

GLOBAL AFRICA

Call for papers: issue 8

DIGITAL ECONOMY IN AFRICA

Issue 8 of Global Africa will focus on the Digital Economy driven by three objectives:

Firstly, the issue seeks to question the current reality of the digital economy in Africa, with a view to understanding its scope and depth by asking the following questions: what does the digital economy represent for African economies and societies and for the global economy? What is Africa's share in the global digital economy? Who are the players in the global digital economy and what do they represent for African economies and the economy? What are the current orientations and strategies of African states and organizations when it comes to the digital economy?

Secondly, the issue examines the strategies that underpin the digital economy in Africa from ontological, epistemological and axiological issues relevant to Africa - varied its identities, cultures and ambitions. In this regard, the issue grapples with question such as how is African research thinking about the development of the digital economy on the continent and beyond? How is African thought positioned in the global discussion on the digital economy? What are scholars in the humanities and the social sciences in Africa thinking about the current reality and direction of the digital economy in Africa? What are the psychological, social, cultural and environmental impacts of the digital economy in Africa?

Lastly, the issue considers possible and desirable directions of the digital economy in Africa with a focus on what are the strategies for a positive African digital economy, one that genuinely benefits the people of Africa? What could form the basis of African approaches to, and priorities for the digital economy? What are the challenges (infrastructural, regulation, skills and capacities, financing, etc.) for the development of the digital economy in Africa? Which sectors, if any, should be prioritized (financing, green technologies, educational technologies and e-learning, agritech, etc.)?

This special issue will publish interdisciplinary articles on African perceptions, receptions and conceptions of the evolving digital economy. An important focus of the issue is how African economies receive, adapt and shape economic paradigms on the one hand, and if and how they adopt strategies informed by African research to address the challenges and opportunities of the digital economy, on the other hand.

GLOBAL AFRICA

Contributions examining Africa's position vis-à-vis the positive or negative consequences of the digital economy on African societies, ecosystems and social groups are welcome. Beyond the impacts of the digital economy on countries in Africa and societies of the Global Africa, contributions should also examine the postures, perceptions and responses of African publics state actors, and civil societies to the phenomena of the digital economy.

Themes:

- 1. Survey of the digital economy: research data on statistics on the contribution of the digital economy to GDP at national level, the reach of the digital economy in Africa to the global economy, digital strategies of African and Global African states, RECs (regional economic communities) continental structures.**

This theme focuses on analyzing the current state of the digital economy in Africa drawing on statistics and other research dataset to understand the contribution of the digital economy to the African economies. This assessment will be made regarding the digital strategies of African states, the RECs and the AU, integrating a comparative dimension between the different regions in Africa.

- 2. Epistemological, ethical and sovereignty issues around the digital economy in Africa**

This theme is about the choices made by African actors (such as states, innovators, the general public etc) in the digital economy with regards to values, ideological orientations, psychological, social and cultural risks presented by the digital economy. It also examines how these choices are reflected in the digital economy strategies of states, RECs and the AU.

- 3. Legal, institutional, governance and regulatory questions around the digital economy in Africa**

This theme is devoted to the standards, institutions, mechanisms and legal instruments put in place at state, REC and AU levels to govern and regulate the digital economy and the interpretation of these instruments in terms of the ethical and philosophical stakes that they carry for Africa.

- 4. Digital economy in Africa and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**

With the coming into effect of the African Continental Free Trade (AfCFTA) the digital economy, and e-commerce in particular, is becoming a topical issue on the continent. What is the place of the digital economy in the AfCFTA zone and what mechanisms exist or should be put in place to ensure that the digital divide between states/regions of the continent, or within states (between capital cities and provinces) or between urban and rural areas, do not accentuate or worsen current inequalities? How do we think the digital economy in the context of the continental free trade? What analysis, in this context, can be made of the inescapable presence of international private technological powers in Africa (GAFAM, BATX...) and the influence of non-African states?

GLOBAL AFRICA

5. Digitizing informal economies: the digital economy and the reality of the informal economy in Africa

The so-called “informal” economy occupies an important place in production and social reproduction in Africa. Analyses of how this reality relates to the digital economy is an essential part of this theme. Issues of taxation and financing of the economy, control of economic flows through the digital economy, and the control of working conditions in the digital economy are crucial to the theme.

6. Talents, skills and industries in Africa's digital economy

Industry, like all other sectors of the economy, is strongly impacted by digital technology, which opens new opportunities as well as bringing new risks. The so-called Industry 4.0 refers both to the digitization of traditional industries (including AI and traditional industrial infrastructures) and to the emergence of a digital industry (digital infrastructures and digital industrial products). This industry, and the entities that support and develop it, are undergoing profound and lasting change. The skills and talents on which this new industry feeds require new education and training strategies, which are real challenges for Africa.

Moreover, the new forms, conditions and models of work and work organization in the digital economy can undermine the rights and living conditions of workers. Development strategies for the digital economy have to be conceived in the light of these major challenges.

7. Banking, finance and money in the digital economy

The new realities brought about by e-banking, electronic money, including crypto-currency, and digital finance are unavoidable in Africa. Analyzing their scope, their potential contribution to the economy, and the challenges they pose to sovereignty and accountability is essential. This entails assessing the African states, the RECs and the AU in terms of their strategies and their state of readiness in the face of internal weaknesses and external threats to, and posed by the digital economy to Africa.

Submission schedule

Deadline for submissions of first draft of articles: June 30, 2024

Deadline for submission of final draft of articles: August 30, 2024

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GLOBAL AFRICA

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GLOBAL AFRICA

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