

# Foreword

The digitalization process in Asia is probably more advanced and more rapid than in any other part of the world. Thanks to the high willingness to use new technologies and adaptability to experiment with existing structure and processes as well as easy access to tremendous amounts of data, Asian countries are leading in the latest data-driven tech development such as artificial intelligence, autonomous driving, e-health and fintech.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought devastating impact to Asia, causing economic and social disruption in many Asian countries. Nevertheless, the pandemic has, on the other hand, also accelerated the digital transformation in the region as governments have to work with the private sector to develop new technical solutions, such as contact tracing apps, to stop the spread of the virus. In addition, other areas such as e-healthcare, e-commerce, remote working and e-mobility were also indirectly strengthened amid the social distancing regulations.

As Asia is playing a more significant role in developing digital technologies, it is now the time to take a deeper look towards Asia in this context. The diverse digital landscape, with national and regional differences, allows us to draw multiple insights from different Asian approaches on responding to the same challenges brought by the process of digital transformation. At the same time, it is important to understand the role of digital policies and guidelines by the various governments in their endeavour of enabling innovation and progress while protecting the users against negative impact like cybercrime and the illegal collection of personal data.

**T**his edited volume “The Next Digital Decade – Spaces and Futures” consists of 12 case studies covering a wide range of topics such as future of work, AI governance, legal innovation, govtech, data governance, fintech and cybersecurity etc., written by scholars and practitioners of all stages of career and from multiple disciplines.

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