

Report On The Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2026

Powered by DigiServe Network Services, held on Thursday, 10 September 2026 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, 38/40 Isaac John Street, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos.

1.0 Preamble

The eighth edition of the Nigeria eGovernment Summit was held on Thursday, 10 September 2026 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, running from 8am to 5pm, with the Nigeria eGovernment Excellence Awards following the same evening from 6pm to 10pm.

The summit commenced with registration and a visit to the exhibition stands, the recognition of special guests and speakers, the recitation of the national anthem, and a welcome address by the Executive Chairman, DigiServe Network Services and convener of the eGovernment Summit, Engr. Lanre Ajayi.

The 2026 edition was built around the theme: "Mainstreaming Technologies in Nigeria Election Management". The theme was chosen deliberately. Nigeria is in an election year, with elections scheduled across multiple states and national attention focused on the 2027 general elections. As the convener put it in his welcome address, the question of technology in election management "is not an academic one. It is a question that will determine whether Nigerians trust the outcomes of elections that shape their lives, their livelihoods and their futures."

The summit featured a welcome address, six goodwill messages, three keynote addresses, a special presentation on artificial intelligence in governance, and four panel sessions, each addressing a sub-theme built around the main theme. It drew participants from federal and state government, the technology industry, regulatory agencies, civil society, the legal profession and the media.

The Nigeria eGovernment Summit is an annual programme designed to bring together government and technology service providers, including the citizens who are the beneficiaries of technology services, to discuss the importance of leveraging emerging technologies that enhance the services government delivers to its citizens.

2.0 Objectives of the Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2026

The objectives of the 2026 edition, as set out by the Chairman in his welcome address, are as follows:

1. To provide a high-level, evidence-based platform for examining the current state of technology adoption in Nigeria's electoral process, identifying what is working, what is not, and what must change.
2. To facilitate robust dialogue between government, INEC and state electoral commissions, technology providers, civil society organisations and the international community on the standards, frameworks and investment required to mainstream electoral technology in Nigeria.
3. To identify actionable policy recommendations that can be taken from the hall to the desks of decision makers: recommendations that are practical, achievable and grounded in Nigeria's realities.
4. To celebrate and recognise, through the Nigeria eGovernment Excellence Awards 2026, the ministries, departments and agencies, private sector organisations, state governments and individuals who have distinguished themselves in advancing eGovernment and digital service delivery across Nigeria.
5. To strengthen the community of practice around digital governance in Nigeria, deepening relationships between those who build digital governance, those who regulate it, those who fund it, and those who ultimately benefit from it, who are the Nigerian people.

3.0 Attendees

The summit was attended by representatives of state governments, federal ministries, departments and agencies, captains of industry, leaders of professional and industry associations, development partners, the legal profession, civil society organisations and the press.

State governments represented included Edo, Cross River, Kano, Zamfara, Enugu, Anambra, Oyo, Lagos and Kebbi. Federal agencies represented included the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC), the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC).

Industry associations represented included the Association of Telecommunications Companies of Nigeria (ATCON), the Information Technology Association of Nigeria (ITAN), the Institute of Software Practitioners of Nigeria (ISPON), the Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA), the Internet Society (ISOC) Nigeria Chapter, and the Computer Professionals Registration Council of Nigeria (CPN).

At the evening awards ceremony, the Edo State delegation was led by the Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, representing His Excellency Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State, and included the Head of Service, permanent secretaries and agency chief executives. The scale of that delegation was commended from the podium as evidence of the attention the state accorded the event.

4.0 Welcome Address

The Chairman of the Nigeria eGovernment Summit, Engr. Lanre Ajayi, welcomed participants and set out the case for the year's theme.

He said Nigeria had already answered the question of whether technology belongs in its elections, and that the summit existed to answer a harder question.

"The question this summit asks, and we spend the day answering, is not simply whether we should use technology in elections. Nigeria has answered that question. The question is how we mainstream it, how we move technology from pilot projects and contested deployments to an embedded, trusted, comprehensive feature of our electoral architecture," he said.

He acknowledged the progress already recorded. Biometric voter registration has reduced multiple registration. Electronic transmission of results has collapsed the

time between voting and the declaration of results. Voter authentication systems have strengthened the integrity of the ballot. But he said the gaps were equally visible: infrastructure deficits, cybersecurity vulnerabilities and digital literacy challenges that, if unaddressed, can undermine the very confidence technology was deployed to build.

Speaking on the stakes, he said: "An election that citizens do not trust is not merely a flawed process. It is a crisis of legitimacy. And a democracy built on contested results is a democracy that cannot fully serve its people."

He described technology, deployed properly, as a bridge. "Technology deployed with transparency, governed with accountability, and explained to the citizenry with honesty has the power to be the bridge between the elections Nigeria has had and the elections Nigerians deserve," he said.

The Chairman also called digital transformation a shared responsibility, naming government at every level, the private sector that builds the systems, civil society that holds the process accountable, the media that informs the public, development partners that invest in the journey, and citizens who must ultimately trust, adopt and demand the digital services they deserve.

On the challenges that remain, he said digital infrastructure gaps persist, cybersecurity threats are growing, and public trust in digital systems must be continuously earned rather than assumed. He described the digital divide between urban and rural, young and old, connected and unconnected as "a moral challenge that no technology alone can solve, but neither can it be solved without technology."

He closed by charging delegates to convert deliberation into action. "In the end, it is decisions, not discussions, that transform nations," he said.

5.0 Goodwill Messages

Six goodwill messages were delivered. Three of the listed speakers were represented by colleagues.

5.1 Internet Society (ISOC) Nigeria Chapter

The goodwill message of the President of the Internet Society Nigeria Chapter, Engr. Kunle Olorundare, was delivered on his behalf by Bemisola Esho. He conveyed apologies for his absence, citing an urgent matter affecting the strategic digital interests of the African continent.

The message proposed that Nigeria evaluate its electoral readiness through three distinct lenses.

The first is the technology lens, which requires analysis of the resilience, security and scalability of electronic voting and data transmission infrastructure, "to ensure no voter or polling unit is left in the dark."

The second is the digital rights lens. In seeking total digital coverage, the message said, Nigeria must safeguard the digital rights, privacy and online freedoms of every citizen, "ensuring technology empowers rather than marginalises."

The third is the information authentication lens, described as "an urgent battle against the plague of fake news and misinformation", requiring tools and frameworks that verify facts, preserve information integrity and build public trust in the electoral process.

"By synchronising these perspectives, we can eliminate the vulnerabilities that threaten our collective democratic journey," the message said.

5.2 Information Technology Association of Nigeria (ITAN)

The goodwill message of the President of ITAN, Dr. Emmanuel Olarewaju Ayoola, was delivered by the National Secretary-General, Prof. Oluremi Olushina, on behalf of the over 350 IT-driven companies the association represents across the country.

He dwelt on the word "mainstreaming" in the summit theme, arguing that it carried more weight than it might first appear.

"For too long, election technology in this country has behaved like a seasonal crop: procured, deployed and celebrated once every four years, then left fallow until the

next cycle approaches. Mainstreaming demands something different: sustained investment, sustained local capacity building, and sustained testing between elections, not merely before them," he said.

He positioned the industry as a builder rather than an observer. "We do not come to this summit merely to observe. We come as a partner prepared to build," he said, noting that it is Nigerian engineers, data scientists, cybersecurity practitioners and local software companies who will be asked to design, build, secure and maintain whatever the summit resolves.

He commended the Independent National Electoral Commission and its Chairman, Professor Joash Ojo Amupitan, SAN, on the announced commitment to conduct a comprehensive audit of INEC technology systems and a mock presidential election ahead of 2027, and offered the technical capacity of ITAN membership to support both exercises.

"If Nigeria mainstreams its election technology the way it has mainstreamed telecommunications and banking technology, today's challenge will be remembered as a solved problem," he said.

5.3 Institute of Software Practitioners of Nigeria (ISPON)

The President of ISPON, Mr. James Okwudili Agada, delivered the most quantitative intervention of the session, drawing attention to the share of public spending that reaches the software industry.

He said software receives approximately 0.3 to 0.5 per cent of the federal budget, which represents slightly less than 0.1 per cent of Nigeria's gross domestic product. Across the states, he put the total budget for software at around 0.2 per cent. He stressed that these were budget figures rather than expenditure figures.

He said the stated contribution of software to Nigeria's GDP is less than 0.2 per cent, and that this was the source of the industry's concern.

His central argument was that investment in eGovernment should produce exportable Nigerian technology companies, not merely domestic systems. He cited international precedent for government-seeded technology.

"The Google we use today started out as part of a CIA research project. The Oracle database I use today, the initial development was funded by the CIA. CIA is just government. The Estonians are exporting their eGovernment solutions even to Nigeria. Part of the integration effort we are working on with the European Union is actually based on X-Road from Estonia," he said.

Applying the point to Nigeria's own electoral technology, he said: "If we have BVAS, then we should be exporting BVAS. There is no reason why BVAS should be locked into Nigeria."

He was candid in his criticism of his own constituency, observing that few software companies had taken exhibition booths or placed advertisements in the summit brochure, and called for a more serious partnership with the summit to discuss not only government's eGovernment efforts but the business of eGovernment solutions, both within Nigeria and for export.

5.4 Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA)

The President of NiRA, Mr. Adesola Akinsanya, built his message around a single question, which he returned to throughout: "Can we truly mainstream technology into elections without mainstreaming trust into technology?"

He introduced the association's work on DNSSEC, the Domain Name System Security Extensions, into the Nigerian digital ecosystem. He acknowledged that the Domain Name System appears technical and remote from elections, but argued that it sits at the heart of what every credible digital election system requires, which is trust.

He put the practical questions to the hall. When a citizen visits a website to obtain electoral information or access a government service, how confident can we be that the destination is authentic? How confident can we be that the information received has not been manipulated? How do we protect citizens from being redirected to a fraudulent or malicious website?

"Technology can make election management faster and more accessible, and can improve transparency. But technology without adequate security can equally create

new vulnerabilities," he said.

He stressed that the subject is ultimately human. "Election technology is not just about machines, software or platforms. It is about the people," he said, naming the voter seeking accurate information, the young Nigerian receiving an election message on social media who must judge whether it is authentic, and the institutions that must communicate securely and credibly.

He closed with a challenge: "I challenge us not only to ask what technology we can deploy. Let us ask what trust architecture must accompany it." And he offered a test of success: "When the votes are eventually cast and the results announced, should we not be able to look back and say we did not simply digitise our election, we strengthened confidence in democracy?"

5.5 Association of Telecommunications Companies of Nigeria (ATCON)

The goodwill message of the President of ATCON, Mr. Tony Izuagbe Emoekpere, was delivered by Dr. Kenny Judah, an executive member of the association and National Coordinator for Internet Service Providers in Nigeria. Mr. Emoekpere conveyed apologies, having been unable to return from Cairo as planned.

The message argued that technology has outgrown its description as an enabler of the electoral process. "As Nigeria prepares for the 2027 general elections, technology can no longer be regarded as merely an enabler of the electoral process. It is increasingly becoming part of the infrastructure upon which the credibility, transparency and efficiency of elections depend," it said.

On the role of telecommunications, the message said: "There can be no meaningful digital transformation without reliable connectivity. Behind every digital platform, every electronic transaction, every cloud service and every real-time exchange of information is a telecommunications infrastructure that must work."

It stressed that election technology must function not only in major cities but in remote communities, rural areas and difficult terrains where connectivity and power remain significant challenges, and called for deliberate collaboration among INEC, government, telecommunications operators, technology providers,

infrastructure companies and security agencies to identify vulnerabilities early.

The message identified four distinct trust relationships that must hold: citizens must trust the technology, political actors must trust the process, election administrators must trust the infrastructure, and Nigerians must have confidence that their data and digital identities are adequately protected.

"Cybersecurity and data protection must be treated as fundamental components of election integrity rather than a technical afterthought," it said.

ATCON asked of government an enabling regulatory environment, effective public-private partnerships, infrastructure protection, timely access to sites and rights of way, and policies that encourage continued investment in digital infrastructure.

5.6 Lagos State Infrastructure Maintenance and Regulatory Agency (LASIMRA)

The General Manager of LASIMRA, Prince Oyekan Elegushi, delivered an address titled "The Invisible Ballot: Why Election Technology Stands or Falls on Infrastructure".

He opened by reframing the summit theme as an infrastructure question rather than a software question.

"Technology does not win elections. Trust does. And trust in a digital democracy does not travel on slogans, it travels on fibre. It travels on power. It travels on the right of way that was planned before the campaign posters went up. It travels on infrastructure that does not fail at 4pm on election day when the last result sheet is being transmitted from a polling unit in Ikorodu, Badagry, Epe or any other part of Nigeria," he said.

He acknowledged what Nigeria has built. "Over the last 10 years Nigeria has done something few democracies have done at this scale. We have put biometrics at the heart of the register. We have put accreditation devices in the hands of ad hoc staff. We have opened a public window onto polling unit results. The Electoral Act gave those tools legal life. INEC gave them operational life," he said.

But he said each of those tools is a promise that must be kept in real time, and described the failure modes in three formulations that were widely noted in the hall: "A BVAS that cannot talk to a server is paperwork. An IReV portal that the public cannot reach is a rumour factory. A situation room without redundant connectivity is a single point of national anxiety."

He then set out the Lagos Dig Once Doctrine. Under the policy, when a road is opened for construction, rehabilitation or a new corridor, the duct is laid once, and multiple operators light that duct rather than returning year after year with jackhammers and generators. "One trench, many networks. One public asset, many private services," he said. The ducts last a generation, and the fibre inside can be upgraded without tearing the city open again.

He reported that through LASIMRA, Lagos State has facilitated private investment for the development of approximately 30,000 kilometres of 28-way fibre duct infrastructure along strategic corridors across the state, and has secured approximately 22 million dollars of investment, with the process ongoing.

He explained the design intent. A 28-way duct, he said, "is not a single operator's private pipe. It is a highway with many lanes. It is designed for sharing," so that the major operators, internet service providers, state-owned networks "and the networks that will carry electoral traffic in 2027 can ride the same protected corridor instead of fighting one another in the same trench."

"That is mainstreaming. Not another pilot. Not another donated gadget that dies when the grant ends. A backbone that private capital is willing to fund because the rules are clear, the right of way is bankable, and the regulator will not move the goalposts after the money is in the ground," he said.

On the last mile, he said: "Election technology fails at the last mile. It fails where power is uncertain. It fails where there is no redundant path out of a ward. It fails where a fibre cut at 2pm has no alternative route. It fails where INEC offices, collation centres and polling units sit on islands of connectivity while the rest of the city is an ocean."

He reported that LASIMRA is advancing GIS mapping of fibre routes and has developed an automated Telecommunications Infrastructure Registration System (TIRS) to simplify operator permit registration. The system is in testing and was expected before the end of the year.

On the relationship between physical infrastructure and cybersecurity, he said: "Cybersecurity does not begin in a security operations centre. It begins with physical infrastructure that is identified, registered, monitored and defended. You cannot secure what you have not mapped. You cannot trust a result that travelled on a network nobody can account for."

He rejected the idea that elections begin on election morning. "A voter who has never had reliable internet in her home will not suddenly become a confident digital citizen because a device appeared at her polling unit on the morning of the election. A health centre that cannot transmit data will not inspire faith in a results portal. A school that is offline cannot raise the generation we keep asking to trust the process," he said.

He described the Lagos goal of internet connectivity to every home, hospital, health centre and school as "electoral infrastructure in slow motion", and warned: "If those flows only work in Victoria Island and Ikoyi and die in Ibeju-Lekki, Epe or Festac, you have not mainstreamed technology, you have only decorated it."

He put four direct requests to the Federation, which are reflected in the recommendations at Section 11.0 of this report.

He closed: "INEC can design the best process in Africa. Innovators can write the most elegant code. Civil society can watch every upload. None of it will matter if the pipe is dark. When we speak of mainstreaming technologies in Nigerian election management, let us mean it. Not gadgets on a high table, but fibre under the street."

6.0 Keynote Address: The Data Protection Perspective

The National Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigeria Data Protection Commission, Dr. Vincent Olatunji, delivered a keynote titled "Mainstreaming Technologies in Nigeria Election Management: The Data Protection Perspective".

He opened with a charge to the organisers and delegates about the fate of summit outcomes.

"We discuss and dispense and nothing happens. The outcome of discussions must be taken to the next level. Government is to give policy direction, but policy direction will come from advice, from recommendations, from submissions from occasions like this," he said, urging that the outcomes of the edition be escalated to the relevant government organisations as soon as the summit concluded. "More importantly, as we are approaching the 2027 election period, it is not too late."

6.1 The journey of electoral technology in Nigeria

Dr. Olatunji traced the evolution of election technology in Nigeria. He recalled the Option A4 system of the Babangida era, under which voters queued behind their preferred candidates and counting was manual. Before 2011, accreditation, voting, collation and the announcement of results were all conducted manually.

In 2011, automated biometric capture was introduced as the means of identification. In 2015, the card reader was introduced, which he described as a turning point despite the challenges encountered. In 2019, voter authentication was enhanced. More recently, BVAS and IReV have been deployed, alongside election result analysis dashboards and continuous voter registration ward and polling unit locators, which he said were never previously possible. In the week of the summit, INEC launched a real-time election data tracker.

He urged a tolerant posture toward failure in technology adoption. "It is always good for you to try and fail. Failure is still part of your learning curve. The highest level of advancement in technology started from failures," he said, cautioning against the attitude that nothing should be attempted for fear it will fail.

He also urged constructive engagement rather than criticism, noting that electoral technology faces difficulties in advanced countries as well, and called on stakeholders to identify what works, strengthen it, and propose logical corrections for what does not.

6.2 What the technology has delivered

Dr. Olatunji reported that accreditation time at polling units has fallen by up to 80 per cent, from between 10 and 15 minutes to under three minutes. He said observers and voters affirmed that BVAS has effectively minimised voter impersonation because of its reliance on biometrics, and that it has curtailed multiple registration, proxy voting, double registration and overvoting through biometric screening.

He drew a parallel with identity reform more broadly. "There was a time in Nigeria when one person could have up to 10 international passports. Now, with your National Identification Number as your unique identifier, your foundational ID, it is very difficult to impersonate or to vote multiple times," he said.

He cited the transfer of voter registration between locations as a practical gain, reporting that a transfer from Abuja to his home state, which would previously have been difficult, was completed in 20 minutes.

On the equity of a technology-mediated process, he said: "Even if you are the President, when you get to the voting centre, the same process that a groundnut seller goes through is what you have to go through. So there is equity, there is fairness to everybody, and there is transparency."

He noted that approximately 70 per cent of Nigerian youth are digital natives, and that technology adoption comes readily to that population.

6.3 The voter as a data subject

The core of the keynote was the proposition that every stage of the electoral process generates personal data, and that the voter is therefore a data subject entitled to protection.

At registration, the citizen leaves name, date of birth, address and voter card number. At accreditation, biometrics are captured, which Dr. Olatunji said are classified as sensitive data requiring an additional level of security. At voting, the fingerprint is unique to the individual. At collation, Form EC8A result sheets, uploads and timestamps generate further data.

He named the principles that every data controller in the chain must observe: data anonymisation, purpose limitation, storage limitation and security.

6.4 Risks identified

Dr. Olatunji identified five categories of risk.

The first is data breaches and leaks, where appropriate technical and organisational measures are not put in place by data controllers at federal, state, local government and ward level.

The second is voter apathy arising from loss of confidence. He expressed the citizen's reasoning directly: "Why should I leave my data with them when they have not put in place appropriate measures to protect me?"

The third is voter profiling, where voting patterns are analysed and used against citizens. He noted that political affiliation is among the categories of sensitive data, and that it should not be used against any citizen.

The fourth is third-party risk. INEC does not develop and deploy all its solutions itself and relies on third-party agents and solution providers. "If there is a leak in the database, the controller, which is INEC in this case, will be held responsible," he said, calling for proper service level agreements binding vendors to equivalent protection measures.

The fifth is surveillance.

6.5 Work with INEC

Dr. Olatunji reported that INEC now has a team of data protection officers, which he said had never previously been the case, and the announcement drew applause from the hall.

He described an investigation in which personal data had been shared on social media platforms. The Commission invited INEC and the staff involved, and he reported that INEC cooperated fully with the process, including on remediation and on establishing how the leak occurred. "Before the NDPC, that would have just been allowed to slide and nothing would have happened," he said, adding that the relationship with INEC on the protection of personal data is improving.

6.6 The digital literacy gap

He cautioned that over 65 per cent of Nigerian rural communities include many citizens who cannot read or write and do not understand the technology being deployed. "All they know is that they want to come and vote. You need to put them through it," he said, identifying this as a continuing obligation on the system rather than a failing of the citizen.

7.0 Special Presentation: OneGov and AI-Assisted Governance

A special presentation demonstrated OneGov, a citizen service aggregator accessible through WhatsApp, the web and a dedicated platform.

The demonstration showed a citizen requesting a government service, using a driver's licence as the example, by voice note, text or video. The platform operates in Pidgin, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo in addition to English, and detects the language in use. Pidgin was selected deliberately for the live demonstration. "Pidgin is almost like the global language. Anywhere you go in Nigeria you can speak it," the presenter said.

The platform was described as an aggregator rather than a replacement. Existing portals, such as those for tax payment, remain in place, and OneGov provides a single route to reach them.

The stated rationale was that most artificial intelligence deployments in government provide information only. "Do we have integration of AI where we are able to actually get that service, and not just the information alone?" the presenter asked.

Delegates participated in a live exercise, scanning a QR code or messaging a number and submitting a sample query on how to pay a land use charge.

Asked about data sovereignty, the presenter said that offline or local graphics processing units can be used where specific data must not leave the country, and that models exist that are capable of operating in that configuration.

8.0 Panel Session 1: State Government Panel

Sub-theme: Fostering an Enabling Environment for Electoral Technology: Infrastructure, Policy and Innovation at the State Level.

The session was chaired by the Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of VDT Communications, Mr. Biodun Omoniyi. The session focused on broadband and connectivity for electoral operations, digital infrastructure development, Right-of-Way reforms, and the security and resilience of election infrastructure.

8.1 Lead paper: the enabling environment

The Honourable Commissioner for Science and Technology, Cross River State, Associate Professor Justin Beshel, presented on fostering an enabling environment for electoral technology at the subnational level.

His central proposition was that the constraint is not the technology. "We cannot build technology-enabled elections on technology alone. We must build the infrastructure and policy environment that allows the technology to work," he said. "The real challenge is bigger than the technology itself."

He identified five challenges. The first is reliable broadband and last-mile connectivity, asking how many localities, polling units and wards actually have internet connectivity. The second is adequate digital and physical infrastructure.

The third is reliable electricity and backup power, illustrated with a familiar field problem: "There are situations where you have your BVAS, but it is off. There is no place to power the BVAS, and so we resort to manual result collation." The fourth is secure and resilient communication networks, noting that presiding officers and supervisors are deployed without a working communication link between them. The fifth is skilled personnel capable of supporting critical systems, alongside clear policies that enable infrastructure development.

Drawing on direct experience of electoral duty, he recalled that ad hoc staff have faced the challenge of obtaining light by which to write out results, and that orientation in hostile environments amounted to advice to comply and return alive.

He set out four requirements for broadband treated as election infrastructure. It must be available, reaching the locations where electoral operations take place, including underserved and hard-to-reach communities. It must be reliable, remaining operational during periods of intense demand and network congestion, with alternative connectivity for critical operations. It must be supported by power, because "connectivity infrastructure is only as reliable as the power system it supports." And it must be secure against disruption and cyber threats.

He raised a concern about deliberate degradation of networks on election day, stating that sharp practices sometimes involve connivance with network operators so that calls and communication fail on the day of an election. The claim was made from the floor and is recorded here as made.

On the division of responsibility, he was precise. INEC is charged with electoral administration, covering processes and procedures, voter accreditation, election technology and result management. The state's role is to enable rather than duplicate, through deliberate broadband and fibre infrastructure, right-of-way facilitation, access to public infrastructure, power and infrastructure resilience, digital skills and technical capacity, public-private partnerships, and infrastructure mapping and planning. "States may not administer federal elections, but they can help create the digital environment for electoral technology to succeed," he said.

"Expanding broadband is not simply a telecommunications objective. It is an investment in the resilience of the state's digital infrastructure," he added.

Presenting Cross River State as a case study, he reported 170 kilometres of completed fibre network deployed to all ministries, departments and agencies, with fibre to the home now in place. The state has partnered with the NCC, Nokia and NIGCOMSAT on digital skills, connectivity and technology innovation. Right of way is granted within two weeks of application, applied for online with no physical interface, and land administration in the state is fully digitised. The state operates a Dig Once policy using a six-duct fibre configuration. He issued an open invitation to investors interested in partnering on fibre to the home.

He closed with a five-element resilience framework: redundancy, through alternative connectivity and backup systems; power resilience, with grid power complemented by backup solutions; cybersecurity, protecting systems, devices, networks and sensitive information; monitoring and rapid response, to detect problems early and mobilise technical support quickly; and continuity and recovery, with clear procedures for maintaining operations and recovering from disruption.

"The objective is not to build systems that never fail. It is to build systems that can continue operating when something does fail," he said. "If you want technology-enabled elections, you must first build an environment that enables the technology."

8.2 Lead paper: securing the electoral system

The Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Tizel Cybersecurity, Mrs. Happiness Obioha, presented on securing electoral technology. She was the first female presenter of the day and received a standing ovation.

She mapped five categories of challenge to corresponding solutions. Cyber attack and data breach require advanced threat detection. Device tampering and fake identity require biometric liveness detection and encryption. Network outage and poor connectivity require redundant networks and offline mode. Insider threat and human error require access control and user monitoring. Data manipulation and

misconfiguration require AI analytics and audit trails.

On infrastructure, she said a secure data centre with disaster recovery is "another critical infrastructure that every state needs to own", and stressed that building a data centre is not sufficient in itself. She named database activity monitoring, covering the health of the server and authorised access at every point in time, as a requirement under both the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation and comparable international standards. For cloud deployments she recommended an embedded cloud access security broker. She also named multi-factor authentication, intrusion prevention embedded in network devices, data loss prevention to protect voter data, and a security operations centre providing full visibility across a state.

She emphasised personnel. People must be trained, with continuous awareness training and certification, in order to operate a security operations centre and manage these processes.

She proposed a five-phase approach to a secured election: assess and plan; build and deploy; monitor and optimise; secure and innovate; and ensure sustainability. "It is not just about putting the system in play. Continuous monitoring, continuous maintenance, continuous evaluation is very important," she said.

She expressed the aspiration that Nigeria will reach a point where citizens can vote from the comfort of their homes, and closed: "Together we can build a safer, smarter election system through cybersecurity."

8.3 State interventions

Edo State reported that all 18 local government areas are now connected by fibre from the state data centre, extending to hospitals in those areas. The connectivity programme followed a tour of all 18 local government areas and approximately 48 primary healthcare centres. The state reported training between 3,000 and 4,000 people in artificial intelligence over the preceding year, with participants ranging in age from eight to their fifties. The representative described a population of at least five million, young and bandwidth-hungry, and argued for market conditions that allow medium-sized operators, not only the largest networks, to deliver cheaper bandwidth. "Technology is useless without the people," the representative said.

Anambra State reported the mantra of the Governor, Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo, as "everything technology, technology everywhere", with technology applied across budget planning, validation, revenue generation and education. The state established the Solution Innovation District in 2023 with a mandate to train 10,000 indigenes in digital technology. That target was surpassed, with over 20,000 trained, and the programme has since been extended through an initiative described as the One Million Anambra Digital Tribe, open to any resident of the state.

Enugu State was commended for its deployment of cameras across locations within the state together with a command centre, which Mrs. Obioha cited as an example of the physical security layer that must accompany digital security.

8.4 Chair's synthesis

The panel chair, Mr. Biodun Omoniyi, drew an important distinction on network failures, observing that what had been described as a shutdown was not a failure of infrastructure but an intentional act, and that the remedy for intentional acts lies in conduct rather than engineering.

He placed the discussion in the context of progress since 2011, noting that in recent elections complaints about BVAS not working had largely subsided.

He also offered the clarification that framed much of the day's discussion. "The voting itself is still physical. What we are talking about is the verification and then the display. That is what we currently do. The question is whether we can progress into a position where we are actually doing electronic voting. But we are not there now. A lot still needs to be done by the states," he said.

9.0 Panel Session 2: Digital Infrastructure, Energy and Inclusive Access

Sub-theme: The Last Mile Challenge: Powering Connectivity and Energy for 100% Polling Unit Coverage.

The session was chaired by Professor Demola Omojola, Professor of Geographic Information Systems, University of Lagos. Panelists included the lead paper

presenters together with representatives of Fibreworld Telecommunications Network Limited, ipNX Business, BAS Technologies, Enextgen Wireless Limited and the Internet Society Nigeria Chapter.

9.1 Lead paper: the Polling Unit Energy System

The Technical Director and Founder of Stelnux Solutions, Mr. Oluwasoji Agboola, presented the most specific engineering proposal of the summit: a standardised Polling Unit Energy System.

The proposed design places an intelligent direct current bus at the centre of the system, with power management, drawing on an energy mix of solar photovoltaic generation, battery storage, grid supply and generator capacity. The rationale is that the absence of efficient grid supply to a locality need not be decisive. "Even if we do not have grid reaching that locality efficiently, we have various alternatives that can be mixed together to achieve sustainable energy deployment to that locality," he said.

He made the case for treating such deployments as general-purpose public infrastructure rather than electoral equipment. Because the systems are capital intensive, he argued they should not be deployed for electoral processes alone, and are reusable infrastructure for government services beyond elections, citing health systems as an example. A further benefit, he said, is better visibility of failures before they become incidents.

His closing takeaway was: "Power the last mile. Connect every polling unit. Strengthen democracy."

9.2 The accountability question

The defining exchange of the session began with a question from the floor asking why point of sale terminals function in every part of Nigeria while electoral infrastructure does not.

The response drew on NCC data, citing broadband penetration at 58 per cent and mobile network penetration at 90 per cent. "There is internet connectivity

everywhere. The how is a different conversation. It is possible to have every single device in this country connected to the internet," the panelist said.

The answer then turned to institutional accountability. "Nigeria has one of the most secure banking systems in the world. Why can't our public institutions work that way? Because the banks, the enterprise businesses and the private sector have key performance indicators to deliver to their shareholders. Who are the shareholders of our public institutions?" The response from the hall was: the public.

The exchange framed one of the summit's clearest conclusions, that the gap between private and public digital resilience in Nigeria is a question of accountability structures rather than of available technology.

9.3 Evidence, provability and the law

A substantial thread of the session addressed whether electoral technology produces evidence that survives legal challenge.

The challenge was reframed in these terms: "Yesterday the issue was: let us conduct the elections so that we will all have faith. The challenge for tomorrow is to conduct the elections, preserve the evidence of the results and of the election, and more importantly, to prove it in a court of law." The proposition offered to the panel was: "We should not merely conduct elections. Let us make them provable."

Delegates were urged to study Nigerian court judgments and pleadings when designing electoral technology. One case was cited in which an electoral officer issued fake result sheets to polling unit staff while retaining the originals, with the consequence that the result sheets returned from the polling units were rejected at collation as fakes.

The proposal that followed was for distributed custody of results. "If we are going to use distributed technology, and I support it, what it means is that INEC is not the only person who has the result. Why does the court not also have a copy of the results so that they can check? That is a very good place to implement blockchain," it was argued, with political parties and the courts named as potential copy-holders.

An important technical correction was made on the record. "I do not think we should say blockchain is tamper-proof. It is not tamper-proof. What it is, is that if you tamper with it, it will keep a record that you tampered," the panel heard.

A specific legislative gap was identified. "Our laws are a bit behind the advancements in technology. Electronic evidence is accepted in our courts. However, the source of that electronic evidence, and who can plead it in court, also needs to be properly specified. Otherwise, after you download the data from IReV and take it to court, the court will tell you that you made a copy of something that is not supposed to be in your custody, and therefore the evidence is not accepted."

The session also heard a caution against overpromising. "We are not going to solve all the problems between now and 2027. We should be honest and accept it."

A design principle offered to the panel was that systems should be built to tolerate incompetent operation, on the reasoning that systems outlive the people who build them.

9.4 The legal and compliance perspective

A Senior Associate at Kenna, Ms. Chidera Ezenwanne, addressed the session as a lawyer and data protection compliance officer, using the previous day's flight disruptions as an analogy for traceability. Disruption on that scale begins with one or two events, and the industry is able to trace the origin. "That is the entirety of our conversation here today. We should be able to trace. We should be able to find out where the source is," she said.

On the legal framework, she made an observation of practical importance: the existing law already provides for BVAS and comparable technologies, already contemplates an electronic register and electronic transmission, and is therefore flexible enough to accommodate better technology as it emerges.

On blockchain, she said its value from a legal standpoint lies in the audit trail, showing what was changed, when, how and by whom.

On audit as a discipline, she said: "In data protection, what we do for firms or organisations is to audit. And in doing that we have records. To pull 10 or 15

people who are lying together, it will be difficult. You need to have proper steps." She named the audit targets as those with access, the third parties, and the vendors deploying the technology.

9.5 Session summary

The moderator summarised the session in terms the summit returned to repeatedly: "Technology itself is not going to solve all of our problems. It is not a silver bullet. The human factor, other structures and guardrails should also be put in place. And finally, are we really ready for this?"

10.0 Panel Session: Emerging Technologies, Citizen Rights and Digital Trust

This session addressed emerging technologies for electoral auditing and the protection of the digital voter, covering data privacy, cybersecurity and misinformation.

10.1 Lead paper: testing, data and citizen rights

The Executive Director of Paradigm Initiative, Mr. 'Gbenga Sesan, delivered the most forthright intervention of the summit, organised around three demands.

"Every association in this room must make a request: that technology must begin to be tested from now, that data must be trusted, and that civic rights must be respected," he said.

On testing, he argued that procurement is not preparation. "The truth about technology is that you can never wake up, award contracts, and think technology will work," he said. "Technology will fail if you don't prepare." He urged every association present to formally request that INEC begin robust testing immediately, noting that off-cycle elections present live opportunities to test systems before 2027. He acknowledged the lateness of the hour while rejecting it as an excuse, citing the proverb that the best time was twenty years ago and the next best time is now.

He raised a specific technical concern regarding the operating system on which BVAS devices run, and the question of whether it remains within its security support lifecycle. The summit did not resolve the point, but the underlying question, whether electoral devices are maintained on supported and patched software, is recorded here as a matter requiring verification.

On data, he said: "Data is about trust. If I cannot trust the way you handle my data, I cannot trust any process that goes through it." He reported that Paradigm Initiative has a case before the courts concerning the sale of Nigerians' personal data online, and referred to a previously reported breach in which the records of approximately 137 million Nigerians became available on the dark web. His emphasis was on remedy rather than blame: "This is not the time to blame anyone. This is a time to block the loopholes." He added: "Until we address impunity, the next person to steal data is just waiting."

He advanced the principle that custodians of national identity data must be demonstrably non-partisan, on the reasoning that public confidence in electoral data cannot be separated from public confidence in those who hold it.

On citizen rights, he reported that Paradigm Initiative has researched digital rights and civic responsibility in Nigeria since 2013, and that Nigeria's position has declined over the most recent reporting period, having previously improved through investment in data protection and the passage of data protection law. He attributed the decline in part to network disruptions, some of them deliberate.

His warning to the industry was the sharpest formulation of the day: "If we are not careful, we will use politics and elections to turn technology into a poison pill. People will see two things every time you talk about technology for elections: contractocracy and manipulation." He placed the responsibility for preventing that outcome on the room itself.

10.2 Lead paper: protecting digital trust

The Chief Information Security Officer of FirstBank, Dr. Harrison N. Nnaji, presented on protecting digital trust in Nigeria, covering cybersecurity, privacy and the future of citizen-centric governance.

He opened by expanding the definition of electoral security. "The security of an election is no longer confined to the polling booth. It extends to every device, database, identity, platform and piece of information that shapes a citizen's ability to vote," he said, adding that citizens' rights and digital trust cannot be separated from cybercrime.

He presented Nigeria's digital demographics as a population of 220 million with 110 million connected citizens, and reported more than 4,700 weekly attack attempts against the environments he monitors. He observed that digital presence now extends across generations and that technology has permeated every facet of national life.

10.3 The three pillars of protecting the digital voter

The Head of Strategic Partnerships and Operations at ITGest Nigeria and Nexus Alliance, Ms. Alma Oputa, proposed a three-pillar framework. The first pillar is protecting the data of the voter. The second is protecting the systems on which elections depend. The third is protecting the information environment in which electoral decisions are made.

She grounded the framework in a democratic test: "If at the end of everything the citizens themselves do not trust the results gotten from that process, you can never really say that you had a democratic electoral process."

She cited two developments as grounds for cautious optimism: the formation of a joint working group between the Nigeria Data Protection Commission and INEC to strengthen data protection in the electoral process, and amendments to the electoral legal framework that further embed technology in the process. She also cited recent off-cycle elections in Osun and Ekiti States, noting the degree of citizen vigilance over results as encouraging.

10.4 Session close

The session closed on the question of citizen awareness, with the observation that most citizens are unfamiliar with the content of the Electoral Act and that those present had an obligation to be better informed and to inform others.

The closing charge was directed at the associations in the room: "Beyond all these things we have said, what are we going to do differently in this room? We can talk, but what are we going to do differently? All the associations, ITAN, ISPON, ATCON, what are we going to start doing? Are we going to put the independent bodies in check and make them accountable? Are we also going to have people that will police the police?"

11.0 Nigeria eGovernment Excellence Awards 2026

The Nigeria eGovernment Excellence Awards 2026 were presented the same evening at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, from 6pm. The ceremony opened with the national anthem and the recognition of state delegations.

The awards spanned four tracks: federal government ministries, departments and agencies; state governments; the private sector; and individuals. Thirty-eight awards were presented across categories covering digital infrastructure, revenue digitalisation, healthcare digitisation, cybersecurity leadership, broadband infrastructure, policy leadership and digital governance.

11.1 Methodology

The defining feature of the 2026 awards was the voting process. Approximately 33,000 votes were cast, and category results were announced with vote counts and percentages. In one category reported from the podium, the winner was announced with 254 votes representing 45.4 per cent of votes cast in that category.

The methodology was addressed directly from the podium, in terms that distinguished the exercise from awards conferred without process. "There are awards and there are awards in Nigeria today. Anybody can get any award," one speaker said, before describing his own participation in the vote. "If you have 33,000 people voting, it means that this went through a very strenuous, tedious process that shows the integrity of the people behind this."

Dr. Vincent Olatunji returned to the same point. "Being able to gather about 33,000 votes is not a small thing. That shows how scientific what they are doing here tonight is. It is not only about gathering people and calling some people to pay

money and give awards to them. It shows that you have carried out your empirical studies and critically analysed, and which people can fact-check. So for every awardee tonight, it is not that you have just been picked. It is that you have merited it," he said.

He charged the recipients to treat recognition as an obligation. "When you are recognised, it calls for more work. For all that are going to win this night, I especially appeal to you to go back, roll up your sleeves again, restart the engine. Let the work continue," he said.

He closed with an argument for indigenous capacity. "The whole world is moving. Nobody is waiting. We have to be innovative, we have to be creative, bring new ideas. But for us in Nigeria, we need to develop our own solutions that can compete with anyone in any part of the world. We have the talents, we have the people, we have the knowledge, we have the skills, we have the potential. It is only for us to put our heads together, have a vision, and pursue it rigorously," he said.

11.2 Chairman's remarks

The Chairman of the Summit, Engr. Lanre Ajayi, marked the transition from deliberation to recognition. "A few hours ago, in this very hall, we sat together as a community of digital governance practitioners, policymakers, innovators and advocates, and we asked the hard questions about technology, elections, democracy and the digital future of Nigeria. We discussed, we debated, we challenged one another, and I believe we left this room better equipped, better connected and more committed to the work ahead," he said.

"Now the conversations give way to the celebrations: the kind of presentation that comes with a trophy, a standing ovation, and the overwhelming knowledge that your work has been seen, your impact has been measured, and your excellence has been named," he said.

The full list of award categories, winners and official citations is published separately.

12.0 Challenges Identified

The summit identified the following challenges to the mainstreaming of technology in Nigeria's election management.

1. **Last-mile connectivity and power remain the binding constraints.** Election technology fails where there is no redundant path out of a ward, where a fibre cut has no alternative route, and where polling units sit on islands of connectivity. BVAS devices without power result in a return to manual collation.
2. **Electoral technology is procured in cycles rather than maintained as standing capacity.** The practice of procuring, deploying and celebrating technology once every four years, and leaving it fallow between cycles, was identified as incompatible with the concept of mainstreaming.
3. **Systems are not tested rigorously ahead of deployment.** The summit heard that testing must begin well before an electoral cycle, and that off-cycle elections represent opportunities to test that are currently underused.
4. **The legal framework for electronic evidence is incomplete.** While electronic evidence is admissible in Nigerian courts, the source of that evidence and the question of who may plead it are insufficiently specified, creating a risk that electoral data downloaded from public portals will be rejected at trial.
5. **Public institutions do not match private sector resilience.** The contrast between the reliability of banking and payment infrastructure and that of public electoral systems was attributed to the absence of equivalent accountability structures and performance obligations.
6. **Data protection practice across the electoral chain is uneven.** Risks identified included data breaches and leaks where controllers have not implemented appropriate technical and organisational measures, voter profiling, third-party and vendor risk, surveillance, and the resulting voter apathy.

7. **Public confidence in the custody of national data has been damaged.** The summit heard of the sale of citizens' personal data and of a major breach affecting a very large number of records, and heard that the absence of consequences invites repetition.
8. **Digital literacy remains a serious constraint.** Over 65 per cent of rural communities include citizens who cannot read or write and who do not understand the technology being deployed, and civic awareness of the Electoral Act itself is low.
9. **Investment in indigenous software capacity is insufficient.** Software attracts approximately 0.3 to 0.5 per cent of the federal budget and contributes less than 0.2 per cent of GDP, limiting the industry's capacity to build and export electoral technology.
10. **Deliberate network disruption around elections.** The summit heard allegations of network degradation on election days arising from collusion rather than technical failure, and heard that such disruptions have contributed to Nigeria's declining digital rights standing.
11. **Right of way remains a barrier to deployment.** Rights of way continue to be treated by many states as a revenue opportunity rather than as enabling infrastructure, delaying fibre deployment to the communities that need it most.

13.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the summit.

1. **Testing of electoral technology must begin immediately and continue between electoral cycles.** INEC should be formally requested by the industry associations to commence robust testing of all electoral systems now, using off-cycle elections as live test opportunities ahead of 2027.
2. **Treat right of way as national electoral infrastructure.** Rights of way should be harmonised and priced so that operators can deploy where voters live rather than only where deployment is commercially attractive, and should

not be treated primarily as a source of state revenue.

3. **Adopt a Dig Once policy in every state that will host a collation centre.** Where roads are opened, ducts should be laid once and shared among multiple operators. Repeated excavation in the same season as voter registration and elections produces repeated cable cuts that are then attributed to technology failure.
4. **Protect the physical layer of the network.** Vandalism of fibre and towers should be treated as an attack on the electoral process. The implementation of the Critical National Information Infrastructure order was commended, and the NCC, operators and security agencies were asked to extend equivalent support to state governments and state-level regulators.
5. **Design electoral technology for the network Nigeria actually has.** Systems should be built with offline capability, store-and-forward functionality and redundancy, while the underlying network is improved.
6. **Standardise polling unit energy provision.** A standardised Polling Unit Energy System, combining solar photovoltaic generation, battery storage, grid supply and generator capacity around an intelligent direct current bus, should be adopted. Such installations should be designed as reusable public infrastructure serving health and other government services between elections, not as electoral equipment alone.
7. **Specify the law on electronic electoral evidence.** The legal framework should be amended to define the admissible source of electronic electoral evidence and the parties entitled to plead it in court, so that data obtained from official portals can be relied upon in election petitions.
8. **Distribute custody of results.** Consideration should be given to distributed ledger technology that places verifiable copies of results with the courts and political parties as well as with INEC, providing a tamper-evident record against which contested results can be checked.
9. **Hold public institutions to private sector standards of resilience.** Public institutions responsible for electoral and identity systems should be subject to

published performance and resilience obligations comparable to those the financial sector accepts.

10. **Strengthen data protection across the whole electoral chain.** Every data controller at federal, state, local government and ward level should implement appropriate technical and organisational measures, observing data anonymisation, purpose limitation, storage limitation and security. Service level agreements with third-party vendors must bind them to equivalent standards, since the controller remains liable for processor breaches.
11. **Ensure that custodians of national identity and electoral data are demonstrably non-partisan,** and address insider threat within data-holding institutions, since public confidence in electoral data cannot be separated from confidence in those who hold it.
12. **Build the trust architecture alongside the technology.** Deployment of DNSSEC, multi-factor authentication, intrusion prevention, data loss prevention, database activity monitoring and security operations centres should accompany any expansion of electoral technology.
13. **Treat digital literacy and civic awareness as electoral infrastructure.** Sustained programmes are required for rural and non-literate populations, alongside public education on the content of the Electoral Act and on distinguishing authentic electoral information from misinformation.
14. **Increase public investment in indigenous software capacity,** with the explicit objective of building Nigerian electoral technology that can be exported, following the precedent of countries that have commercialised their eGovernment solutions internationally.
15. **Escalate the outcomes of this summit to decision makers.** The recommendations of the summit should be formally transmitted to INEC, the relevant federal agencies and state governments without delay, and the industry associations should adopt a common position and pursue it.
16. **States should build the enabling environment rather than duplicate federal functions,** concentrating on broadband and fibre infrastructure,

right-of-way facilitation, power and infrastructure resilience, digital skills, public-private partnerships and infrastructure mapping.

14.0 Conclusion

The eighth Nigeria eGovernment Summit established a clear position on its theme. Nigeria has settled the question of whether technology belongs in its elections. What remains unsettled is whether that technology can be moved from periodic procurement to permanent national capacity.

The summit's recurring conclusion was that the decisive constraints are not technological. They are infrastructural, legal, institutional and behavioural. Connectivity and power at the last mile, a legal framework that makes electoral data provable in court, accountability structures that oblige public institutions to match private sector resilience, and demonstrable trustworthiness in the custody of citizen data were each identified as prerequisites that technology alone cannot supply.

The summit also recorded genuine progress: accreditation times reduced by up to 80 per cent, biometric verification that has materially reduced impersonation, the first deployment of data protection officers within INEC, state fibre networks reaching every local government area in Edo State, 30,000 kilometres of shared duct under development in Lagos, and over 20,000 citizens trained in digital skills in Anambra State.

As the Chairman observed in closing the welcome address, it is decisions rather than discussions that transform nations. The task that follows this summit is the transmission of its recommendations to those with the authority to act on them, in good time before 2027.

Rapporteur: Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2026