

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**
POWERED BY YOUNG PEOPLE



**CIVIC-TECH TOOLS AND
YOUTHS' PARTICIPATION
IN NIGERIA ELECTIONS:
ACCOUNTABILITY AND
TRANSPARENCY.**



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Executive Summary.

Systemic issues and challenges threaten accountability and transparency in Nigerian elections.

Over time, young people from all regions of the country have teamed up at the local and national levels to champion causes to strengthen accountability and transparency in the country's elections. Lending support to these activities are civic development actors using tech-driven tools. This research examines the impact of digital technology-driven civic engagement initiatives on accountability and transparency in the Nigerian political system, recognising the pivotal role of technology in shaping modern-day democracy. Given the growing importance of civic tech in promoting citizen engagement and government accountability, understanding its influence on transparency and accountability is paramount in fostering democratic governance in Nigeria.

A mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, was employed to explore the role of civic tech in enhancing accountability and transparency. 2,600 Nigerian youths were surveyed, and 25 were engaged in a Focus Group Discussion and Interviews to gather insights from diverse perspectives, ensuring comprehensive analysis.

The research revealed that 85.7% of Nigerian youths are inclined towards participating in electoral engagement, with 63.9% relying on civic tech tools for political participation. Civic technology was found to influence voting decisions among respondents, highlighting its potential to shape electoral outcomes and foster political awareness.

Civic tech was observed to have gender-specific impacts, including increased visibility of women in politics and advocacy for gender-specific policies. Despite its potential

benefits, the research found that adopting Civic technologies is difficult to use because of challenges such as digital literacy gaps, limited internet access, and technical glitches, which hinder their widespread adoption and effectiveness.

To harness the potential of civic tech in elections, the government needs to enhance data accessibility, strengthen civic tech integration, and promote digital literacy among government officials. In addition, young people should actively engage in civic activities, leveraging civic tech platforms, and advocate for institutional reforms. There is a need for accelerated collaborations among civic tech innovators and leaders to innovate, empower communities, and advocate for policy change. Community leaders nationwide must promote civic engagement, facilitate dialogue, and lead by example in upholding transparency and accountability. There's a need for civil society to forge collaborations in designing and implementing innovative solutions that further strengthen the impact of civic tech in Nigeria. There's a need for young persons nationwide to scale the usurpation of civic tech tools for activities focused on holding politicians accountable and improving accountability.

This research's findings underscore civic technology's transformative potential in advancing accountability and transparency in the Nigerian political system. By addressing challenges and implementing the recommendations outlined, stakeholders can leverage civic tech to strengthen democratic governance, empower citizens, and foster a more inclusive and transparent political environment in Nigeria.

2,600

Nigerian youths were surveyed

25

were engaged in a Focus Group Discussion and Interviews

86%

Nigerian youths are inclined towards participating in electoral engagement

64%

relying on civic tech tools for political participation

→ **“To harness the potential of civic tech in elections, the government needs to enhance data accessibility, strengthen civic tech integration, and promote digital literacy among government officials”**

Introduction.

The political landscape of Nigeria is undergoing a significant transformation, driven in part by the growing political involvement of its youth population.

With 70% of the country under 30¹, young Nigerians' voices and actions can shape the nation's future². In a democracy, accountability and transparency in governance are paramount for the legitimacy and success of political processes. Civic technology (civic tech) has emerged as a promising means to foster citizen engagement, promote political accountability, and enhance transparency within the Nigerian political system. According to the World Bank, Civic Tech is “the use of digital technologies to support a range of citizen engagement processes”. It also refers to using internet-based resources, platforms, and technology to enhance public sector transparency and oversight, enhance citizens' engagement, and improve public service delivery.

After the 2023 General Election, non-governmental organisations and international development institutions invested substantially in technology-driven tools to bolster civic engagement among the nation's youth². These tools extend beyond mere participation in elections; they empower young Nigerians to contribute to the

political discourse actively, hold election stakeholders accountable, report irregularities, and combat the scourge of misinformation and fake news. Through mobile applications, online platforms, and data-driven initiatives, these civic tech tools can significantly impact the credibility and fairness of the election process.

This study examines the role and impact of civic tech tools in shaping political participation, accountability, and transparency in Nigeria. This is to influence the practice of civic engagement and policy-making in Nigeria by exposing the strength of civic tech and how it can be enhanced to further the development of accountability in Nigeria's democratic space. By exploring these tools' advantages, challenges, and outcomes, the study sheds light on their significance in strengthening the fabric of Nigerian democracy. The research approach is designed to ensure intersectionality, allowing us to understand how civic tech influences the political engagement of both young men and women in Nigeria.

This study answers the following questions:

- 1 What civic technology tools and platforms are young Nigerians utilising for political participation, accountability, and transparency?
- 2 What facilities and challenges do young people in Nigeria encounter when using civic technology to increase political participation, accountability, and transparency?
- 3 How does civic technology affect accountability and transparency in the Nigerian political system?
- 4 How well does it enable youth political engagement outside of elections?
- 5 What impact have these tech tools had on curbing the spread of fake news and misinformation in Nigerian governance and politics, taking into consideration gender-specific experiences?

70%

of Nigeria's population are under 30

- According to the World Bank, Civic Tech is “the use of digital technologies to support a range of citizen engagement processes”.
- After the 2023 General Election, non-governmental organisations and international development institutions invested substantially in technology-driven tools to bolster civic engagement among the nation's youth.

Research Approach and Methodology.

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to holistically explore the dynamic relationship between civic tech, youth political engagement, and governance accountability in Nigeria. To achieve this, the following research methods were employed:

Literature Review.

The study commenced with an extensive literature review to build a solid theoretical foundation and gain insights into existing knowledge regarding civic tech, youth participation, and accountability within the Nigerian context⁴. The researcher reviewed published journal articles and industry reports that delved into civic engagement, youth involvement in the election, gender inclusion of electoral laws and policies, and the impact of technology in enhancing civic engagement. Works related to the thematic areas that focus on Nigeria or parts of Nigeria were considered when choosing literature for the review.

Surveys.

Surveys serve as a primary quantitative data collection method for this study. These surveys were distributed among a diverse sample of young Nigerians to gather information on their utilisation of civic tech tools, their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages, and the impact of these tools on their political engagement, as well as their views on governance accountability and transparency⁵. The proportion sample size was used to calculate the minimum sample size, confidence level and margin of error. As a result of the calculation, 2,600 young persons were sampled for this study. The individuals sampled include young women and girls from across the regions of Nigeria. The data was collected using Google Forms and the KoboCollect Platform. The Kobocollect tool was deployed to ensure that the data reflects the perception of people who do not necessarily have access to the Google form or the internet.

Interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including civic tech organisations, youth activists, government officials, women leaders and experts in the field. Twenty-five stakeholders from across different sectors were interviewed for the study⁶. At least five people from each category mentioned were interviewed to provide a robust view of stakeholders working on civic engagement and accountability in Nigeria. These interviews offered valuable in-depth insights into their experiences, perspectives, and recommendations concerning civic tech for youth political participation, accountability, and transparency. The population interviewed was gender inclusive.

Focus Group Discussions.

To delve deeper into emerging themes and facilitate qualitative data collection, focus group discussions were organised with young Nigerians actively engaged with civic tech platforms⁷. These discussions provided a platform for participants to share their experiences, challenges, and successes in using civic tech for political engagement. Youth advocates, women groups, civic tech innovators, civil society organisations (CSOs), government representatives, community leaders, academics and researchers, community leaders, and tech tool users were engaged in FGDs.

This approach was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impact of civic tech tools on youth political participation and governance in Nigeria. Intersectionality was a central consideration throughout the research process.

Data Analysis.

Literature Review.

The analysis of the literature review involved synthesising existing knowledge on civic tech, youth participation, accountability, and transparency in the Nigerian context. The literature review commenced with a search using keywords and Boolean operators. The findings were synthesised after filtering out irrelevant resources and integrating them based on trends and patterns of the works. The process identified key themes, trends, and gaps in the literature. Emphasis was placed on literature explicitly focusing on Nigeria or regions within Nigeria. The analysis provides a theoretical foundation for the research, highlighting areas where civic tech has been impactful and where further investigation is needed.

Surveys.

Survey data analysis encompasses a quantitative approach involving statistical techniques to draw insights from the responses of the young Nigerians surveyed. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise survey responses, providing an overview of civic tech usage, perceived advantages and challenges, and its impact on political engagement, accountability, and transparency.

Interviews.

We adopted a qualitative approach to analyse the interview data. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights from the interviews with key stakeholders. Transcripts of interviews were carefully reviewed, coded, and categorised into themes related to civic tech's role in youth political participation, accountability, and transparency. Particular attention was paid to gender-specific experiences and recommendations provided by the interviewees. This analysis allows for a nuanced understanding of the perspectives and experiences of diverse stakeholders.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Data analysis for FGDs also followed the qualitative approach. Transcripts and notes from FGDs were reviewed and analysed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis offered a deeper understanding of the experiences, challenges, and successes of using civic tech for political engagement. Special attention was given to gender-related discussions within the FGDs, as they can shed light on gender-specific issues in civic tech usage and its impact.



Literature Review.

3.1

The development of democracy and the electoral system in Nigeria.

The development of Nigeria's electoral system has been characterised by a complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors, shaping the nation's democratic trajectory⁸. From its independence in 1960, Nigeria embarked on a journey marked by periods of democratic transitions and military rule, each leaving its imprint on the electoral framework. The pre-independence elections under British colonial rule laid the foundation for Nigeria's electoral history, albeit with significant colonial influence⁹. The 1964 elections marked a turning point. They allowed for greater participation and representation yet revealed vulnerabilities within the electoral system that ultimately led to the demise of the First Republic.

Subsequent attempts at democratic governance, such as the Second Republic in 1979, were met with challenges, including legitimacy concerns and military intervention. The transition to democracy in 1999 brought renewed hope, but elections continued to face issues of rigging, violence, and a lack of internal

party democracy¹⁰. Despite progress in subsequent polls, challenges persisted, prompting reforms to enhance the electoral process's efficiency and credibility.

One notable advancement in recent years has been integrating tech-driven tools and mechanisms by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other stakeholders. Biometric voter registration and electronic transmission of results are among the innovations aimed at streamlining the electoral process and reducing fraud. These technological advancements have contributed to increased transparency and accountability, albeit with room for improvement. Nigeria's electoral journey reflects a complex evolution of progress, challenges, and reforms. While significant strides have been made in enhancing the efficiency and credibility of the electoral system through technological innovations, continued efforts are needed to address the remaining challenges and further strengthen democratic governance in Nigeria.

3.2

The Impact of Nigerian Accountability and Transparency Landscape on Public Trust.

In any democratic society, transparency, accountability, and public trust are crucial for effective governance. In Nigeria, challenges such as electoral fraud, corruption, and declining public confidence in the government underscore the need to examine the relationship between public trust and the accountability and transparency framework. Historical factors, including electoral fraud and broken promises, have contributed to the erosion of public confidence in Nigeria's government. Transparency in electoral operations is essential, as evidenced by the significant drop in public faith due to widespread fraud and corruption during elections. Efforts to address these challenges, such as establishing the Uwias Electoral Reform Committees, aimed to increase public trust but have yet to overcome implementation obstacles¹¹.

Various studies shed light on the challenges and opportunities within Nigeria's democratic governance landscape. Olu-Adeyemi¹² and Yagboyaju¹³ Okeke's study on democratic consolidation acknowledged achievements while addressing obstacles hindering progress, emphasising the importance of overcoming impediments for a robust democratic system. It highlighted Nigeria's struggle for good governance through democracy since independence and the erosion of trust over the years due to historical electoral practices¹⁴. Odo's study on leadership challenges advocated for resolving factors hindering effective leadership, including the need to educate and empower young leaders¹⁵.

Iroghama's study on political trust determinants found that trust in Nigeria's government is influenced by factors such as corruption management and economic performance¹⁶. Nigeria's poor performance in global governance indices further reflects governance, accountability, and transparency challenges, contributing to the erosion of public trust. Addressing the impact of the Nigerian accountability and transparency landscape on public trust requires comprehensive reforms. Strengthening legal frameworks, incorporating electoral reforms, and enhancing anti-corruption efforts are essential to rebuilding public trust. Initiatives to improve citizens' understanding of their role in the democratic process and the importance of transparent governance can also contribute to rebuilding public trust.

Civic tech can facilitate access to information, enhance civic engagement, and foster transparency in governance processes. By leveraging civic tech solutions, Nigeria can address the challenges highlighted in the research and rebuild public trust in its democratic institutions¹⁷. Integrating civic tech tools into Nigeria's electoral system and governance framework can contribute to a more transparent, accountable, and trusted government, ultimately strengthening democracy and promoting sustainable development¹⁸.

Literature Review.

3.3

Youths' Absenteeism and Women's Exclusion from Polls in Nigeria.

Nigeria's democratic environment is characterised by complex issues, including youth absenteeism and women's lack of active engagement in polls. The relationship between the systematic exclusion of women from the political process and youth absenteeism in Nigeria highlights severe flaws in the country's democratic structure¹⁹. Youth absenteeism in Nigerian politics is a pressing concern that demands meticulous scrutiny. Despite the energetic nature of the youth demographic, their underrepresentation in polls raises questions about the democratic health of the nation. Understanding the factors contributing to youth absenteeism involves a comprehensive analysis of Nigeria's socio-political landscape. Structural conditions, economic crises, and political underrepresentation are foundational issues shaping the youth experience²⁰. These challenges include high unemployment rates, limited access to quality education, and inadequate healthcare services. Additionally, the lack of youth representation in decision-making processes further marginalises their voices and hinders their engagement in political activities.

Economic factors play a pivotal role in youth absenteeism. High levels of unemployment and poverty create an environment of frustration where the youth feel they have 'nothing to lose' and 'perhaps something to gain' by abstaining from political processes²¹. This weakened the ability of political and civic organisations to foster democratic practices, perpetuating youth disenfranchisement. Political violence, often linked to youth participation, can be viewed as a consequence of economic constraints and a feeling of hopelessness. The 'youth clientelism model' provides a lens through which to understand how political elites exploit the energy and drive of young people for their political gains.

In tandem with the challenges of youth absenteeism, the exclusion of women from active participation in Nigerian politics is a persistent issue that demands critical examination. Despite constitutional provisions that theoretically endorse equal rights for men and women in politics, the reality is starkly different. The historically low representation of women in Nigerian politics, especially in the National Assembly, reflects deeply ingrained gender inequalities and societal norms that hinder women's political progress. Over the years, historical observations have highlighted the negligible representation of women in the

early republics, emphasising the persistent lack of recognition of the gender component in democracy²². The patriarchal system entrenched in traditional and socio-political structures continues to denigrate the role of women in politics, relegating them to second-class citizens in the political sphere²³.

The absence of women from party politics in Nigeria has far-reaching consequences for the political and electoral processes. Erunke and Abdul²⁴ trace the gender bias in Nigeria's political system to the colonial era, highlighting the historical roots of women's marginalisation. The need to recognise women's potential and contributions to governance perpetuates their underrepresentation in decision-making structures, creating an imbalanced political landscape. The implications of women's exclusion extend beyond numerical representation. Women's perspectives and concerns are often marginalised in political discourse, and gender-related issues may need to be addressed. As noted by Dovi²⁵, female legislators face the challenge of persuading their male counterparts to pass gender-sensitive measures, as male-dominated legislatures tend to prioritise issues from a male perspective.

The absenteeism of youths and excluding women from active political participation in Nigeria are critical issues that warrant immediate attention. Understanding the nuanced factors contributing to youth absenteeism, including economic challenges and a sense of disempowerment, is essential for designing effective strategies to engage the youth in democratic processes. Addressing women's exclusion requires dismantling deeply rooted patriarchal structures and aligning domestic policies with international commitments. The rejection of measures aimed at domesticating international agreements highlights the urgency of institutional reforms. Achieving genuine gender equality in Nigerian politics necessitates concerted efforts to challenge cultural norms, empower women economically, and create an inclusive political environment.



Literature Review.

3.4 Technology in driving participation and engagement of women and youths in governance in Nigeria.

For decades, researchers working on social and political science within and outside of Nigeria have focused resources on understanding the development of civic engagement in the country. Studies have mainly focused on the inclusion of women, youths, and people with disabilities²⁶. Even though much work has been done on civic engagement and youth participation in Nigeria, few scholarly contributions have examined the use of tech-driven tools to enhance the development of Nigerian democracy, particularly the inclusion of traditionally marginalised groups.

Oarhe Osumah's work, "Paradigm Shift: Youth Engagement in the Conduct of the 2015 Elections in Nigeria," is one of the few studies to appraise recent developments within civic space and youth engagement²⁷. The work explores a paradigm shift in youth engagement during Nigeria's 2015 general elections. Contrary to historical negative perceptions of youth involvement, the study reveals a transition from destructive to constructive engagement. The dual motivation theory was employed to elucidate this shift. The authors asserted that, in prior elections, youth involvement, driven by a need to alter outcomes, took on destructive forms. However, the 2015 elections witnessed a positive transformation, with youth driven by a duty to participate in public affairs. The author attributes this change to a growing awareness of youth as agents of change, amplified by social media and other tech-driven tools. The shift in the rate of youth engagement in the electoral processes was contextualised within the challenges faced in earlier elections, where youth were manipulated for destructive political roles, including thuggery. The 2015 elections showcased positive initiatives such as peace

campaigns, voter education, and election monitoring. The paper emphasises the role of social media in fostering this change and highlights the successes of the elections, which were marked by peaceful reactions and improved outcomes. The synthesis of the dual motivation theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding this evolution in youth political conduct.

Sule et al.'s research delves into the pivotal role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), specifically the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (NCSSR), in the democratisation process during Nigeria's Fourth Republic²⁸. Focusing on the 2015 and 2019 General Elections, the study employs a qualitative case study method, interviewing NCSSR members, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) representatives, and academicians. The NCSSR significantly contributed to the success of the elections through pre-election, during the election, and post-election activities. It engaged in proper monitoring and civic voter education, collaborated actively with INEC, and partnered with international donor agencies through a "Civil Society Situation Room" comprising over 60 registered CSOs. The study recommends empowering CSOs constitutionally and financially for effective performance. The authors emphasise the role of civil society as a third tier of government, operating independently but closely cooperating with the state. The article traces the historical context of civil society in Nigeria, highlighting its active role in pressuring the military to cede power in 1999. The study underscores the critical role of CSOs, particularly the NCSSR, in fostering democratic governance and credible elections. The research recommends sustained

collaboration between CSOs and electoral bodies for future elections, advocating for constitutional support and independent funding to strengthen their impact.

Ayeni and Esan explore the transformative impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the electoral process in Nigeria from 1999 to 2017. Acknowledging the historical prevalence of electoral malpractices, the authors highlight the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) strategic adoption of innovative technologies to enhance election management. The introduction of the Electronic Voters Register (EVR), Automatic Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS), and Smart Card Reader (SCR) emerged as a turning point²⁹. These technologies successfully mitigate issues like multiple registration and voting, offering a credible solution to the historical challenge of electoral fraud. The e-collation support platform further strengthens the transparency of INEC by reducing manipulation during results. The chronological overview of INEC's technological evolution showcases a progressive move toward efficiency. The researchers commend INEC for adapting to international standards and emphasise the positive correlation between technology adoption and reducing electoral malpractices. While acknowledging the advancements, the study highlights challenges such as delays in collation, authentication failures, and the need for constant register updates. Recommendations include a call for a more sophisticated electronic voter registration system, online tracking of voter card collection, and periodic register updates to ensure accuracy. Incorporating ICT in Nigeria's electoral system is instrumental in minimising electoral fraud, fostering credible elections, and enhancing the

transparency of INEC³⁰. The study underlines the need for continuous technological advancements and proactive measures to address emerging challenges in future elections.

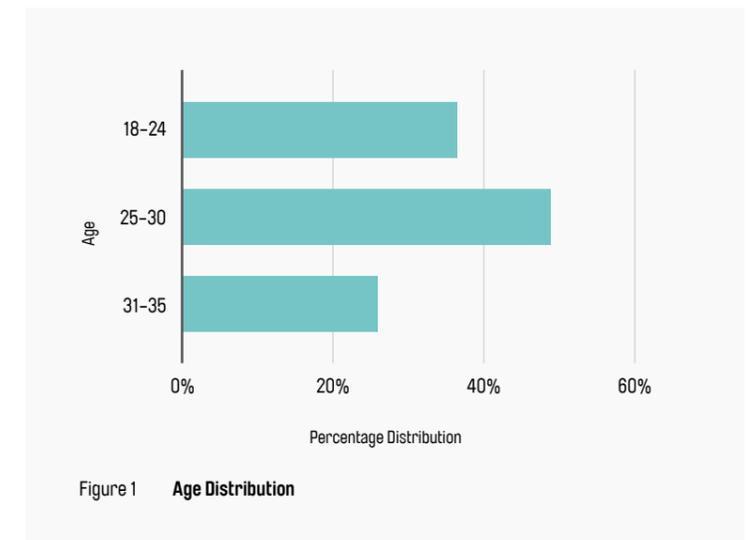
Another work of research that has delved into the thematic areas of the study is Nigeria's Social Media Culture: Exploring Civic Participation of Youths in the 2015 Presidential Election by Doris N. M. and Chinwe E. U. The study explores the transformative impact of social media, mainly accessed through mobile technologies, on political communication and participation among Nigerian youths³¹. The study utilises the Technological Acceptance Model and survey research methods to investigate the influence of social media, specifically during the 2015 Presidential Elections in Nigeria. Findings indicate that mobile text messages and social media updates from politicians influenced voting decisions to some extent. Despite the pervasive nature of social media in Nigeria and the high adoption of mobile technologies, the study reveals a minimal effect on political engagement. The review underscores the significant role of social media in shaping modern civic and political participation, citing examples from global political campaigns, such as Barack Obama's use of social media during the 2008 election. It emphasises the growing use of social media in Nigerian elections and the increasing internet adoption rate, especially among youth. However, the study highlights challenges, including time constraints, poor mobile services, and distractions, that could have improved the expected level of political engagement through mobile devices during the 2015 election.

Survey Findings.

Age Distribution of respondents.

The age distribution of the respondents demonstrates a notable concentration within the younger demographic cohorts, with individuals aged 18 to 30 comprising most participants. Specifically, respondents aged 18 to 24 constitute approximately 35.8% of the total sample, indicating a substantial representation of this youthful age group. Moreover, individuals aged 25 to 30 represent the largest segment, comprising approximately 50.1% of the respondents, thus indicating a significant prevalence of individuals in their late twenties. Conversely, respondents aged 31 to 35 constitute a

smaller proportion, accounting for approximately 14.1% of the total sample. This distribution underscores a pronounced emphasis on younger age brackets, suggesting a heightened interest or engagement among individuals in their late teens to early thirties in the subject matter under investigation. Such an age distribution may reflect broader trends in technological adoption, political awareness, or social activism within younger demographics, thereby informing subsequent analyses and interpretations within the research context.



Participation of Respondents in Elections.

The respondents' reflections regarding their involvement in elections indicate a notable inclination towards electoral engagement, with 85.7% of participants affirming their active involvement in voting processes. This statistic reflects a significant civic responsibility and political participation level among the surveyed individuals. The majority's willingness to exercise their voting rights suggests a commitment to democratic principles and a recognition of the importance of electoral participation in shaping governance and decision-making processes.

Conversely, 14.3% of respondents did not vote during elections. While this percentage represents a minority within the sample population, it is still noteworthy as it may signify various factors influencing non-participation, such as disenchantment with the political system, logistical challenges, or ideological disengagement. Understanding the motivations behind voting and abstention can offer valuable insights into the dynamics of civic engagement and contribute towards efforts to foster greater electoral inclusivity and participation.

50%
of respondents are aged 25 to 30, representing the largest segment

36%
of respondents are aged 18 to 24

86%
of participants affirming their active involvement in voting processes

Survey Findings.

Frequency of participants' engagement in electoral activities.

The responses provided by the respondents indicate a varied level of participation in elections since the restoration of democracy in Nigeria in 1999. A notable portion, constituting 39.4% of the respondents, reported participating in two elections during this period, suggesting a consistent engagement with the democratic process. Meanwhile, 23.1% of respondents indicated participation in a single election, reflecting a somewhat lower level of involvement. A smaller yet significant proportion, accounting for 12.5% of the respondents, reported participating in three elections, indicating a sustained commitment to exercising their democratic rights. Conversely, only a minority of respondents, totalling 5.6%, reported involvement in four elections, suggesting a relatively higher level of civic

engagement.

Interestingly, 5.7% of respondents reported participating in five elections, further underscoring their ongoing dedication to the electoral process. A minority of 5.0% of respondents reported engagement in six elections, demonstrating a deep-seated commitment to democratic participation. Finally, 8.8% of respondents reported participation in seven elections, representing the highest level of engagement among the surveyed population. These diverse responses highlight the varying degrees of civic involvement and commitment to democratic principles among Nigerian citizens since the advent of the Fourth Republic.

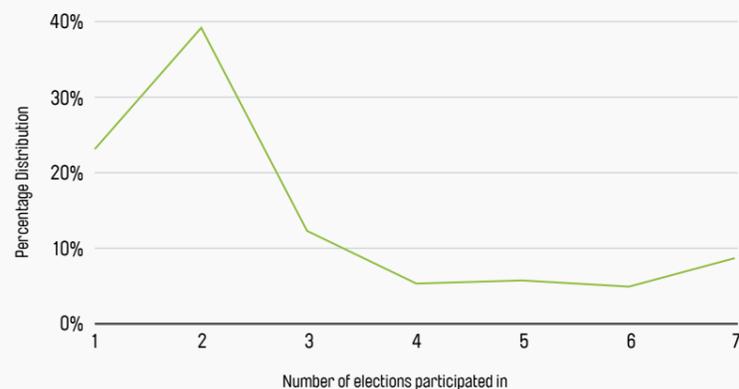


Figure 2 % vs How many elections have you participated in since the return to democracy in 1999?

Influence of Civic Tech on Participants.

Based on the statistical breakdown of responses, it is evident that a significant majority, comprising 64.8% of the respondents, affirmed that the use of civic tech tools indeed influenced their choice of voting in their first election experience. This finding underscores civic tech platforms' growing importance and impact in shaping young voters' political decisions. The substantial proportion of respondents indicating a positive influence suggests a notable engagement level with digital tools to enhance civic participation and political awareness. Conversely, a

minority of 16.7% responded negatively, indicating that civic tech did not influence their voting choice, while a smaller percentage of 18.5% remained neutral. These contrasting viewpoints highlight the diverse perspectives and experiences among individuals regarding the role of technology in electoral decision-making. Further qualitative exploration may be warranted to delve deeper into the specific mechanisms through which civic tech tools influence voting behaviour and elucidate the factors contributing to variations in respondent perceptions.

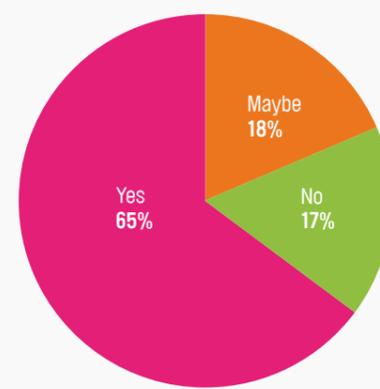


Figure 3 Level of civic tech influence on participation in elections

39%

of the respondents, reported participating in two elections during this period, suggesting a consistent engagement with the democratic process.

23%

of respondents indicated participation in a single election, reflecting a somewhat lower level of involvement.

65%

of the respondents, affirmed that the use of civic tech tools indeed influenced their choice of voting in their first election experience.

Survey Findings.

Participants' First Time Participating in General Election.

The data illustrates the respondents' first-time voting experiences in general elections across various years. Most respondents (39.7%) reported that their initial participation in a general election occurred in 2019, reflecting a significant proportion of first-time voters during that electoral cycle. This surge in first-time voters in 2019 may be attributed to several factors, including heightened political awareness and engagement among younger demographics and concerted efforts by electoral authorities and civil society organisations to mobilise citizens to exercise their voting rights.

Furthermore, the substantial representation of first-time voters in 2019 underscores the pivotal role of youth in shaping the outcome of elections and influencing political dynamics in contemporary Nigerian society. Conversely, prior electoral cycles saw relatively lower percentages of first-time voters, with responses ranging from 5.2% in 2003 to 12.0% in 2015. These variations may reflect fluctuations in voter turnout, changes in political landscapes, and evolving sociopolitical contexts, underscoring Nigeria's dynamic nature of electoral participation.

40%

reported that their initial participation in a general election occurred in 2019, reflecting a significant proportion of first-time voters during that electoral cycle.



Furthermore, the substantial representation of first-time voters in 2019 underscores the pivotal role of youth in shaping the outcome of elections and influencing political dynamics in contemporary Nigerian society.

The popularity of Civic Tech Tools among participants.

The responses to the question regarding familiarity with civic technology tools/platforms used for political engagement in Nigeria indicate a notable level of awareness and engagement among the respondents. With 70.3% of participants affirming their familiarity with such tools, it is evident that most of the sample population possesses knowledge of civic technology platforms to facilitate political engagement. This high level of awareness suggests a growing interest and recognition of the potential impact of technology in fostering civic participation and accountability within the Nigerian political landscape. However, it is

noteworthy that a % of respondents, comprising 15.8%, indicated a need for more familiarity with civic technology tools, highlighting the importance of further education and awareness campaigns to enhance understanding and uptake of these platforms among the broader population. The minority response of 13.9% may suggest a degree of uncertainty or ambiguity among some participants regarding their familiarity with specific civic tech tools, emphasising the importance of clear communication and accessibility in promoting the adoption of such platforms for political engagement.

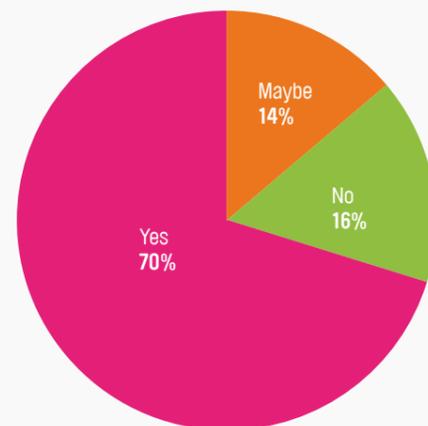


Figure 4 The popularity of civic tech tools among participants

Rate of Usage of Civic Tech Tools.

According to the survey data, most respondents, comprising 63.9%, reported having utilised civic apps available online at some point in time. This indicates a notable level of engagement and familiarity with digital tools to promote civic participation and political engagement among the surveyed population. Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents, accounting for 20.5%, indicated they had not used any civic apps online. This minority response may suggest varying levels of access to technology, differing preferences for traditional modes of political engagement, or limited awareness of available civic tech platforms among specific segments of the

surveyed population. Notably, a minority of respondents, representing 15.5%, responded with uncertainty or neutrality regarding their usage of civic apps online. This ambiguous response category could reflect a need for more clarity or recall among respondents regarding their past interactions with civic tech platforms, highlighting the importance of precise wording and clarity in survey design. Overall, the survey findings underscore individuals' diverse attitudes and experiences towards civic tech usage, emphasising the nuanced nature of digital engagement in civic participation.

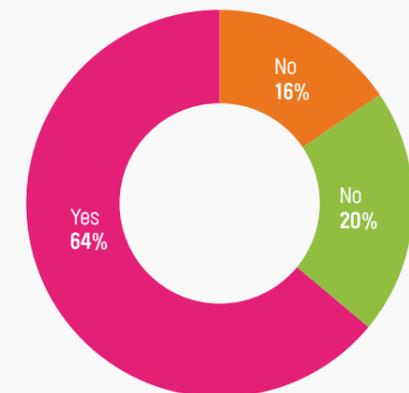


Figure 5 Rate of usage of civic tech tools

Survey Findings.

Challenges to employing civic tech tools among young persons.

Responses regarding the challenges encountered when using civic tech for political engagement provide valuable insights into the complexities inherent in leveraging technology for civic participation. A significant proportion of respondents, constituting 35.7%, highlighted difficulties stemming from their limited knowledge of effectively utilising the available tools. This underscores the importance of enhancing digital literacy and providing comprehensive training programs to empower users with the necessary skills to navigate civic tech platforms proficiently. Additionally, issues related to user-friendliness and accessibility were cited by 10.3% of respondents, indicating the need for intuitive design and interface optimisation to ensure inclusivity and usability across diverse user demographics. Furthermore, language differences emerged as a notable concern for 8.8% of respondents, emphasising the necessity of multilingual support and localisation efforts to accommodate

linguistically diverse populations.

Moreover, a substantial proportion of respondents, totalling 27.6%, identified limited access to reliable internet as a significant barrier, highlighting the persistent digital divide and the imperative of expanding internet infrastructure and connectivity initiatives to bridge this gap. Additionally, 5.2% of respondents cited limited civic education as a hindrance, emphasising the importance of comprehensive civic education programs to cultivate informed and engaged citizenry. Lastly, technical glitches were identified by 12.4% of respondents, underscoring the importance of robust technical support and maintenance mechanisms to ensure the seamless functioning of civic tech platforms. Overall, these responses underscore the multifaceted challenges that must be addressed to maximise the efficacy and accessibility of civic tech for political engagement.

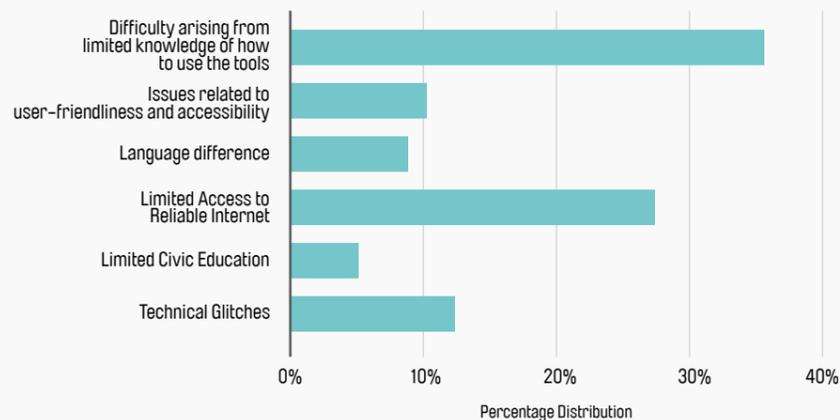


Figure 6 Have you encountered any difficulties or challenges using civic tech for political en a ement?

Impact of Civic Tech on Political Accountability in Nigeria.

According to the survey responses, opinions regarding the impact of civic technology on political accountability in Nigeria vary significantly among respondents. A notable portion, constituting 38.9% of participants, believed in the slight influence of civic technology on political accountability. This group likely perceives civic tech as contributing marginally to enhancing accountability mechanisms within the political landscape. Conversely, 26.2% of respondents indicated a firm conviction in the significant impact of civic technology on political accountability. This subset likely views civic tech as a catalyst for

promoting transparency, encouraging citizen oversight, and holding government officials accountable for their actions.

In contrast, 25.4% of participants held a more moderate stance, suggesting a belief in the mild influence of civic technology on political accountability. Lastly, 9.6% of respondents expressed scepticism, stating that civic technology has not impacted political accountability in Nigeria. This segment needs to be more pessimistic regarding the efficacy of civic tech tools in fostering accountability within the country's political sphere.

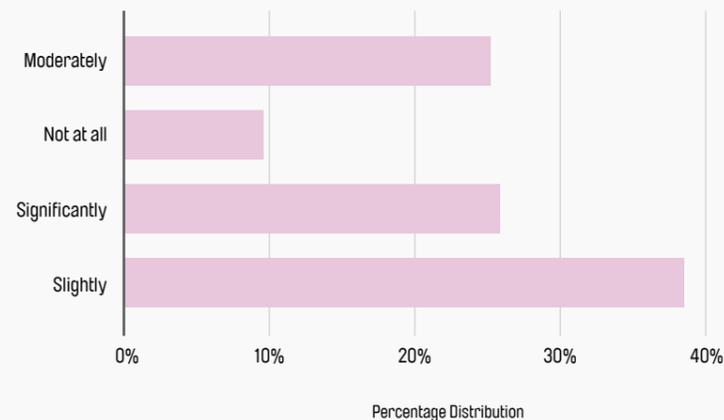


Figure 7 In your opinion, how has civic technology impacted political accountability in Nigeria?

36%

highlighted difficulties stemming from their limited knowledge of effectively utilising the available tools.

28%

identified limited access to reliable internet as a significant barrier, highlighting the persistent digital divide and the imperative of expanding internet infrastructure and connectivity initiatives to bridge this gap.

39%

of participants, believed in the slight influence of civic technology on political accountability



Survey Findings.

Influence Civic Technology on Transparency in the Nigerian Political System.

According to the survey data, a significant majority of respondents, comprising 64.2%, perceive that civic technology has led to an improvement in transparency within the Nigerian political system. This finding underscores the transformative potential of civic tech in fostering greater openness and accountability in governance processes. The substantial proportion of respondents attributing increased transparency to civic technology suggests that these digital tools and platforms have effectively enhanced access to information, facilitated public scrutiny of government actions, and promoted greater accountability among political actors. However, it is noteworthy that a minority of respondents, constituting 3.7%, expressed a contrary view, indicating a perceived

decrease in transparency associated with civic technology. While this perspective warrants further investigation, it is evident that the prevailing sentiment among respondents aligns with the notion that civic technology has positively impacted transparency within the Nigerian political landscape. Nonetheless, a notable % of respondents, totalling 20.4%, indicated that they perceive no significant impact of civic technology on transparency. Comprising 11.7% of the participants, other respondents expressed uncertainty regarding the influence of civic technology on transparency, highlighting the complexity of assessing the multifaceted dynamics of technological interventions in the political sphere.

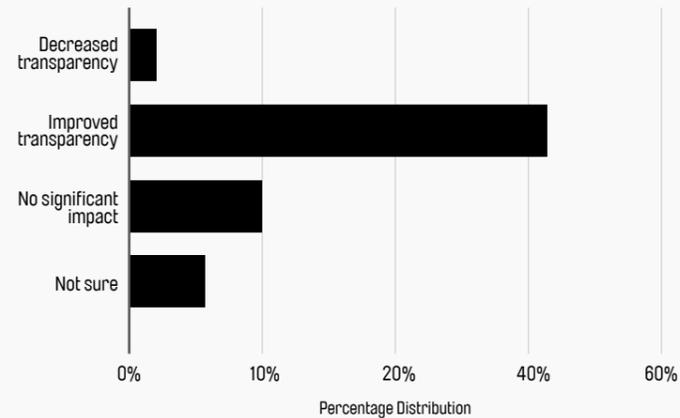


Figure 8 Influence of civic technology on transparency in the Nigerian political system?

Influence of Civic Tech on Youth Political Engagement during Post-Election Periods.

The survey data indicates the prevailing sentiment among respondents regarding the extent to which civic tech tools enable youth political engagement outside of election periods. Remarkably, a substantial majority of participants, constituting 66.10%, assert that these tools facilitate political engagement to only a small extent, suggesting a prevalent perception of limited efficacy in leveraging civic tech for sustained political involvement outside of electoral cycles. Conversely, a notably lower proportion, 5.90%, expressed that

civic tech enables significant engagement, indicating a minority belief in the transformative potential of such tools in fostering continuous youth participation in political discourse and activism. Meanwhile, respondents attributing a moderate degree of efficacy account for 14.30%, indicating a modest acknowledgement of the utility of civic tech but with reservations regarding its overall impact. The minority, at 13.80%, contend that civic tech tools do not enable political engagement outside elections.

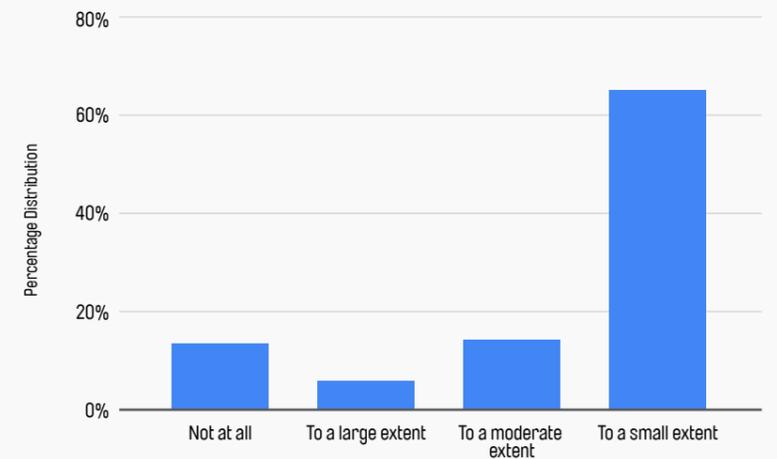


Figure 9 Influence of civic technology on transparency in the Nigerian political system?

Survey Findings.

Influence of Civic Tech Tools on the Menace of Fake News.

According to the survey results, a significant majority of respondents, constituting 67.50%, expressed the belief that civic tech tools have indeed played a crucial role in curbing the spread of fake news and misinformation within the Nigerian governance and political spheres. This resounding affirmation underscores the perceived efficacy of civic tech interventions in addressing the pervasive issue of misinformation, which has long plagued the country's political

landscape. Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents, comprising 14.40%, disagreed that civic tech tools have effectively mitigated the spread of fake news, indicating a degree of scepticism or reservation regarding the impact of such technological solutions. Meanwhile, a notable subset of respondents, totalling 18.10%, expressed uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the effectiveness of civic tech tools in combating misinformation.

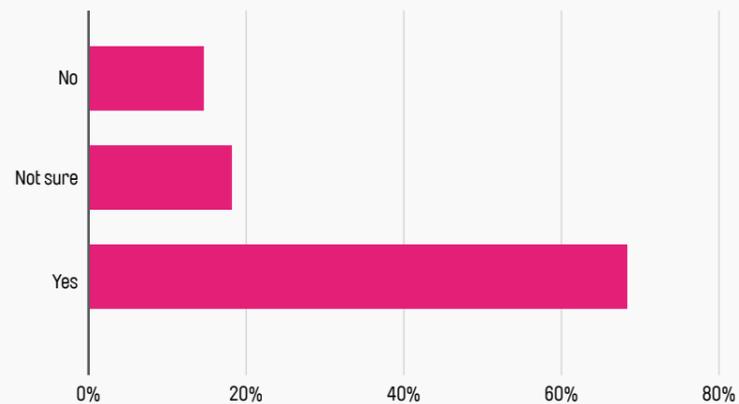


Figure 10 Influence of Civic Tech Tools on the Menace of Fake News

Gender and the Impact of Civic Technology in Nigeria.

The survey results reveal significant gender-specific impacts of civic tech on political engagement, with a notable majority (60.50%) of respondents affirming their observation of such effects. Among the identified impacts, the increased visibility of women in politics emerges as the most prevalent, with 42.30% of respondents acknowledging its significance. This trend underscores the transformative potential of civic tech platforms in challenging traditional gender dynamics within political spaces by providing women with opportunities for more excellent representation and participation. Additionally, access to gender-specific information garnered notable attention, with 17.50% of respondents highlighting its importance. This suggests that civic tech is pivotal in facilitating women's access to tailored political information, thus empowering them to make informed decisions and

actively engage in political discourse.

Moreover, the advocacy for gender-specific policies (10.40%) and online support communities (11.20%) further indicate the instrumental role of civic tech in fostering a supportive environment for women's political participation and advocacy. However, it is noteworthy that other impacts, such as amplification of women's voices (5.50%) and real-time participation in decision-making (6.10%), garnered relatively lower percentages, suggesting potential areas for further exploration and enhancement in leveraging civic tech to address gender disparities in political engagement. These findings underscore civic tech's multifaceted and transformative potential in promoting gender-inclusive political spaces and advancing women's participation in the democratic process.



Discussion.

The utilisation of civic technology tools and platforms among young Nigerians for political participation, accountability, and transparency represents a burgeoning phenomenon in the contemporary socio-political landscape of Nigeria. As the digital age continues to reshape traditional modes of civic engagement, civic tech presents a unique opportunity to empower citizens, particularly the youth demographic, in shaping governance, fostering accountability, and promoting transparency within the Nigerian political sphere.

Civic Tech Tools in Nigeria.

Nigeria's experience with civic technology is consistent with more significant global trends toward digital innovation and information democratisation. The widespread availability of mobile devices, internet access, and social media platforms has led to a growing trend among young Nigerians to utilise digital tools for political expression, organising group actions and holding public authorities

responsible. Civic technology has the potential to democratise access to information, elevate the voices of the underprivileged, and encourage direct communication between the public and decision-makers. In Nigeria, it catalyses information on the importance of engaging with the government and political activities.

“
We've never witnessed the political awareness and interest level recorded during the 2023 General Election. There was an enormous employment of social media and other technology, and we all saw the following results: increased interest among Gen Z and Gen Alpha.
”
— Male, Media Practitioner.

Young Nigerians use various civic technology tools and platforms to enhance political participation, accountability, and transparency. Among the most widely used tools are mobile applications, social media platforms, and online forums dedicated to political discourse and civic engagement. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram serve as virtual spaces for young Nigerians to discuss political issues, share information, and organise grassroots movements. These platforms enable real-time communication, disseminate news and updates, and empower citizens to amplify their voices on matters of public interest. In examining young Nigerians' civic technology tools and platforms for political participation, accountability, and transparency, it is evident that diverse digital resources are employed to facilitate civic engagement. The survey findings reveal a notable level of familiarity and usage of civic tech platforms among the surveyed population, with approximately 70.3% of participants affirming their awareness of such tools. This suggests a growing recognition of the potential of technology to enhance civic participation and promote transparency within the Nigerian political sphere. Notably, the popularity of online civic apps underscores the importance of digital platforms in fostering political engagement among young Nigerians, reflecting a shift towards technologically mediated modes of civic interaction.

Discussion.

“

Compared to periods preceding the advent of technology-driven advocacy and engagements, youths are beginning to engage with government and politicians. Especially with social media.

— Male, Youth Group Representative

”

With social innovators and not-for-profit leaders investing in developing mobile applications and websites to enhance civic engagement in Nigeria, citizens, especially young persons, are being offered opportunities to form coalitions to build engagement of government officials and politicians. Like social media platforms, mobile applications dedicated to civic engagement are catalysing transparency and accountability in Nigeria. Tracks.ng, FollowTheMoney, and YouthsGovTrackaare are catalysing engagement with public office holders and simplifying information critical to accelerating engagement with government. With tech-driven platforms, citizens can access important information such as budgets and lists of approved government contracts in simplified and visually appealing forms, reaching millions.

“

The innovativeness of the civic tech space is continually growing. There is a need to develop tools that meet the needs of every sect of Nigerian communities. One important improvement is using radio and USSD codes to increase engagement with people who cannot access smartphone applications or even the world wide web.

— Male, Media Practitioner

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Challenges Impeding the Use of Civic Tech Tools among Young Persons in Nigeria.

“

Nigerians are not using the tools being developed by innovators enough. Compared to the population of persons who have access to smartphones and the internet, the number of people engaging with mobile applications and websites is insignificant.

— Female Civil Society Leader

”

Despite the widespread adoption of civic technology tools, the survey data also illuminates challenges young Nigerians encounter in leveraging these platforms for political participation, accountability, and transparency. One significant obstacle identified by respondents is the need for more knowledge of how to effectively utilise civic tech tools, with 35.7% citing difficulties arising from a lack of digital literacy. This underscores the importance of investing in comprehensive training programs and digital literacy initiatives to empower users with the necessary skills to navigate civic tech platforms proficiently. Issues related to user-friendliness and accessibility were highlighted by 10.3% of respondents, emphasising the need for intuitive design and interface optimisation to ensure inclusivity across diverse user demographics. Language differences emerged as a notable concern for 8.8% of respondents, underscoring the importance of

multilingual support and localisation efforts to accommodate linguistically diverse populations.

Limited access to reliable internet represents a significant barrier to civic tech usage, with 27.6% of respondents identifying this as a considerable challenge. This highlights the persistent digital divide within Nigerian society and underscores the need for concerted efforts to expand internet infrastructure and connectivity initiatives to bridge this gap. Technical glitches were cited by 12.4% of respondents as a hindrance, emphasising the importance of robust technical support and maintenance mechanisms to ensure the seamless functioning of civic tech platforms. Lastly, limited civic education emerged as a challenge for 5.2% of respondents, underscoring the importance of comprehensive civic education programs to foster informed and engaged citizenship.

Discussion.

“

There is a major digital divide in Nigeria, and it is impeding the success of technological advancements in the civic engagement space. The divide involves people's level of exposure, access to the internet and trust in the tools being developed. A lot of Nigerians do not trust 'internet things'. People have been scammed online, and many have heard stories of others being scammed. The lack of trust in the internet has continually limited the uptake of tools targeted at increasing civic engagement in Nigeria.

— Male, Academia.

”

→ **Civil society organisations and civic tech entities have played a pivotal role in promoting dialogues and shaping attitudes towards transparency and accountability in the Nigerian political sphere through various technologies.**

Civic Tech's Impact on Transparency and Accountability in Nigeria

Civil society organisations and civic tech entities have played a pivotal role in promoting dialogues and shaping attitudes towards transparency and accountability in the Nigerian political sphere through various technologies. These initiatives go beyond just changing legislation; they also aim to change how the public views civic space and present chances for creative fixes to Nigeria's historical election problems. The cornerstones of contemporary democracy are universally acknowledged as accountability and transparency, guaranteeing that citizens hold public officials accountable and that the public has easy access to vital information about

government activities. By enabling the public to hold politicians responsible, these programs reduce the likelihood of corruption in the public sector by providing access to data and information about public affairs. The goal is to foster a culture of civic engagement and participation in Nigeria, ensuring that citizens are actively involved in shaping the future of their country. Through these initiatives, there is an opportunity to strengthen democracy and promote good governance by empowering individuals to participate in decision-making actively.

“

We have recently witnessed ease in tracking the government's work and promises. The use of social media by civic tech institutions and the development of tech-driven platforms make it easy for people to share information about projects around them and learn about such government activities. This is not the case before the age of social media and technological advancements in civic developments.

”

Discussion.

Over the years, Nigeria has faced difficulties with obsolete data, information that may be too complicated for non-technical audiences, and government data shrouded in secrecy. Apart from civic tech endeavours, several digital instruments, such as social media networks like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), have been utilised to promote transparency and accountability projects. These platforms act as channels for sharing condensed datasets with a broader audience, making it simple and efficient for target audiences to obtain necessary

information. Stakeholders hope to increase citizen engagement and awareness by bridging information gaps and improving accountability and transparency in Nigerian politics through digital platforms. These platforms allow for real-time interaction and citizen feedback, creating a more dynamic and responsive environment for civic engagement. By leveraging the reach and accessibility of social media, stakeholders aim to empower citizens to hold government officials accountable and participate in decision-making processes.

“

One of the very opportunities being offered to citizens by civic technology is the power to communicate for elected and appointed government officers in real-time. Reporting and communications with government, even security agencies, have become easier.

— Female Civil Society Leader.

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There is the need for more applications that help members of the vulnerable groups to report crimes. People sometimes want to report cases of sexual and personal violence and other crimes, too. It can be made easier with technology that anonymises their identities.

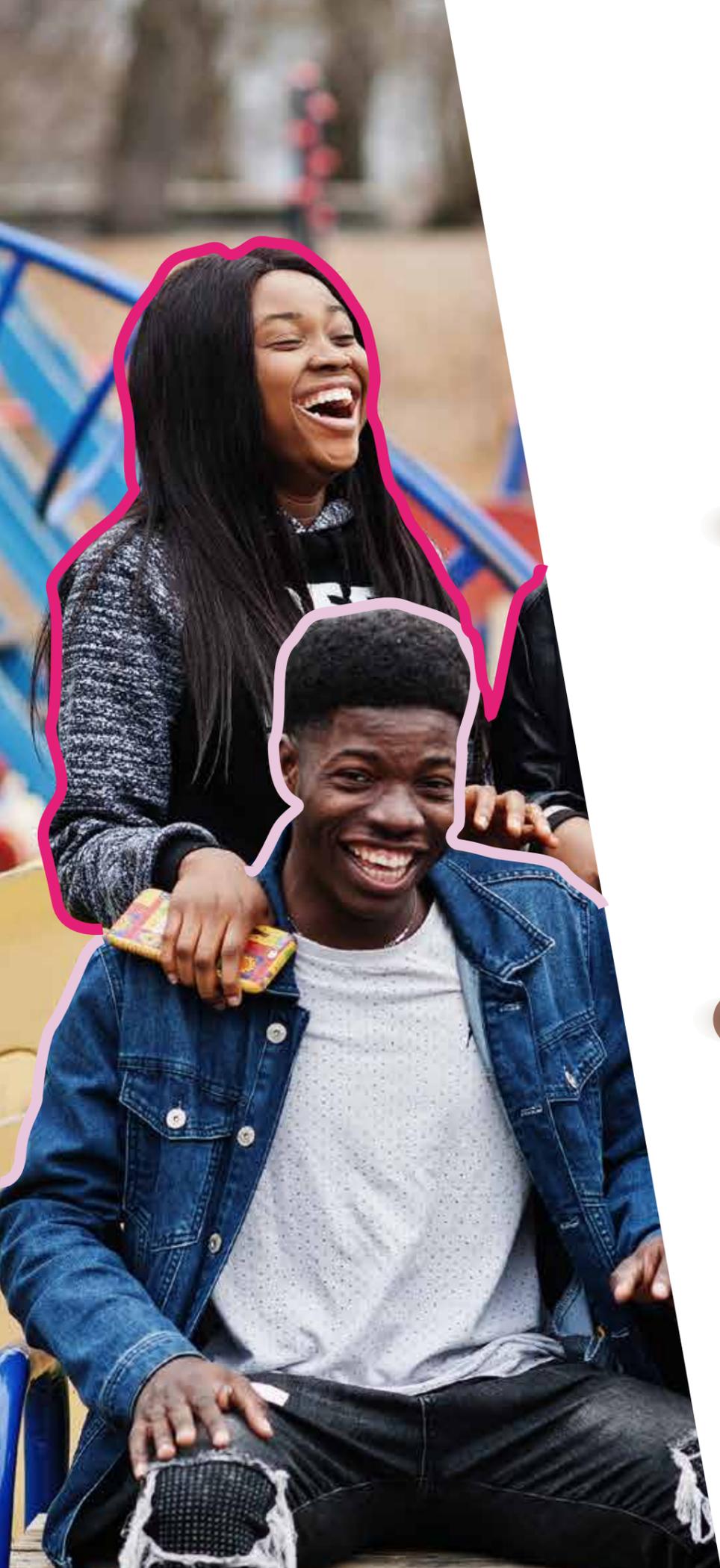
— Female Student (Gen-Z)

”

Outside of the electioneering period, using tech-driven tools aided the development of engagement platforms for accountability and transparency. Youths can develop and publish petitions. Tools like Change.Org enable young persons to communicate their concerns collaboratively. Issues relating to corruption, abandoned projects, and policy advocacy are being championed using technology that leverages mobile apps and social media platforms after the

completion of election circles. With FactCheck Africa and other fact-checking tools, media houses and civil society organisations are leading the course in enabling systemic empowerment of the people to filter the information they act upon during and after the election. Experts in the development sector have identified a need for more tech-driven tools targeted at other public interests besides engagement with politicians.





Recommendations.

Recommendations for the Government:

Enhance Data Accessibility: The government should prioritise efforts to increase the accessibility of public data and information. This can be achieved by implementing policies that mandate the timely publication of government data in user-friendly formats, ensuring that information is readily available to all citizens.

Strengthen Civic Tech Integration: Government agencies should collaborate with civic tech organisations to leverage innovative technological solutions to promote transparency and accountability. This collaboration can involve supporting the development and implementation of civic tech tools that facilitate citizen engagement and oversight of government activities.

Promote Digital Literacy: Initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy among government officials and civil servants should be implemented to ensure the effective utilisation of digital platforms for transparency and accountability purposes. Training programs and workshops can be organised to equip government personnel with the necessary skills to navigate and leverage digital tools effectively.

Enact Transparent Policies: The government should enact and enforce policies that promote transparency and accountability in governance. This includes measures to ensure public access to information, protection of whistleblowers, and stringent penalties for corrupt practices.

Recommendations for Youths:

Engage Actively: Youth participation in civic and political processes is crucial for fostering accountability and transparency. Young people should actively engage in civic activities, including voting, advocacy, and community organising, to hold government officials accountable and demand transparency.

Utilise Civic Tech: Young Nigerians should use civic tech platforms and tools to amplify their voices, access information, and hold authorities accountable. Youth can shape a more transparent and accountable political system by actively participating in civic tech initiatives.

Advocate for Reform: Youth-led advocacy campaigns should be launched to push for institutional reforms that promote transparency and accountability in governance. By advocating for policy changes and institutional reforms, young people can drive positive change and ensure government responsiveness to citizen needs.

Recommendations.

Recommendations for Civic Organizations and Social Innovators:

Collaborate and Innovate: There is a need to collaborate to develop innovative solutions that promote transparency and accountability. By pooling resources and expertise, cohorts of organisations can create civic tech tools and initiatives more impactful in addressing specific transparency and accountability challenges.

Empower Communities: Another route to accelerate civic engagement in Nigeria is to focus on empowering communities to demand transparency and accountability from government institutions. This will be achieved through grassroots mobilisation, capacity-building workshops, and community-led monitoring initiatives that empower citizens to hold authorities accountable.

Development of Gender-Responsive Tools: Organizations working on developing civic tech tools should implement need assessments focused on the needs of people of all genders and incorporate findings into already deployed and designed products. This will ensure inclusion and accelerate adoption across all sects of people within the Nigerian communities.

Advocate for Policy Change: Civic organisations should advocate for policy changes strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms. This may involve lobbying policymakers, conducting research to inform policy decisions, and mobilising public support for legislative reforms.

Recommendations for Community Leaders:

Promote Civic Engagement: Community leaders play a pivotal role in promoting civic engagement and accountability at the local level. They should encourage community members, especially youth, to participate in civic activities, attend town hall meetings, and engage with local government officials.

Facilitate Dialogue: Community leaders should facilitate constructive dialogue between citizens and government authorities to address transparency and accountability issues. By creating platforms for dialogue and collaboration, community leaders can foster trust and cooperation between communities and government institutions.

Lead by Example: Community leaders should lead by example by demonstrating transparency and accountability in their actions and decision-making processes. By upholding high ethical standards and promoting open communication, community leaders can inspire trust and confidence among community members and government stakeholders.

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