



PROBLEMS OF PROTESTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

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Received: 28 th February 2026 Accepted: 26 th March 2026	This article analyzes the issues of protecting human rights and freedoms in the digital world. The rapid development of modern information and communication technologies creates significant opportunities, but also generates new risks and challenges. In particular, issues such as cybercrime, violations of personal data privacy, digital surveillance, and ethical concerns related to artificial intelligence are examined. The article explores these problems based on the experience of Uzbekistan and international practices, and proposes possible solutions.

Keywords: digital rights, human rights, cybersecurity, personal data, artificial intelligence, digital society, information security, surveillance, opportunities, communication, modern information

INTRODUCTION

In the XXI st century, humanity has entered an unprecedented era of digital development. Modern information and communication technologies cover all aspects of our lives, creating enormous conveniences for humans. At the same time, the issue of reliable protection of human rights and freedoms in the digital world is becoming urgent. After all, today the digital revolution has become one of the most important human rights issues for the whole world - along with its undoubted achievements, it is undeniable that there are also serious risks.

States and international organizations are increasingly recognizing the need for a legal order in the digital sphere. The UN Human Rights Council has officially recognized the right to free access to the Internet as an integral part of human rights. [1]. This has shaped the concept of digital rights, which refers to the online protection of traditional rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression, privacy, and access to information. For example, some countries are even considering access to the Internet as a constitutional right. The transboundary nature of digital rights increases the importance of global cooperation and universal norms.

Threats to rights and freedoms in the digital space are manifested in various forms. In particular, the increase in hate speech, defamation and cyberbullying on the Internet is observed to have real negative consequences for society. Online threats have a particularly strong impact on vulnerable groups such as women and national and ethnic minorities.[2]. At the same time, flows of false information pose a threat to social stability and bury the truth under the guise of "fake news". Technologically, the "dark" part of

cyberspace is creating new risks such as the illegal collection of personal data, total surveillance and cybercrime. All this is a serious challenge to the concept of protecting human rights in the digital age.

As Uzbekistan moves towards a digital society, global challenges in this area are becoming more apparent at the national level. As the e-government system, interactive public services, and information infrastructure are being introduced in our country, protecting citizens' digital rights and interests has become a priority. In particular, the Law "On Personal Data" adopted in 2019 and the "Digital Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy are important initiatives aimed at ensuring privacy and information security. At the same time, experts note that while digital technologies are creating new opportunities on the one hand, they are also creating new threats and problems on the other. [3]. Therefore, improving digital legal culture, that is, developing skills in society to use technologies in accordance with legal and ethical standards, remains a requirement today.

The rapid development of digital technologies is deeply embedded in all aspects of modern society. The Internet, artificial intelligence and other modern information and communication technologies, on the one hand, create new opportunities for ensuring human rights and freedoms, and on the other hand, they pose unprecedented new threats and challenges to them. [4].

Indeed, in the digital world, the concept of human rights is taking on a new meaning: traditional rights and freedoms must now also be applied and protected in the online space. The UN resolutions of 2013 emphasized that "offline" rights should also be fully implemented in the "online" space.[5]. In this sense, freedom of access



to the Internet is recognized as one of the fundamental rights in democratic societies, for example, it is not without reason that in 2009 the French Constitutional Council considered the possibility of accessing the Internet at the level of a constitutional right.

Today, as a result of the digital revolution, the field of human rights protection is facing new challenges. The term "digital rights" (e.g., internet access, online privacy) has emerged in the international arena, which refers to the digital manifestations of human rights such as access to information, freedom of expression, and privacy. Digital technologies can also play a huge role in ensuring human dignity - for example, the online provision of public services, increased openness, and increased citizen engagement are among the positive aspects. In the case of Uzbekistan, in recent years, e-government systems have been introduced within the framework of the "Digital Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy, creating a number of facilities that serve to ensure citizens' rights.[6].

At the same time, the potential for abuse of these opportunities provided by digital technologies is also increasing. Technological threats are introducing new risks to the protection of individual rights in the modern world. In particular, issues such as information security and cybercrime, violation of personal data privacy, attempts at digital totalitarianism, inappropriate use of artificial intelligence, and the penetration of biometric control into public life are raising serious ethical issues. Below, these issues are discussed in the spirit of philosophical analysis, using the example of Uzbekistan and the world experience, and the main contradictions and solutions in the protection of human rights and freedoms in the digital era are considered.

Ensuring information security is also a pressing issue in Uzbekistan, and the legal framework for cybersecurity has been strengthened in recent years. The Law "On Personal Data" (URQ-547, 02.07.2019), adopted in 2019, established the basic principles for the processing and protection of personal data.[7]. This law obliges any organization and information system to obtain consent when collecting citizens' data and to take measures to protect it.

In particular, information security policies are being introduced in state bodies and the private sector, aiming to prevent the unauthorized dissemination of personal data. However, in practice, some problems have been observed during the implementation of this law - in particular, it is known that in 2021, access to some foreign social networks in Uzbekistan was temporarily restricted for non-compliance with the requirements of this law. This example shows how difficult a balance the

protection of rights in the digital era requires: on the one hand, it is necessary to ensure the inviolability of personal data, and on the other, not to undermine freedom of information.

In the international dimension of cybersecurity, states are increasingly cooperating to combat cybercrime and protect information infrastructure. In particular, international instruments such as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (2001) serve to coordinate interstate assistance in criminalizing and investigating cybercrime. Such initiatives aim to strengthen the legal framework for protecting human rights in the digital space.[8]. Because if cybersecurity is not ensured, citizens' privacy, property rights, and even the right to life (for example, cyberattacks on health systems) may be at risk.

Therefore, it is clear that the protection of human rights is now closely related to measures to ensure information security. With the advent of digital technologies in our lives, the concept of privacy requires new perspectives. The right to privacy, previously guaranteed only in the "real" world, is now increasingly violated in the virtual space. Modern technologies allow for the collection, analysis and use of huge amounts of data about people's lifestyles for various purposes. [9]. According to the report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights "The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age", the ability to monitor, analyze, and even predict and manipulate people's behavior with the help of big data (Big Data) and artificial intelligence has increased to an unprecedented extent. This poses a serious threat to human dignity, personal freedom and privacy if the use of such technologies continues without precautions.

In Uzbekistan's experience, in addition to the aforementioned 2019 Law on Personal Data, the right to privacy was also specifically strengthened in the new version of the Constitution (2023). The relevant articles of the Constitution guarantee the protection of citizens' correspondence, telephone conversations and other communications, as well as personal information, under the state's guarantee. Thus, the necessary foundations have been created in our country to ensure legal privacy. However, it is important to ensure that the laws in this area are implemented and do not lag behind technological progress. For example, to what extent are citizens able to protect their data in the online space? To what extent do various applications and sites comply with the rules of personal data protection? These questions are a practical issue, and at the same time they are inextricably linked to improving the information culture in society.



The next layer of complex problems in the digital world is the ethical and legal issues arising from the development of artificial intelligence (AI). Uzbekistan is also moving rapidly in this direction.[10]. On the one hand, artificial intelligence provides humanity with huge innovative solutions and conveniences - accurate diagnosis of diseases in medicine, autonomous control in transport, optimization in production, etc.

On the other hand, as AI systems increasingly replace the human factor in decision-making processes, questions arise about the concepts of responsibility and accountability. First, there is a risk of discrimination and unfairness in decisions made by AI algorithms. It is known that artificial intelligence systems are often trained on the basis of large amounts of historical data. If this data previously contained unequal treatment of certain groups (racial, ethnic, sexual, etc.), AI will "inherit" this bias and continue it in its decisions.

A 2018 report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) highlighted that decisions based on algorithmic analysis increase the risk of discrimination – for example, automated selection programs have been found to make negative judgments about women when reviewing resumes and applications, or algorithms used in sentencing courts to place people of color at higher risk.[11]. The principle of fairness is therefore becoming a matter of particular concern in areas where AI is used. This requires ensuring "algorithmic transparency" – that is, how AI makes decisions must be explained and monitored, otherwise it becomes unclear who is responsible for "black box" decisions.

Secondly, who should bear responsibility for the use of AI tools is also an unclear area. If a self-driving car gets into an accident or an artificial intelligence that makes a medical diagnosis makes a wrong conclusion and harms a patient - in this case, will the programmer, the device manufacturer, the user or the artificial intelligence itself (as a legal entity) be responsible? Currently, there are no clear answers to these questions in the world, but many lawyers and philosophers are discussing the legal status and liability of AI. Recommendations on the ethics of robotics and artificial intelligence have been developed at the level of UNESCO and the Council of Europe. In particular, the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, adopted in 2021, notes the need for a human rights-based approach to the creation and use of AI systems, and that AI should always be under human control. This principle, called "Human-in-the-loop," means that humans should have the final say in making important decisions.

Third, one of the problems in the field of artificial intelligence is deepfake technologies and the spread of false information (disinformation). Currently, AI can fake photos, videos, and audio to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish them from reality. As a result, it has become easier to spread false materials that mislead the public and damage the honor and reputation of a person. "The integration of artificial intelligence systems with ethical values and their management in accordance with them is essential for the future of society. Therefore, scientific research and practical approaches are needed to ensure that artificial intelligence systems comply with ethical standards."

By 2025, generative AI will be able to generate text, images, and sound more widely and cost-effectively.[12]. This could undermine the right to information and democracy as citizens find it increasingly difficult to distinguish between real and fake facts. Some countries are therefore moving towards banning or labeling deepfake content with specific laws; for example, the European Union's newly adopted AI Act requires that artificially generated images and content made available to the public be labeled.

In short, the ethical issues surrounding AI pose a challenge to society in managing and guiding technological advances.[13]. Technology is inherently neutral; how it is used is up to humanity. As contemporary philosophers like Harari warn, AI could become a tool for total societal subjugation in the hands of authoritarian leaders—a digital dictatorship in which a small elite AI controls the thoughts and lives of the masses. At the same time, democratic societies can also use technology in the opposite direction—to increase transparency and public control. The crucial factor, then, is who controls AI and for what purposes.

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