



IPIE
International Panel on the
Information Environment

Generative AI in Electoral Campaigns

Mapping Global Patterns

Summary for Policymakers 2025.1

SYNOPSIS

This Summary for Policymakers provides a high-level review of the findings of the IPIE Technical Paper, *The Role of Generative AI Use in 2024 Elections Worldwide* (TP2025.2). Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is being deployed in many ways during elections, ranging from the creation of deepfake video and audio messages, to sophisticated voter targeting. What are the implications of GenAI for election administration and voter participation around the world?

To understand the global trends, the IPIE set up a formal incident database to capture all instances of political GenAI usage in 2024 as reported in major news media. The database recorded all available information on who uses GenAI, how, and for what purpose.

Based on an analysis of an original data set of 215 incidents, covering all 50 countries holding competitive national elections in 2024, we summarize global trends in the use of GenAI for campaign communications, candidate electioneering, foreign influence operations, and voter turnout efforts.

We find that:

- (1) Fully four-fifths (80%) of the countries holding elections in 2024 had GenAI incidents.
- (2) The vast majority (90%) of incidents involved content creation, such as audio messages, images, videos, and social media posts.
- (3) Almost half of the incidents have no known source (46%), a quarter were produced by political candidates and parties (25%), a fifth were produced by foreign actors (20%), and the remainder came from other sources (9%).
- (4) More than two-thirds (69%) of the incidents were described as having a harmful role in the election.

The main Technical Paper discusses methodology, techniques for aggregating observations from comparative contexts, and the limitations of incident database analysis.

This assessment delivers the first global, data-driven analysis of its kind, designed to inform policy recommendations that enhance election administration, foster trust in electoral processes, and boost voter turnout.

GenAI technologies are already shaping political life. To guide responsible innovation and governance, technology designers and policymakers must understand both the positive applications and the potential harm these systems introduce.

INTRODUCTION

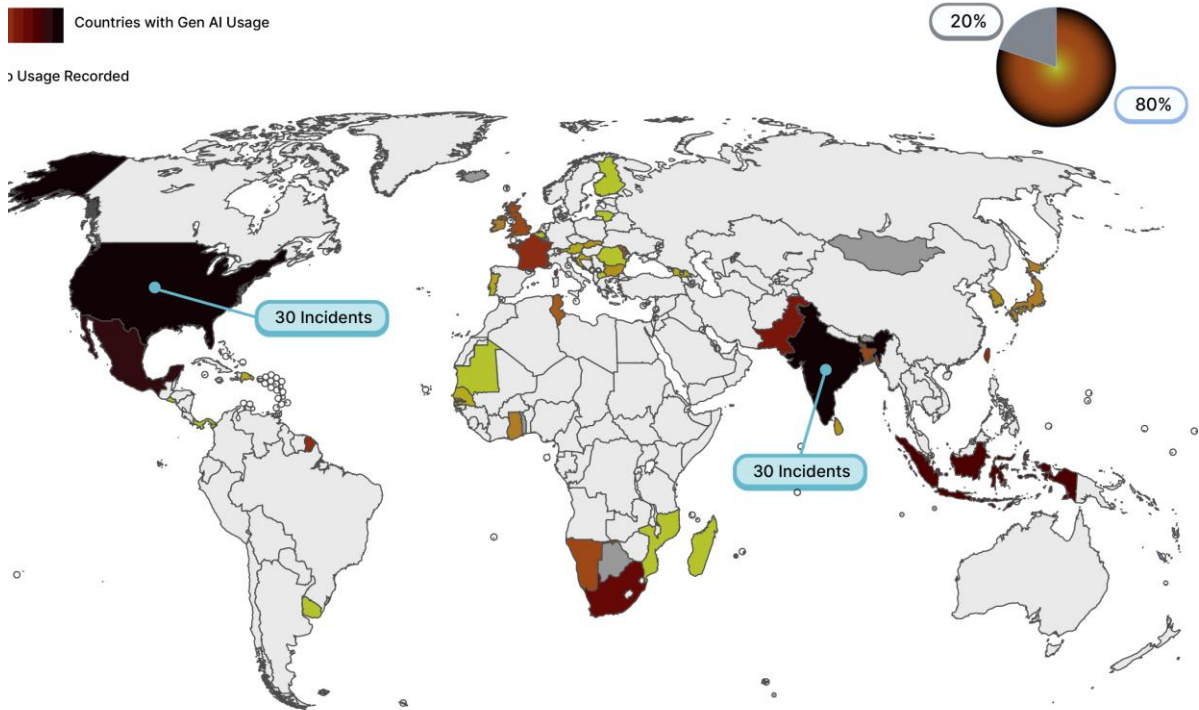
Generative AI is already an important part of modern political communication, especially during elections [1]. In 2024, more than half the world’s population voted in national elections [2]. Across these elections, GenAI tools were used to influence voters, spread falsehoods, and disrupt democratic processes. Their impact is no longer speculative or theoretical—it is observable and global.

How is GenAI being used to influence elections, and by whom? To answer this question, we built the first open-source global database of GenAI incidents during elections. The database covers 50 countries with competitive national votes in 2024, and this analysis is based on 215 recorded cases, examined by a three-person coding team with high inter-coder reliability scores and percentage agreement, and accompanied by external review and proofing processes.

For additional notes on the methodology, please see the IPIE Technical Paper, *The Role of Generative AI Use in 2024 Elections Worldwide (TP2025.2)* [3]. Figure 1 presents a visualization of where GenAI was used in 2024 elections. There were fully 50 countries that held competitive elections—as defined by well accepted expert rankings [4], [5], [6].

Our findings should be used to inform both technology design and public policy oversight. GenAI is being widely used—often deceptively—by political actors, foreign entities, and unknown sources. This Summary for Policymakers distills the most consequential trends from the data and offers grounded insights to guide electoral safeguards and policy responses.

Figure 1. Global Distribution of GenAI Usage in 2024 Elections



Source: IPIE calculations based on data collected 10-12-2024 to 17-02-2025.

Note: For additional information on sampling and methodology, see the IPIE Technical Paper, *The Role of Generative AI Use in 2024 Elections Worldwide (TP2025.2)*. Some instances of GenAI may surface after the collection period, although most will have been reported in this date range.

FINDING 1: GEN-AI IS INVOLVED IN MOST ELECTIONS

KEY FINDING

In 2024, 80% of election-running countries experienced GenAI incidents—most notably in the USA and India.

The vast majority (80%) of countries that held competitive national elections in 2024 experienced GenAI use during the campaign period. Within that group of countries, the IPIE recorded ten or more GenAI incidents in eight countries—with the most incidents occurring in India (30 incidents) and the USA (30 incidents).

In some countries, GenAI use particularly stood out. There are only a few recorded GenAI instances in Romania, for example. However, it was employed as part of a coordinated effort to degrade the country’s national election—ultimately leading to the annulment of the presidential election results [7]. As the International Foundation for Electoral Systems explains: “the [Romanian constitutional] court’s decision highlighted the impact of the extensive deployment of artificial intelligence (AI), automated systems, and coordinated information integrity campaigns on electoral integrity, among other findings of interference” [8]. Thus, it is

crucial to consider the specific nature of GenAI use in electoral campaigning and the context in which it is employed.

At this point, in most countries where competitive elections are run, campaign communications, candidate electioneering, foreign influence operations, and voter turnout efforts are all in some way shaped by GenAI.

FINDING 2: GEN-AI IS PRIMARILY USED FOR CONTENT PRODUCTION

KEY FINDING

About 90% of incidents involved GenAI-generated content like audio, images, videos, and social media posts.

GenAI is most often used for content creation. In 90% of recorded incidents, GenAI produced audio messages, images, videos, or text. These tools enable the rapid creation of realistic and misleading content, which can be distributed at scale and with precision.

In many cases, GenAI is also deployed in systems that target specific audiences with customized messages. These integrated uses are more sophisticated than simple content generation and often support broader influence operations. In Bangladesh, a synthetic video circulated on election day falsely showed a candidate for Assembly, Abdullah Nahid Nigar, announcing her withdrawal from the race [9], [10]. The video quickly spread across social media platforms. In Taiwan, an AI-manipulated video featured a woman making false personal claims about a leading presidential candidate [11]. In Namibia, deepfake audio used voice-cloning tools to fabricate statements by U.S. President Joe Biden in support of local political parties [12].

These examples reveal how GenAI enables actors to shape political narratives, impersonate public figures, and manipulate public discourse. Rather than serving as isolated content tools, GenAI systems increasingly operate within coordinated communication strategies. They pair content creation with targeted distribution to maximize reach and impact.

FINDING 3: MOST GEN-AI USERS ARE UNKNOWN

KEY FINDING

Nearly half of incidents had unknown sources, 25% came from political candidates or parties, and 20% from foreign actors.

Across the data set, the source behind GenAI-generated content is often unknown. In 46% of cases, the origin could not be traced. Political candidates and parties accounted for 25%, followed by foreign actors at 20%, and other groups—such as lobbyists, civic organizations, or individual citizens—at 9%.

In cases where the source is untraceable, a large majority (79%) involve suspected political manipulation. One notable example occurred in the Republic of Ireland, where approximately 150 anonymous template accounts on X, formerly known as Twitter, shared GenAI-generated content aimed at influencing the national election. The accounts appeared coordinated but lacked identifiable attribution [13].

Actors may choose to conceal their identity for different reasons. In cases of foreign interference or disinformation campaigns, remaining anonymous helps to avoid sanctions or public scrutiny. Visibility would compromise their influence and increase the risk of platform bans. Even when the intent is less harmful, actors may still hide their involvement to preserve the perceived authenticity of a message. For instance, political candidates have hired consultants to create GenAI-generated audio content in local dialects. These materials aim to reach underrepresented or less literate populations. While the content may serve civic outreach, disclosure of the origin could reduce its persuasive power.

Anonymity, whether for malign or strategic purposes, complicates attribution, accountability, and platform governance. As GenAI tools become more accessible, the use of untraceable sources presents growing challenges for transparency in political communication. Strengthening detection, disclosure standards, and oversight mechanisms will be critical in addressing this risk.

FINDING 4: MOST GEN-AI APPLICATIONS HAVE HARMFUL USES IN ELECTIONS

KEY FINDING

More than two-thirds of incidents (69%) were characterized as having played a detrimental role in the electoral process.

Each instance of GenAI use recorded in the database was categorized as either beneficial, harmful, or unclear in its possible electoral implications. Positive examples included the use of GenAI for political messaging, policy explanation, or language translation. By contrast, harmful uses involved hostile impersonation, automated disinformation, or bot-driven amplification of low-quality content. Some uses—such as AI-generated audio for minor or comedic purposes—were coded as unclear. More than two thirds (69%) of recorded incidents were found to have played a harmful role in the context of an election.

Among the cases attributed to foreign actors—comprising 20% of all recorded sources—every reported use of GenAI served harmful purposes. This reflects a consistent interest among foreign entities in interfering with electoral processes or manipulating voter perceptions. For example, ahead of the Solomon Islands election, researchers identified apparent coordination between Russian and Chinese actors [14]. This included AI-generated voice content disseminated through a pro-Chinese Communist Party channel on a platform analogous to YouTube.

Despite these threats, GenAI was also used constructively. Among national political parties and candidates, 38% of reported uses were categorized as beneficial. About 16% of incidents were used for civic outreach or accessibility. Political parties used GenAI to engage underserved voters or simplify communications. In Japan, for instance, candidates employed GenAI-powered chatbots to answer constituent questions and engage voters [15]. These examples suggest that GenAI tools, when used transparently and responsibly, may help to improve access to political information and support more inclusive campaigning, particularly among communities that have historically been underserved.

However, identifying these positive cases was difficult due to poor transparency and limited reporting. Recognizing both the risks and opportunities of GenAI is essential for shaping effective policy responses and maintaining election integrity.

CONCLUSION

This Summary for Policymakers presents the first global evidence base on how Generative AI (GenAI) influenced competitive national elections in 2024. GenAI was used in 80% of countries analyzed, based on a database covering 215 incidents from across 50 competitive national elections.

The primary function of GenAI was the creation of synthetic content—especially deepfake videos, audio, and social media posts. Almost half of all GenAI incidents had no identifiable author, producer, or organization behind the content. When attribution was possible, domestic political actors accounted for 25% of uses, and foreign entities for 20%. Over two-thirds of all GenAI incidents sought to harm election integrity.

Additional findings and methodology notes are available in the full Technical Paper, *The Role of Generative AI Use in 2024 Elections Worldwide* (TP2025.2).

GenAI amplifies the speed of content production and the attractiveness of the content itself. It can be used to produce positive, accurate, or inspiring content, but is rarely used this way. Moreover, it is always part of a larger technology and communications toolkit, so if there is to be public policy oversight, any guidelines should not only cover the use of GenAI in elections, but also other harmful aspects of campaign communications.

Given the prevalence of GenAI use around the world, voters are regularly in situations in which they can hardly (or not at all) determine if the content they see online is generated by AI or not. It is therefore important to strengthen voters' abilities to do so. This can be achieved by establishing mandatory disclosure. Political campaigners relying on GenAI are well advised to declare this. Companies could make sure to police more strictly if AI content on their platforms is branded as such. These steps could help to increase citizens' trust and ability to inform themselves in a reliable manner.

Many uses of GenAI remain difficult to detect. Techniques like content proliferation and hypertargeting often leave minimal public traces and are underreported. Their limited visibility presents significant challenges for researchers and regulators seeking to assess the full scope of AI-driven manipulation. Addressing this gap will require improved detection methods and sustained collaboration between digital platforms and independent research organizations.

Given that so much of the actual use is content related, and the reported outcomes are harmful, policy interventions should begin with transparency standards. Ad libraries for AI-generated election-related content, traceable evidence, and public warnings about foreign interference may help to address the concerning global trends. Content produced by GenAI for campaign use during elections should clearly disclose its GenAI origins to voters, alongside the disclosures of campaign sponsorship that are required by most election administration systems in democracies. Any meaningful public policy oversight must be tied to real data access and independent monitoring capacity.

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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, including AI bias, algorithmic manipulation, and disinformation. 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 reports.

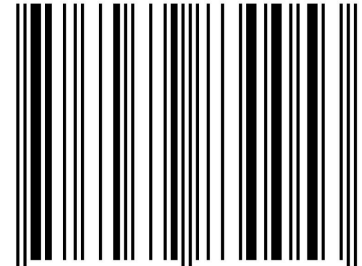
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