

# Dispatches from the Digital Planet

February 2021

"It's time for boldness, for there is so much to do," said President Joe Biden during his inaugural speech. While the dark clouds slowly dissipate as the vaccine injects a ray of positivity globally, the world undoubtedly steps into another challenging year with an abundance of caution. We, at Digital Planet, dive deeper into what has kept people connected through an unprecedented pandemic—digitalization.

What we witnessed in the first week of January is a grim reminder of how technology can wreak havoc on the very fundamentals of democracy. Misinformation, aided by the rise of social media and online news sources, has left some states **more vulnerable** than others. Unfettered communication has even led Big Tech to question the ideals on which they were founded. My piece in **Foreign Policy**, on the systemic changes required in the ecosystem writ large sets the stage for protecting societies against widespread infodemics.

The more pressing predicament however, is on the subject of trust in digital economies. Digital Trust underpins the very functioning of societies online and the critical questions of how to foster, harness, and even re-build trust, become paramount as we continue to navigate our accelerating reliance on technology and the disruptions that come with it. Part of the **Digital Intelligence Index**, our Digital Trust scorecard charts the trustworthiness of 42 digital ecosystems around the world—a crucial measure to developing a more inclusive and resilient future.

As the pandemic evolves by the day, states' and countries' varying policy responses have demonstrated that **Digital Readiness** was a (literal) lifesaver in facilitating social distancing, allowing parts of the labor force to work from home, and supporting the delivery of essential services. Our latest research on the **vulnerabilities experienced by gig workers** highlights inherent racial and socioeconomic disparities within the broader digital economy.

Digital Planet continues to grapple with the challenges of building a sustainable and equitable digital future—one that works for everyone, everywhere—through our **IDEA 2030** research initiative. How do you think policymakers and community leaders should tread in the near- and long-term as they strive for greater economic resilience and social equity? [Let us know on Twitter.](#)

**Bhaskar Chakravorti**

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Executive Director, Institute for Business in the Global Context

## Digital Intelligence Index

Explore our recent research on global digital competitiveness as we study the state of digital trust between the givers and the guarantors.

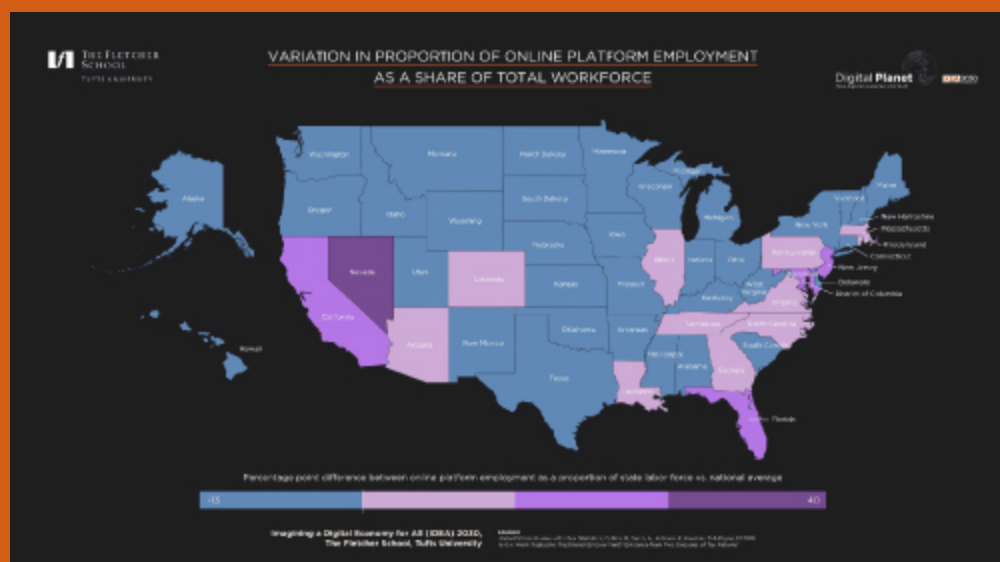


Explore the interactive DII research tool to analyze how these economies stack up against each other, along the broader measures of Digital Evolution and Digital Trust. Compare economies on various parameters, find patterns, draw conclusions on policy intervention, and study the potential for inclusive development through the lens of the digital economy.



[Explore the Interactive DII](#)

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### A Tale of Two Digital Economies: Gig Workers and Remote Workers

The pandemic has demonstrated the gig economy's increasing importance in providing essential services to communities, while also highlighting the inherent disparities and vulnerabilities experienced by gig workers.



### The Digital Health Divide

While several US states have been quick to expand telehealth policies in response to the pandemic, there exists a disconnect between policy action and the infrastructure available to support access. Disparities in broadband access prevent telehealth policies from reaching millions of Americans.

### In the News

**Trust, truth and the financial model of Silicon Valley are at odds:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | The Indian Express

**He may hold the winning ticket in tech and Silicon Valley knows it** | CNN Business

**Jan. 6 Changed Tech Forever:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | Foreign Policy

**Economies of Digitally Advanced Nations Fare Better During Pandemic** | Tufts Now

**For Biden to Solve Inequality, He'll Need Good Wi-Fi** | Bloomberg BNN

**Tech Braces for Intensified Scrutiny Following Capitol Siege, Democrats Winning Control of Senate** | MarketWatch

**Getting Biden to Love Tech:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | Foreign Policy

**Pandemic exposed the existing societal framework as unsustainable:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | The Indian Express

**Which Economies Showed the Most Digital Progress in 2020?:** Bhaskar Chakravorti & Ravi Shankar Chaturvedi | Harvard Business Review

**COVID-19 Vaccines Could Arrive as Soon as Next Week, But Issues Regarding Digital Accessibility Could Pose a Significant Hurdle:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | NBC10 Boston

**Tech Policy in the New Administration: A Proposal with Bhaskar Chakravorti:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | Technomy

**Remote work shakes up geopolitics** | Axios

**What is the future of artificial intelligence?:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | Center for Technology Innovation, Brookings Institution

**Authorities ramp up fight against misinformation and voter suppression** | ABC News

**5 Questions About the Antitrust Case Against Google That You Should Not Be Afraid to Ask:** Bhaskar Chakravorti | Foreign Policy

### About Digital Planet

Digital Planet is an interdisciplinary research initiative of The Fletcher School's Institute for Business in the Global Context (IBGC) dedicated to understanding the impact of digital innovation on the world and providing actionable insights for policymakers, businesses, investors, and innovators.

[Let's continue our discussion on](#) 