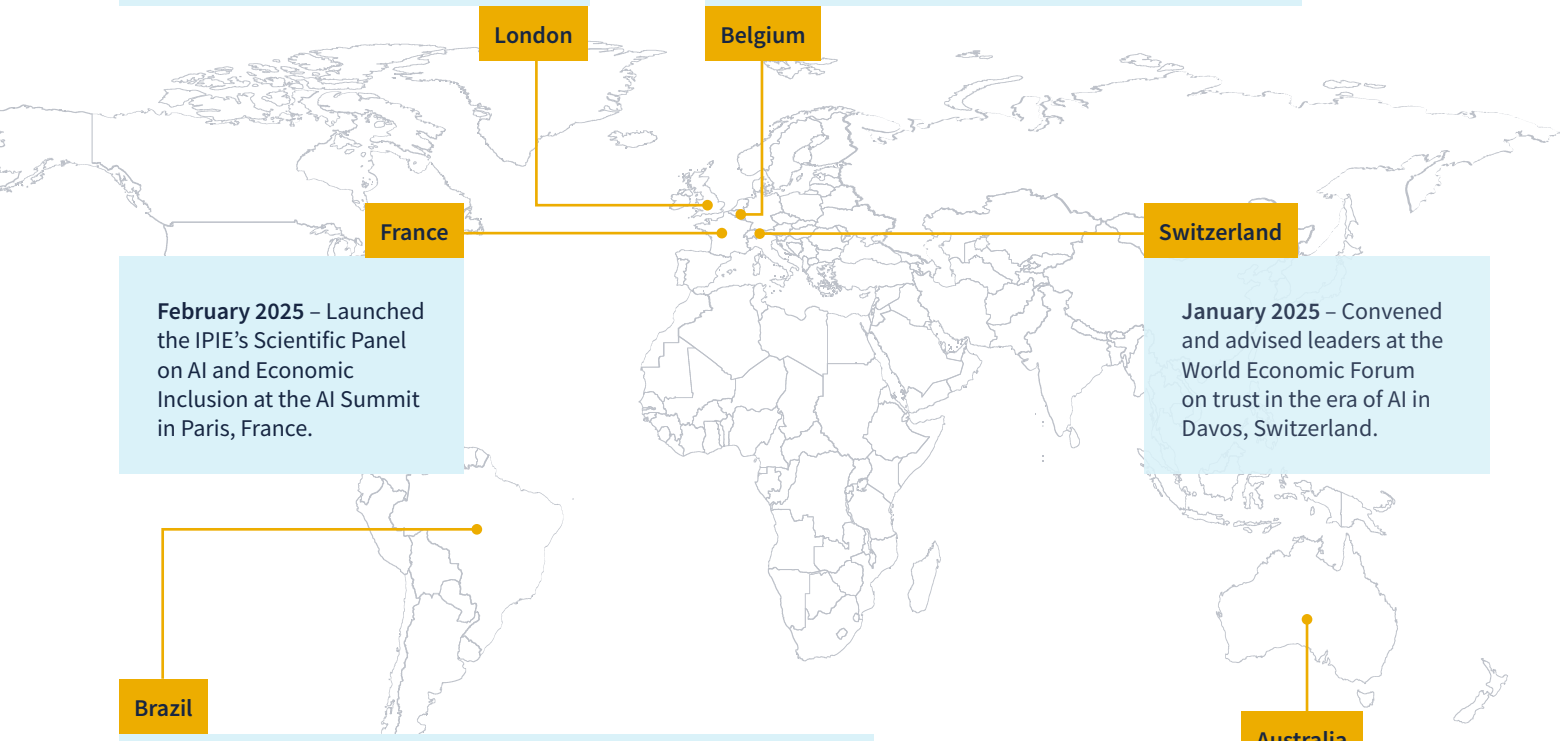
13 scientific assessments delivered

OUR GLOBAL REACH

From Geneva, Switzerland to Belém, Brazil, the IPIE convened leading scientists, policymakers, industry and civil society voices at events across the globe. Our presence at international forums reflects our commitment to ensuring that evidence-based research helps strengthen information integrity wherever decisions are being made.

May 2025 – Briefed industry and government leaders at the BBC London HQ on Generative AI and Elections.

March 2025 – Delivered expertise to the EPP Group in the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, on democracy in the age of social media.



February 2025 – Launched the IPIE's Scientific Panel on AI and Economic Inclusion at the AI Summit in Paris, France.

January 2025 – Convened and advised leaders at the World Economic Forum on trust in the era of AI in Davos, Switzerland.

November 2025 – Played an integral role at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil, providing the scientific basis for understanding information integrity and climate science as as a founding member of the Advisory Board for the new Global Initiative on Information Integrity about Climate Change.

September 2025 – Addressed the Australian Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy.

> "IPIE is a vital partner in advancing policies that strengthen democracy, security, and access to trustworthy information."

Dr. João Brant

Secretary of Digital Policies, Presidency of the Republic of Brazil

A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR AI AUDITING



About the IPIE's Global Standards for AI Auditing Panel

AI systems are increasingly shaping everyday life across sectors, yet those developing and deploying them are often unclear on how to govern AI responsibly. There are currently no global standards for auditing them, despite growing calls from both governments and industry to establish them. The IPIE's Scientific Panel on Global Standards for AI Audits brought together international experts from across the social, computer, and engineering sciences, as well as the humanities, to define what rigorous and comprehensive AI audits should look like. Chaired by Professor Wendy Chun, the Panel worked to identify the criteria, methodologies, and processes that should form the basis of global standards, with the aim of ensuring AI systems are assessed fairly and in the public interest.

KEY FINDINGS

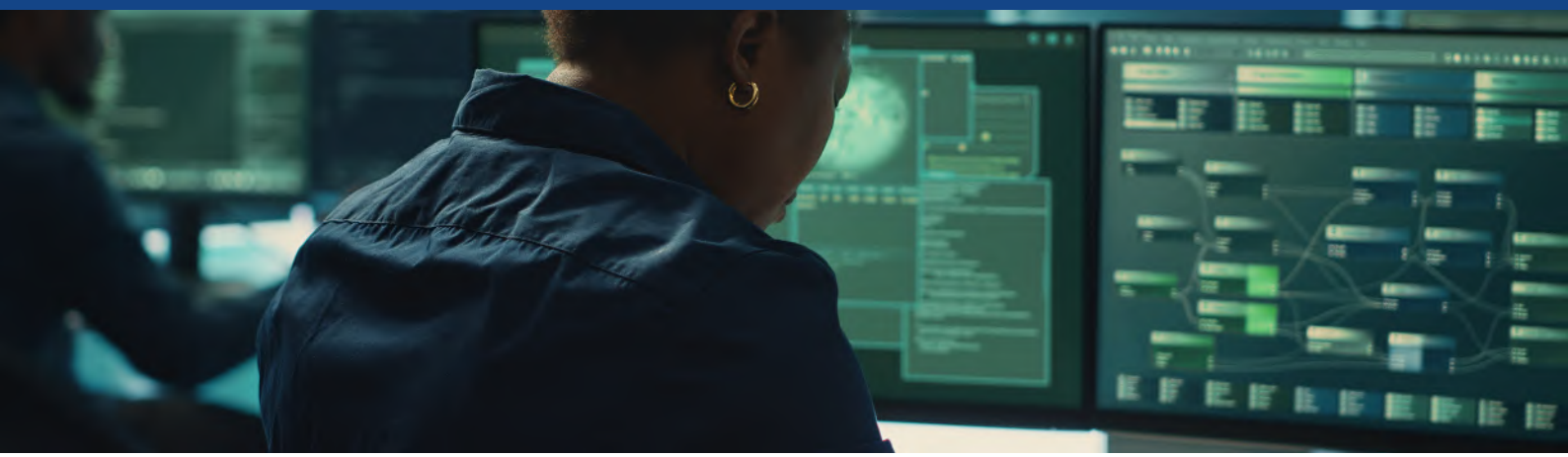
The report identified five core requirements for any credible AI audit: common standards and procedures, auditor independence, access to evidence, transparent reporting, and assessment of global impacts. It further proposed a seven-feature framework covering audit scope, auditor role, stakeholder engagement, context-appropriate criteria, evidence requirements, methodology, and post-audit activities. The report called on policymakers to adopt this framework to build an audit ecosystem that is genuinely global, independent, and centered on human rights.

> "We are deeply concerned about the ways in which artificial intelligence is exacerbating existing problems in the information environment. There is an urgent need for more transparent auditing systems to ensure AI is used responsibly and does not undermine the integrity of our information systems."

Professor Wendy Chun

Chair Scientific Panel on Global Standards on AI Auditing, IPIE; Director, Digital Democracies Institute

2025 EXPERT SURVEY ON THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT



Trust Under Threat: Safeguarding Epistemic Security

The information environment is under great pressure, as are the individuals studying it. The IPIE's third annual Expert Survey captured the views of 438 researchers from 76 countries on the health of the global information environment. For the third year in a row, experts grew more pessimistic about the future, underlining mounting concern about information integrity, polarization, and structural weaknesses in the systems that shape public debate.

KEY FINDINGS

Pessimism is rising. In 2025, 72% of respondents expected the information environment to worsen. That is a nine-point increase from 2024 and an 18-point increase since the first survey in 2023.

Concerns about platforms have grown. 75% of experts now see the lack of platform accountability as a major threat.

Experts say social media has worsened problems like polarization while also supporting political participation.

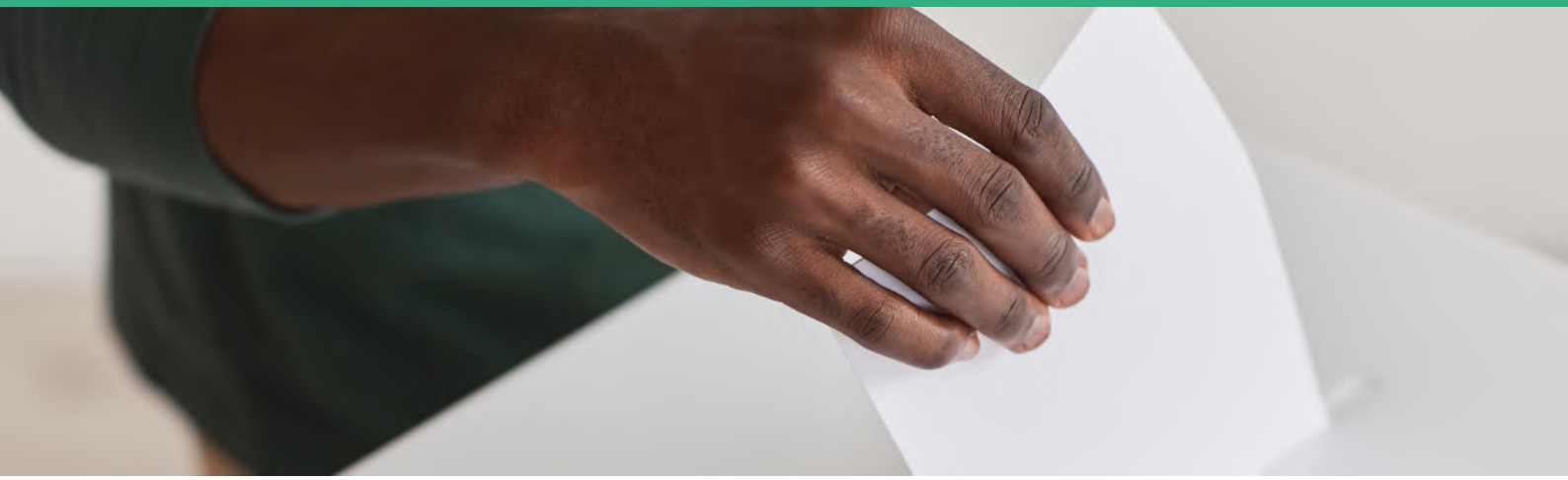
Search engines are seen as having a positive effect on the information environment overall, more so than recommender systems, social media, and AI.

The dominance of large private media companies is considered the main barrier to diverse voices being represented.

> "Experts view generative AI as a double-edged sword. While it has the potential to do a lot of good, its current use may exacerbate biases and misinformation. Balancing these aspects will be crucial for the health of our information environment."

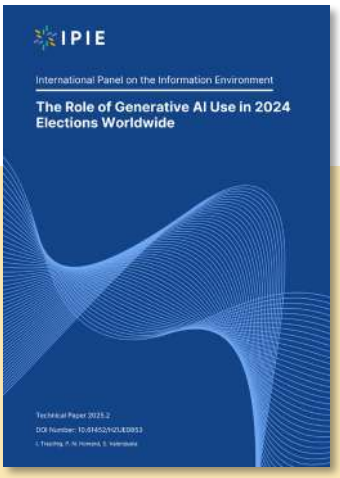
Dr. Sacha Altay

Consulting Scientist, Science and Methodology Committee, IPIE; Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Zurich



About the IPIE's Science and Methodology Committee

The Science and Methodology Committee is the IPIE's core scientific authority, responsible for evaluating the state of the global information environment and assessing threats to information integrity such as algorithmic bias and manipulation. It produces reports on the latest science, commissions original research, and charters domain-specific Scientific Panels. The Committee also engages governments, technology companies, and civil society in consensus-building, and communicates its findings broadly to policymakers, the media, and the public.



ASSESSING THE GLOBAL FOOTPRINT OF GENERATIVE AI

In 2025, the Science and Methodology Committee published a technical paper, The Role of Generative AI Use in 2024 Elections Worldwide. This paper offered the first global, data-driven assessment of GenAI's role across all 50 countries that held competitive national elections in 2024, capturing incidents including the use of synthetic media to mislead voters and AI-driven voter targeting.

MEDIA COVERAGE

This scientific assessment sparked significant international media coverage and was covered in major outlets

The New York Times

In the unusually concentrated wave of elections that took place in 2024, A.I. was used in more than 80 percent, according to the International Panel on the Information Environment, an independent organization of scientists based in Switzerland.

The New York Times, A.I. Is Starting to Wear Down Democracy (26 June 2025).

KEY FINDINGS

The report revealed that GenAI incidents occurred in 80% of 2024 national elections, with 90% involving generated content such as images, videos, audio, or social media posts. Almost half of the incidents have no known source (46%); a quarter was produced by political candidates and parties (25%), and a fifth was produced by foreign actors (20%). Nearly 70% of these incidents were described as having a harmful role in electoral processes.

This evidence base fills critical gaps in understanding how synthetic content interacts with political communication and underscores the urgency of policy responses to protect electoral integrity and public trust.

GenAI INCIDENTS

80% of 2024 national elections.

20% by foreign actors.

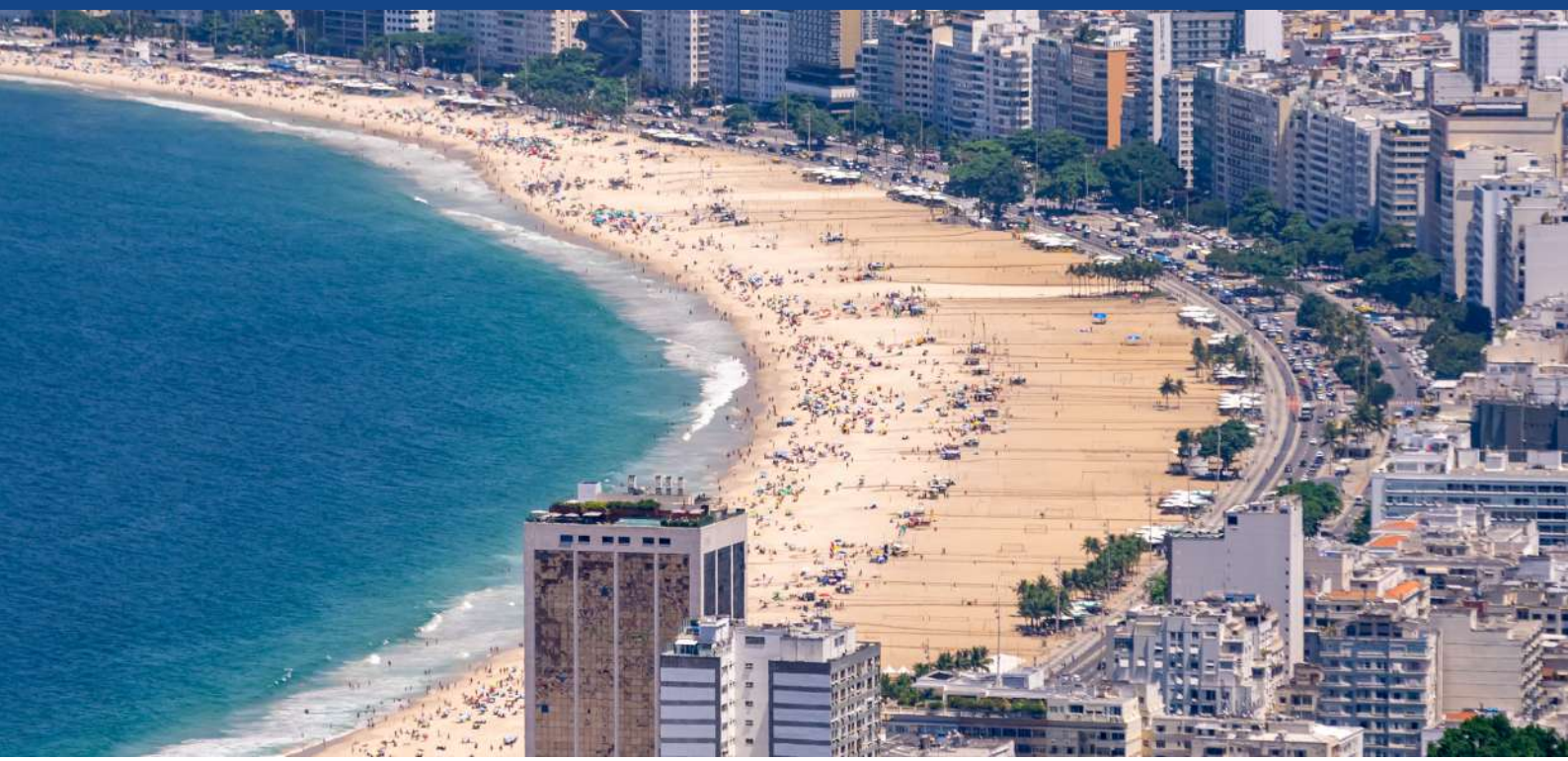
70% deemed harmful to elections.

> “Generative AI presents unique challenges to democratic systems around the world, often amplifying existing problems and making it harder for voters to distinguish accurate information. In 2024, the potential benefits of these technologies were largely eclipsed by their harmful misuse. It’s more important than ever to understand these risks and to support efforts that promote responsible use of AI in democratic contexts.”

Dr. Inga Kristina Trauthig

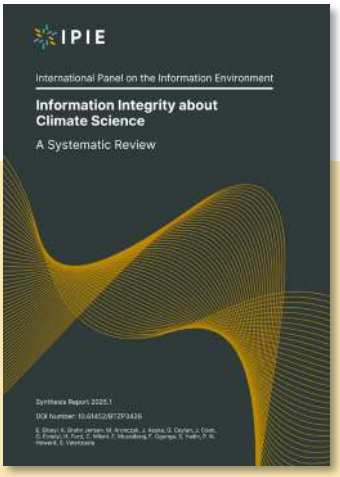
Consulting Scientist, Science and Methodology Committee, IPIE; Research Assistant Professor, Florida International University

INFORMATION INTEGRITY ABOUT CLIMATE SCIENCE



About the Information Integrity & Climate Science Panel

Despite the severity of the threat posed by climate change, public understanding of it is being undermined by coordinated information operations spread through social media. These attacks erode trust in both scientific institutions and the political bodies needed to act on climate evidence. The IPIE's Scientific Panel on Information Integrity about Climate Science addressed this by reviewing the latest research on how media and communication shape public understanding of climate change. It then translated these findings into practical recommendations for policymakers, technology platforms, and other stakeholders to better protect climate science and support informed public debate.

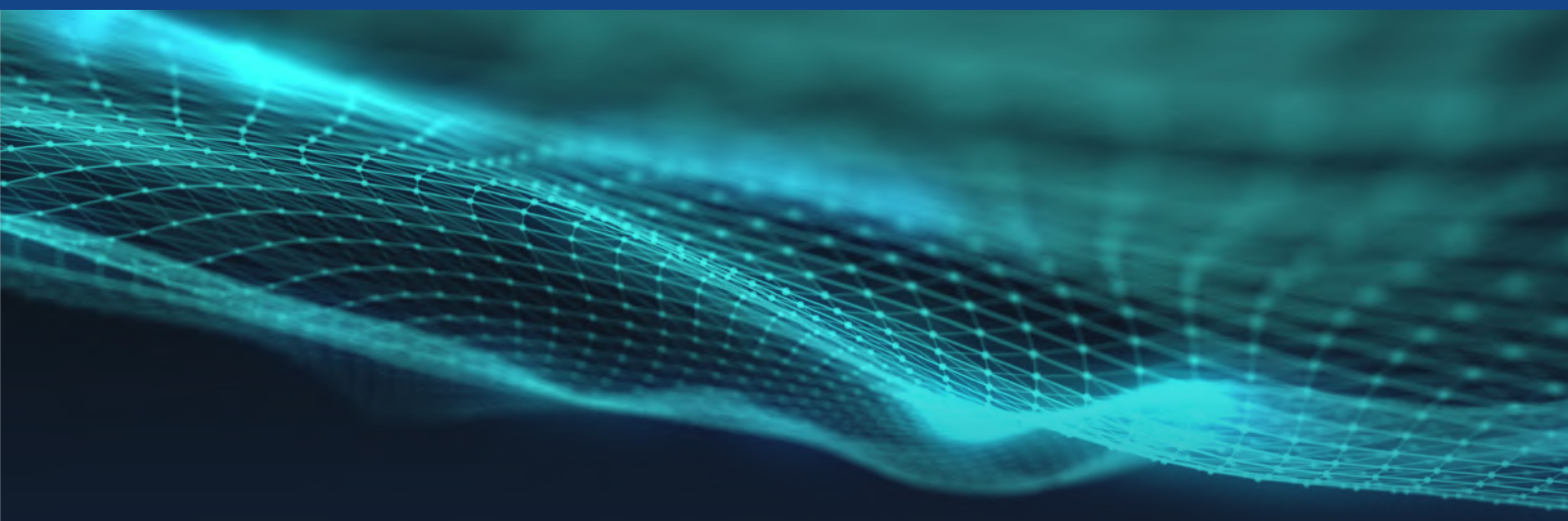


PUBLISHING A LANDMARK REVIEW

The Panel published Information Integrity about Climate Science: A Systematic Review in February 2025. This landmark report synthesized hundreds of studies to chart how information integrity threats, ranging from organized denial networks to misleading narratives about renewable solutions, continue to undermine trust and delay policy progress.

INFORMING THE GLOBAL AGENDA AT COP30

At COP30 in Belém, information integrity rose to the top of the climate policy conversation. The Panel's evidence and recommendations shaped high-level discussions, underscoring that public trust in science is foundational to implementing effective climate action. The IPIE became a founding member of the Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change and was co-author of the landmark international declaration, now endorsed by 26 countries and the EU, affirming shared commitments to protecting information integrity about climate science.



KEY FINDINGS

Powerful actors, including corporations, governments, and political parties, intentionally spread inaccurate or misleading narratives about anthropogenic climate change. These narratives circulate across digital, broadcast, and interpersonal communication channels. The result is a decline in public trust, diminished policy coordination, and a feedback loop between scientific denialism and political inaction.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Within just one month of publication, the report generated substantial global attention, featuring in 115 media articles and reaching an estimated audience of 219 million people.

The Guardian

"It is a major problem," said Dr Klaus Jensen, of the University of Copenhagen, who co-led the IPIE review. "If we don't have the right information available, how are we going to vote for the right causes and politicians, and how are politicians going to translate the clear evidence into the necessary action? Unfortunately, I think the [bad actors] are still very, very active, and probably have the upper hand now.

The Guardian, Climate misinformation turning crisis into catastrophe (June 19, 2025)

The Verge

"What emerges is a picture of strategic disruption—carefully designed to appear moderate, reasonable, and data-driven, while quietly obstructing action," IPIE says in its summary for policymakers. Delay tactics can be considered the "new denial" the report notes. It might manifest as inaccurate claims about renewable energy's impact on the environment or falsely blaming power outages on renewables.

The Verge, The new lies spreading about climate change (June 23, 2025)

About the IPIE's Scientific Panel on AI and Peacebuilding

AI is increasingly being applied to peacebuilding and conflict resolution, from analyzing conflict dynamics and predicting risks to supporting mediation and post-conflict reconciliation. But the same tools can also be used for violence and repression, raising real concerns about transparency, accountability and human rights. The Scientific Panel on AI and Peacebuilding is conducting rigorous, evidence-based research to properly weigh the opportunities against the risks.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND PEACEBUILDING

The Panel's first report highlights the most promising uses of AI for peacebuilding, based on the largest systematic review spanning peacebuilding, humanitarian response, AI ethics, and technology governance. Drawing on evidence from over 600 articles, it also sets out key safeguards for responsible use.

KEY FINDINGS

AI is already shaping conflict situations worldwide, both for good and for harm.

The Panel identified four promising peacebuilding uses of AI, including early warning and forecasting, inclusive digital dialogue, humanitarian crisis mapping, and reducing online polarization.

The same tools carry risks: AI can also be used for repression, surveillance, and eroding information integrity.

Responsible governance is essential to make the benefits outweigh the risks. Recommended actions include:

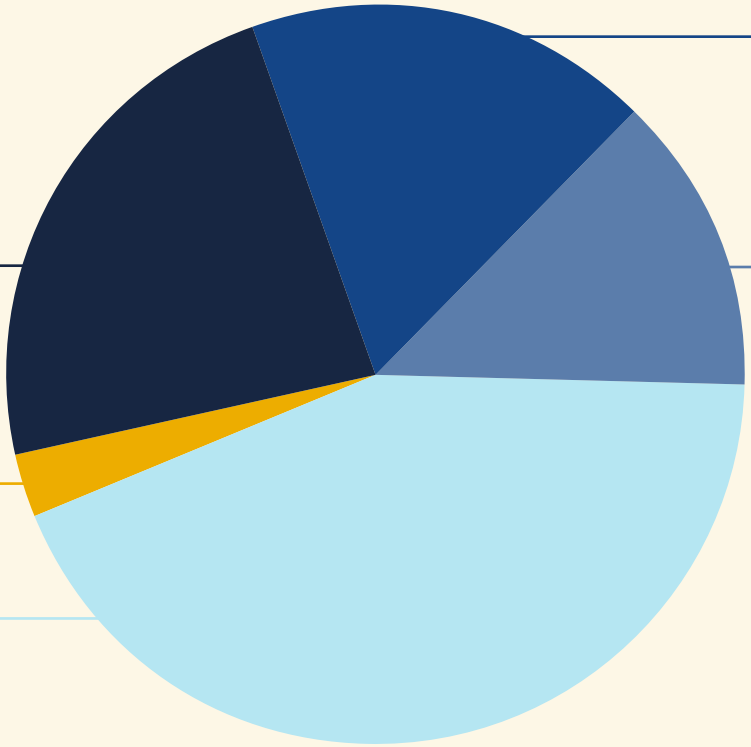
- Putting human rights and "do no harm" first in AI design and use
- Funding open, evidence-based research, including failures, not just successes
- Supporting smaller AI models built for local languages and contexts
- Ensuring transparency and accountability for tools that can be used for both good and harm
- Building stronger partnerships across peacebuilding, development and technology sectors

> "Even if human rights guide the design of AI, human intervention must play a central role in safeguarding its potential for good. This echoes the importance of locally generated data to ensure AI supports context-specific peace efforts. Local knowledge and methods in addressing data poverty and enabling data sovereignty in the Global South is essential to have grounded, inclusive, and locally informed approaches to AI in peacebuilding."

Professor Frederick Ogenga

Chair, Scientific Panel on AI and Peacebuilding, IPIE; Professor, Rongo University

Financial Summary



(CHF) AMOUNT RECEIVED

CHF 356,250.00 Oak Foundation

CHF 274,765.60 Heising Simons Foundation

CHF 203,600.00 Omidyar Network

CHF 668,730.25 Other Grants

CHF 40,101.51 Donations

LOOKING FORWARD 2026-2027



Child Protection and Social Media

The next scientific report from our Scientific Panel on Child Protection and Social Media will examine how platform design and monetization mechanisms contribute to online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The Panel will also engage policymakers and key stakeholders at various global summits, including the Second Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in the Philippines in November 2026.



Climate Science and Information Integrity

Our new Scientific Panel on Information Integrity and the Climate Transition will synthesize global research on how information environments shape public understanding of climate policy, examine the financial structures sustaining climate information integrity threats, and provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, regulators, and technology platforms.



Indexing the Information Environment

Our Indexing the Information Environment Panel will publish the foundational work for a first-of-its-kind index focused on political information environments. The conceptual framework for a new index will lay out the theoretical groundwork, followed by a data and gap analysis mapping what is needed to move from concept to implementation.



2026 Expert Survey

The IPIE's fourth annual Expert Survey will return in 2026, tracking how researchers around the world assess the health of the global information environment. It will build on the trends identified in the 2025 survey, offering funders, policymakers, and other stakeholders an updated benchmark.

> AI is not a neutral force. It reflects the inequalities of the world it was built in, and our work is to ensure that evidence, not assumption, drives how we design systems that are fair for everyone.

Professor Jen Schradie, Chair

Chair, Scientific Panel on AI and Economic Inclusion, IPIE; Digital Sociologist, Centre de Recherche sur les Inégalités, Sciences Po

IPIE

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