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COMMITTEE ON JURIDICAL AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS

COURSE ON DIGITAL DIPLOMACY: THE ROLE OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

[February 15, 2024]

GLOSSARY AND COURSE MATERIALS

(Prepared by the Department for Effective Public Management at the request
of the Chair of the CAJP)

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GLOSSARY

Disclaimer: The following definitions are presented in alphabetical order as general description of some of the terms used in the realm of Digital Transformation. The definitions are not OAS definitions or endorsements of them. These definitions come from a variety of sources listed below.

Algorithmic Models: Algorithmic models refers to defining the intent of algorithms to analyze data and make predictions. Under an algorithmic model, predictions inform decisions, and the decisions have an impact on governments, organizations, policies, services, and people. Algorithms usage trends, show that algorithms are supplementing or replacing decision-making previously undertaken by humans.

Algorithmic Transparency: Algorithmic transparency is a practice that seeks to promote opening information about the data sources of an algorithm, the logic of the algorithm, and the groups that may be impacted by it, all with the intent to prevent algorithm bias and discrimination.

Artificial Intelligence: Artificial Intelligence (AI) encompasses a diverse array of sciences, theories, and techniques aimed at replicating human cognitive abilities within machines. Its scope ranges from systems capable of tackling complex tasks traditionally performed by humans to algorithms that excel in specific domains, such as natural language processing, computer vision, and game-playing. While some classify AI as "strong" or "weak" depending on its ability to independently contextualize diverse problems, AI's essence lies in its capacity to simulate human-like thinking and learning processes. Find the Generative AI term definition in this listing, in alphabetical order.

Connectivity: Connectivity refers to the ability of hardware or software devices to communicate effectively with other devices. In a more general perspective, connectivity refers to the degree of accessibility of any given jurisdiction to internet. It encompasses the capability of devices to establish and maintain connections for the transfer of data. This term is often associated with network connections, including bridges, routers, switches, gateways, and backbone networks. However, it can also refer to various other forms of connections, such as linking a home or office to the Internet or establishing connections between digital devices like cameras, computers, and printers. Good connectivity indicates seamless interaction among devices, enabling efficient data exchange, whereas poor connectivity implies limitations in compatibility or functionality between devices.

Cybersecurity: Cybersecurity encompasses the strategies and measures aimed at preventing damage to, protecting, and restoring computers, electronic communications systems, and related services. Its primary objectives are to ensure the availability, integrity, authentication, confidentiality, and non-repudiation of information. In the modern digital landscape where virtually all aspects of daily life rely on technology, cybersecurity plays a critical role in safeguarding networks, devices, and data from unauthorized access and criminal exploitation. This involves practices such as securing communication channels, defending against cyberattacks, and implementing robust authentication mechanisms.

Data Governance: Data governance refers to the systematic management of an organization's data assets to promote availability, quality, integrity, and security. It involves the establishment and enforcement of policies, procedures, and standards for effectively managing structured and unstructured information. Key elements include identifying data owners, implementing security measures, defining intended data uses, and prioritizing investments to support business needs.

Digital Citizenship: Digital citizenship denotes active engagement and positive contribution to online communities and digital society. Given the pivotal role of information and communication technologies in societal participation and development, digital citizenship holds significant importance. It involves effectively participating in various digital activities, such as creating content, socializing, learning, researching, or playing games, with a social or political purpose or consequence. Digital citizenship operates alongside traditional forms of democratic citizenship, such as face-to-face debates, volunteering, or political activism. It necessitates a range of digital competencies, including online consumer awareness, critical evaluation of information sources, and knowledge of internet privacy and security issues. Effective digital citizenship relies on a combination of digital and general citizenship competencies.

Digital Diplomacy: Digital diplomacy, also known as virtual diplomacy, cyber diplomacy, or e-diplomacy, encompasses the use of digital technologies in diplomatic activities, reflecting a shift in how diplomacy is conducted and perceived. It includes practices such as online communication, social media engagement, and the integration of digital tools into traditional diplomatic tasks like negotiations and information sharing.

Digital Divide: The digital divide delineates the gap between those with access to modern information and communication technology (ICT) and those without. It encompasses disparities among urban and rural communities, socioeconomic groups, and countries at different levels of economic development. Access to broadband (connectivity) is a critical factor, with issues like limited speeds and equipment exacerbating inequalities. The divide manifests in three main forms: the gender gap, where women, especially in developing nations, face limited connectivity compared to men; the social gap, which creates disparities between connected and non-connected groups; and the universal access gap, affecting individuals with disabilities and those lacking digital literacy or adequate infrastructure. Bridging the digital divide requires addressing not only access issues but also promoting digital literacy and skills development for equitable participation in the digital age.

Digital Economy: Digital economy refers to the utilization of information technology to create, market, and consume goods and services for profit. It encompasses various sectors such as digital banking, e-commerce, virtual education, smartphone apps, and collaboration platforms. This economic paradigm relies on the global network enabled by information and communications technologies like the internet, mobile devices, and sensor networks. It includes a wide range of activities such as communication, financial transactions, education, entertainment, and business conducted through digital devices.

Digital Ecosystem: A digital ecosystem is a complex network involving individuals, businesses, and systems that interact through technology. Unlike traditional business ecosystems, digital ecosystems leverage physical layers (devices), information layers (data), and application layers (apps). This involves not only collecting customer data but also using technology to create new products, deliver services, and enhance customer experiences. The distinguishing feature of digital ecosystems is their ability to integrate these layers seamlessly, enabling interactions among users to occur continuously and across various channels. Analogous to biological ecosystems, digital ecosystems exhibit self-organizing, scalable, and sustainable behaviors, where all components interact and contribute to the ecosystem's overall functioning.

Digital Government: Digital government refers to the strategic use of ICTs by governments to uphold good governance principles and accomplish policy objectives; including providing government

services to citizens in a digital format. This concept signifies a fundamental change in the approach of governments worldwide, shifting from traditional administrative methods to leveraging ICTs (electronic government) for improved public service delivery, data-driven decision-making, evidence-based policymaking, enhanced accountability, and transparency, and fostering public trust. It represents a transformative approach to governance that harnesses the power of technology to advance government functions and better serve citizens.

Digital Inclusion: Digital inclusion refers to the effort to ensure that everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, can access, use, and benefit from the digital world. It encompasses making digital technologies accessible and affordable, providing training and support, and ensuring that marginalized groups are not left behind.

Digital Infrastructure: Digital infrastructure encompasses the foundational technological systems and networks (including human capital) essential for delivering digital services and applications. This includes hardware, software, and communication technologies that facilitate data storage, processing, and transmission over the internet; as well as he talent to accomplish it. It encompasses various components such as data centers, fiber infrastructure, server hardware, personnel, IT virtualization and infrastructure software, operating systems, and more, collectively enabling the delivery of digital goods, products, and services.

Digital Literacy: Digital literacy refers to the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate and thrive in a society where communication and information access are predominantly mediated through digital technologies such as internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices. It encompasses the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information safely and appropriately using digital tools. Digital literacy is crucial for employment, entrepreneurship, and participation in modern society. It incorporates competencies known as computer literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy, and media literacy.

Digital Rights: Digital rights extend the principles of universal human rights into digital spaces, advocating for inclusive access to the internet and responsible digital usage as a shared human asset. These rights encompass freedom of expression, access to information, online safety, privacy, and non-discrimination, ensuring equal participation and protection in the digital realm. They prioritize human-centered values, empowering individuals over corporate interests and promoting equitable access and participation.

Digital Security: Digital security involves protecting online identity, data, and assets through various resources such as web services, antivirus software, biometrics, and secured personal devices. It focuses on the economic and social aspects of cybersecurity, promoting trust and maximizing opportunities in the digital realm.

Digital Signature: Also known as e-Signature is a specific type of electronic signature that relies on public-key cryptography to support identity authentication and provide data and transaction integrity. It is used as a means to reach a goal of providing irrefutable evidence that a specific digital object originated from a specific individual and has not been altered. Digital signatures are used to support several security functions. However, the focus of this technology profile is on digital signatures used to protect the integrity and authenticity of documents, such as forms, agreements or contracts, and to demonstrate intent to sign.

Digital Transformation: Digital transformation refers to the process of fundamentally rewiring an organization to create value through the continuous deployment of technology at scale. It adopts a customer-driven, digital-first approach across all aspects of business, including business models, customer experiences, processes, and operations. Utilizing technologies such as AI, automation, hybrid cloud, and data leverage, digital transformation aims to drive intelligent workflows, faster decision-making, and real-time responses to market disruptions.

Digital Government Transformation: resembles the digital transformation definition presented above, but specifically geared to public administrations at national or subnational levels. In the public sphere, digital transformation also refers to the overall transformation not only of organizations, businesses, or governments, but to society as a whole, through digital means.

Emerging Technologies: Emerging technologies denote new and innovative technologies currently under development, testing, or recently introduced to the market, with the potential to significantly impact society and the economy. These technologies share common characteristics: they offer high growth potential for individuals and organizations, face uncertainty due to their novelty, evolve rapidly with continuous advancements, integrate various disciplines, and have the capacity to disrupt traditional industries and methods. Terms such as new technologies or disruptive technologies are often use to emulate the same. The following are some examples of emerging, new, and disruptive technologies: AI, Internet of Things (IoT), ML, blockchain, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), open data, and Virtual Reality (VR).

FinTech: FinTech, short for financial technology, encompasses a broad range of activities that utilize innovation and technological developments to design, offer, and deliver financial products and services. It includes software, mobile applications, and other technologies aimed at enhancing and automating traditional finance for both businesses and consumers. Fintech innovations span from simple mobile payment apps to intricate blockchain networks facilitating encrypted transactions.

Generative AI: Generative AI refers to deep-learning algorithmic models trained on extensive datasets capable of self-producing new content resembling the original data while introducing variations. These models utilize unsupervised and semi-supervised techniques to generate realistic text, images, audio, or other content types, aiming to create original artifacts that closely emulate real-world material. Examples of generative AI models include ChatGPT, DALL·E, StyleGAN, and MuseNet.

Government data: government data includes, but is not limited to, data held by national, regional, local, and city governments, international governmental bodies, and other types of institutions in the wider public sector. The term government data could also apply to data created for governments by external organizations, and data of significant benefit to the public that is held by external organizations and related to government programs and services.

GovTech: GovTech is another term often used when referring to digital government and refers to the convergence of "Government" and "Technology," encompassing the application of cutting-edge technologies in the public sector to enhance governmental services, citizen engagement, and administrative efficiency. This concept spans a wide array of specific applications and solutions tailored to governmental operations. Examples of GovTech include the development of digital platforms for public service delivery, mobile applications for government interaction, electronic voting systems, and online citizen engagement tools.

ICTs: ICTs, short for Information and Communication Technologies, constitute a comprehensive term encompassing all communication technologies, including but not limited to the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, computers, software, middleware, videoconferencing, social networking platforms, and other media applications and services. These technologies facilitate users in accessing, retrieving, storing, transmitting, and manipulating information in digital formats. ICTs also denote the convergence of media technologies such as audio-visual and telephone networks with computer networks, often facilitated through unified cabling or link systems for signal distribution and management.

Interoperability: Interoperability refers to the seamless sharing of resources between different systems, whether through software, hardware, or networks. It enables the exchange and utilization of data among various components or machines, facilitating coordinated access, integration, and cooperation across organizational and geographical boundaries.

Machine learning: Machine Learning (ML) is a subset of AI that focuses on developing algorithms capable of learning from data and improving performance over time without explicit programming. ML methods include supervised learning, where models are trained on labeled data, unsupervised learning, which identifies patterns in unlabeled data, and reinforcement learning, which trains models through trial and error with a reward system. Deep learning, an advanced ML technique, utilizes neural networks to analyze complex data and make predictions autonomously.

New Technologies: new technologies is another concept often used when referring to emerging technologies, and vice versa. For the purpose of this glossary the definition presented above under emerging technologies applies for emerging technologies alike.

Open Data: Open data is digital data that is made available with the technical and legal characteristics necessary for it to be freely used, reused, and redistributed by anyone, anytime, anywhere. Open data refers to structured databases that are publicly available for download and can be reused under specific licensing conditions. Open data enables free access, use, modification, and sharing by anyone for any purpose, typically subject to requirements for attribution and/or share-alike. Legally, open data must be available under an open license allowing unrestricted access, reuse, and redistribution.

Smart Government: Smart Government encompasses the transformation of traditional governmental processes and services through the integration of disruptive technologies such as AI, Internet of Things (IoT), ML, blockchain, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), open data, and Virtual Reality (VR). It involves mostly the development of innovative processes under more strict interoperability frameworks, in collaboration with stakeholders. Smart Government aims to improve government efficiency and performance for enhancing citizen experiences and transforming service delivery in the public sector.

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2022: Strengthening Democracy Resolution **AG/RES. 2989 (LII-O/22)**: Section Open, digital, inclusive, and transparent government.

2021: Strengthening Democracy Resolution **AG/RES. 2975 (LI-O/21)**: Section Open, digital, inclusive, and transparent government.

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2022: Ministerial Declaration of Lima: ENG

2021: Panama City Commitment: ENG

2020: Ministerial Declaration of San José: ENG

2019: Buenos Aires Commitment: ENG

2018: Ministerial Declaration of Panama: ENG