Ministry of Electronics & IT

Advancing Inclusive Voice Technologies in India: Launch of Policy Report and Developers' Toolkit

Posted On: 21 FEB 2026 1:05PM by PIB Delhi

Voice technologies are becoming foundational to digital inclusion in India, shaping how millions access public services, information, and the digital economy. Against this backdrop, a new **Policy Report and Developers' Toolkit on voice technologies** was launched at the India AI Summit Expo 2026 on February 20, 2026 to set out a policy and practice framework supporting open, inclusive, and responsible voice technologies.

The Policy Report and Developers' Toolkit were jointly developed by **ARTPARK @IISc, Digital Futures Lab and Trilegal** with support from **Digital India BHASHINI Division** and the **FAIR Forward - AI for All initiative, implemented by GIZ (German Development Cooperation) funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**, bringing together research, technical expertise, and ecosystem collaboration to advance responsible speech technologies in India.

In a linguistically diverse country like India, voice technologies represent a critical layer of digital public infrastructure, lowering barriers to digital access through speech-based applications. However, the development and deployment of speech technologies also raise complex questions around data governance, inclusion, openness, quality, and responsible use. Addressing these challenges requires alignment between policy frameworks, technical practices, and ecosystem-level coordination.

The Policy Report examines key barriers to building open and responsible speech systems in India - from data collection and model development to infrastructure and governance practices. It proposes targeted policy recommendations to strengthen the voice-technology ecosystem, including treating foundational speech datasets as digital public goods, improving openness and representativeness of models, investing in sustainable public infrastructure, and embedding safeguards to prevent misuse while enabling innovation.

The Developers' Toolkit complements the policy analysis by highlighting key challenges faced by developers working with Indian-language voice datasets and building voice applications. It identifies structural gaps within India's speech and language technology ecosystem, including uneven data representation, weak quality assurance mechanisms, limited evaluation practices, and fragmented governance structures. Recognising that exclusionary outcomes are often embedded throughout the development lifecycle, the toolkit introduces a layered, lifecycle-oriented approach to building inclusive and robust speech AI systems. It presents practical approaches currently adopted across India's voice-technology ecosystem to address challenges from product conceptualisation through deployment.

"*As India moves decisively toward a voice-first digital ecosystem, it is imperative that we build this transition on strong policy foundations and practical implementation frameworks. In a country of immense linguistic diversity, voice technologies are not merely an innovation, they are an instrument of digital inclusion. The Policy Report and Developers' Toolkit launched today provide a structured roadmap for building open, inclusive, and responsible speech technologies in India. While the policy recommendations guide ecosystem alignment, the Developers' Toolkit translates these principles into actionable practices across the AI lifecycle—from data collection and model development to deployment and governance. As voice technologies mature, standards, evaluation frameworks, and technical toolkits will continue to evolve. This journey will also require systematic re-engineering of existing digital and IT infrastructures to make voice journey enabled,multilingual, and interoperable. Through collaborative ecosystem efforts, we can ensure that voice becomes a foundational layer of India's Digital Public Infrastructure, bridging language, literacy, and digital divides at scale*".- Shri Amitabh Nag, CEO, Digital India BHASHINI Division*

"*The Report is full of best practices and lessons learned – from and for policymakers and the tech community alike. For BMZ, it is also about advancing a shared vision for digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide. For millions of people, voice is the most natural and powerful interface to the digital world, especially for those with limited literacy or access to digital infrastructure. When voice AI works in local languages and dialects, it becomes a gateway to public services, health care, education, and economic participation.*"- Dr. Ariane Hildebrandt Director-General of the department for global health, equality of opportunity, digital technologies and food security; German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Curated through a series of interactions with linguists, technical experts and AI ethicists, the policy report and developer's toolkit are an important addition to BHASHINI's expanding work in voice-first multilingual solutions for India, to bridge communication gaps and break down linguistic and digital barriers.

About the Partners

Digital India BHASHINI Division

Digital India BHASHINI Division is an AI powered language translation platform, bridging literacy, language, and digital divides. BHASHINI is redefining communication through innovative VOICE Multilingual AI Solutions. The mission is to make language and technology accessible to everyone through voice-first multilingual solutions for seamless communication, the largest co-creation AI platform driving collaboration and innovation, & by breaking language, literacy, and digital barriers for inclusivity.

GIZ and FAIR Forward - Artificial Intelligence for All

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a federal enterprise with more than 50 years experience in international cooperation. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ implements the project "FAIR Forward - Artificial Intelligence for All" which strives for a more open, inclusive and sustainable approach to AI globally.

ARTPARK @ IISC

ARTPARK is a startup incubation and accelerator program designed to facilitate the evolution of a startup from innovation to incubation. It enables entrepreneurs and researchers to take ideas from the labs to the market, by bridging the gap between research innovations and their application in solving day-to-day challenges, specifically in the AI and Robotics ecosystem.

Digital Future Labs

Digital Futures Lab is an independent, interdisciplinary research studio that studies the complex interplay between technology and society in India and the Majority World. DFL works to realise pathways toward equitable, safe and sustainable digital futures through evidence-based research, systematic foresight and public engagement.

Trilegal

Trilegal is a full-service law firm in India with over 25 years of experience. The firm advises a diverse set of clients including Fortune 500 companies, global investment funds, major Indian conglomerates, domestic and international banks, technology and media companies, family offices and high net-worth individuals.

Nasscom AI

Nasscom represents the voice of India's $280+ billion technology industry, with a vision to establish the nation as the world's leading technology ecosystem. It brings together a diverse and influential community of over 3,500 member companies, spanning the entire industry spectrum. Nasscom AI, the voice of India's AI ecosystem, is a strategic initiative of Nasscom dedicated to nurturing a vibrant, innovative, and sustainable AI landscape in India. It serves as a unifying platform for ecosystem stakeholders to build AI capabilities, accelerate adoption across sectors, and advance the responsible development and deployment of AI through a wide range of programs and initiatives.

PFA below links to:-

Indic Voice Technologies For An Inclusive Digital India

BUILDING AN OPEN AND RESPONSIBLE VOICE TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM

****

MSZ

(Release ID: 2231128) Visitor Counter : 657
Read this release in: Urdu , हिन्दी , Tamil , Telugu