

Policy Matters



Your weekly digest of policy reports that **matter**.
Edited by [Toby Green](#) and [Gary Price](#) of *Policy Commons*.

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Is this newsletter real?

Or was it made by generative AI? While we confess that we do use generative AI as an assistant, these words were written by a human. So was [this comprehensive report on synthetic content](#), which explores the range and risks of generative AI content and, importantly, sets out various strategies and technical approaches to mitigate them.

AI and the excluded

Access to AI—along with its development and governance—is concentrated among a handful of Global North countries. [This paper](#) introduces the concept of the excluded “Global AI Majority” and proposes practical remedies to increase their voice in, and access to, AI governance and capabilities.

Internet and the excluded

Like many remote workers, I’m writing this in a café, using their wifi. But as a new report shows, I’m one of the lucky ones. Half the world’s population is still offline—or rather, they’re on a spectrum of offline-ness. [This illuminating report](#) examines the need for a deeper understanding of digital connectivity and the technologies that have proven to be effective in bridging the digital divide.

Screen time is bad for students

[A new NBER paper](#) examines how mobile app use at a Chinese university affected grades and postgraduation wages. It’s ugly. An increase in phone usage of just one standard deviation lowered grades by a third, and wages were lower too. Worse, a screen-addicted roommate boosts your own use, when you could be in the library studying.

Cybersecurity: what if a gamekeeper turned poacher?

What if legitimate cyber tools and services are captured by bad actors and turned against society? [This paper](#) from RUSI provides an in-depth analysis of how regulatory frameworks, corporate governance, legal standards, diplomatic engagement, and integration into security ecosystems all play a role in the proliferation of these capabilities. [A companion paper](#) from Chatham House sets out policy options.

Insidious. Systemic. Hidden in plain sight.

Australia’s Race Discrimination Commissioner, Girdharan Sivaraman, said of a [new report](#), “The racism described is...systemic. Everyday racism is hidden in plain sight.” The report urges the government to set up a whole-of-society anti-racist agenda.

Will carbon capture work?

Santos, an Australian gas giant, has ambitious plans to convert the nearly depleted Bayu-Undan gas field in Timor Leste into the world’s largest carbon capture and storage (CCS) facility. [This report critically examines](#) the technical, financial, legal, and environmental risks. It highlights concerns about the feasibility of long-distance CO2 transportation, storage capacity, and potential leakage risks.

Other reports that caught our eye last week:

- The most authoritative global source of energy analysis and projections: [IEA’s World Energy Outlook 2024](#)
- [Tech Equity in Action: Transforming the innovation economy for inclusive economic growth](#)
- [A study on the impact of Plan S](#) (Hint: too early to say, except that it has boosted hybrid journals.)

Search of the week: biopiracy

We had no idea biopiracy was a thing until we scanned the issues being discussed at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, COP16, which opens this week in Colombia. So naturally, we [took a look](#) in *Policy Commons* and found content going back to the late 1990s.

Policy Matters on the road

In November, both Gary and Toby look forward to seeing you at the [Charleston](#) conference. Bring your feedback on how we’re doing!

Do you use EndNote, Mendeley, or Zotero?

We’ve just added COIs to all the items in *Policy Commons*. COIs—Content Object Identifiers—have been designed specifically for policy reports and to work alongside DOIs. Now it’s just as easy to cite, share, and track policy reports as it is any journal article. In *Policy Commons*, you’ll find each item’s COI above its title (look for the little orange “C”) and when you click the “Cite” button.

Thanks for staying informed with *Policy Matters* from *Policy Commons*. We choose reports from definitive sources around the globe that are data-rich and timely. Most often they’ll be hot off the press, but sometimes we’ll include older reports we’ve just uncovered.

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