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INTERACTION OF THE STATE AND SOCIETY IN THE CONDITIONS OF DIGITALIZATION: PRACTICAL ASPECTS

ВЗАЄМОДІЯ ДЕРЖАВИ ТА СУСПІЛЬСТВА В УМОВАХ ЦИФРОВІЗАЦІЇ: ПРАКТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ

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The article examines the interaction between the state and society in the context of digitalization, focusing on governance, civic participation, and socio-economic development. Digitalization, through ICT in public administration, increases transparency and efficiency, but also creates challenges such as the digital divide, cybersecurity risks, and regulatory gaps. Based on theoretical and empirical sources from Ukraine and abroad, the study shows how e-governance and open data support state-society cooperation. In Ukraine, the Diia app improves service delivery and citizen engagement, though regional disparities remain. Estonia and EU practices demonstrate inclusive digital democracy. The article highlights digital infrastructure, data protection reform, digital literacy, and public-private partnerships as key priorities for more inclusive and effective governance.

Keywords: digitalization, state-society interaction, e-governance, digital divide, civic participation, Ukraine, practical aspects, digital transformation

Стаття досліджує взаємодію між державою та суспільством у контексті цифровізації, зосереджуючись на практичних аспектах, що формують сучасні моделі управління, громадянської участі та соціально-економічного розвитку. Цифровізація як комплексний трансформаційний процес інтеграції інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій (ІКТ) у систему державного управління та соціальні структури сприяє підвищенню прозорості, підзвітності, ефективності прийняття рішень і доступності публічних послуг. Водночас вона породжує низку викликів, зокрема цифровий розрив між різними соціальними групами, ризики кібербезпеки, проблеми захисту персональних даних і наявність регуляторних прогалів. Опираючись на сучасні теоретичні підходи та емпіричні дані з України й міжнародних практик, у дослідженні проаналізовано роль цифрових інструментів, таких як платформи електронного урядування, сервіси електронної демократії та ініціативи відкритих даних, у посиленні взаємодії держави та суспільства. В Україні впровадження цифрових рішень, зокрема застосування «Дія», демонструє значний прогрес у сфері надання адміністративних послуг, підвищення зручності доступу до них та активізації громадянської участі. Однак зберігаються регіональні диспропорції, що обмежують рівний доступ до цифрових можливостей. Міжнародний досвід, зокрема Естонії та країн ЄС, підтверджує ефективність впровадження моделей цифрової демократії, орієнтованих на інклюзивність, відкритість і залучення громадян до процесів прийняття рішень. У результаті дослідження визначено ключові практичні напрями розвитку: модернізацію цифрової інфраструктури, удосконалення політики захисту даних, подолання цифрового розриву та забезпечення рівного доступу до технологій. Обґрунтовано рекомендації щодо посилення цифрової грамотності населення, розвитку публічно-приватного партнерства, а також інтеграції технологій штучного інтелекту для підвищення адаптивності та ефективності державного управління. Підкреслено, що ефективна взаємодія держави та суспільства в умовах цифрової трансформації потребує комплексного підходу, який поєднує інновації, безпеку та соціальну орієнтованість. Результати базуються на сучасних наукових дослідженнях і підтверджують необхідність формування гнучких адаптивних моделей управління в умовах постпандемічного відновлення та глобальних викликів.

Ключові слова: цифровізація, взаємодія держави та суспільства, електронне урядування, цифровий розрив, громадянська участь, Україна, практичні аспекти, цифрова трансформація.



Statement of the problem. The digital transformation of public administration has become one of the central challenges of contemporary governance. The problem is not limited to the introduction of new software, mobile applications, or data platforms. It concerns the way in which the state and society communicate, cooperate, and co-produce public value under conditions where information is processed more quickly, services are delivered more remotely, and expectations for responsiveness are significantly higher.

The relevance of the topic is determined by at least four practical tasks. First, states need to improve the efficiency and transparency of service delivery. Second, they need to expand citizen participation and feedback channels. Third, they must reduce the digital divide so that the benefits of digitalization do not remain concentrated in large cities or among highly skilled users. Fourth, they are required to protect personal data, maintain cybersecurity, and prevent misuse of digital infrastructures. These tasks are especially important for countries undergoing transformation, including Ukraine, where public administration reform, post-war recovery, and European integration intersect.

From a scientific perspective, the problem is significant because it unites several research traditions. Sociology studies the relationship between institutions and civic behavior; public administration examines service design and accountability; political science analyzes participation and legitimacy. The article therefore treats state–society interaction in digitalization as an interdisciplinary field with both theoretical and applied importance.

The social importance of the topic is reinforced by the fact that digitalization intensifies inequalities unless it is guided by inclusive policy [30]. This means that the issue is structural rather than sectoral: it affects governance, labor, education, healthcare, public communication, the present study focuses on practical aspects of digitalization that directly shape state–society relations

Analysis of recent research and publications. The topic of state–society interaction under digitalization has been discussed across sociology, public administration, political science, and communication studies. The main scholarly contribution of this field lies in showing that digitalization is not merely a technical modernization of public services. It is a systemic transformation that changes how institutions make decisions, how citizens

communicate with the state, how civil society monitors power, and how public trust is formed. Ukrainian and international authors increasingly agree that digitalization improves the speed and visibility of public services, but they also stress that this benefit is unevenly distributed. Zhornitska A.A. [1] investigates digital civil society in Ukraine and shows that online tools can strengthen transparency and citizen engagement. Volodenkov S. V. [5] discusses political process transformation in a digitized society and emphasizes that classical governance models must adapt to networked communication. Reshetnikova N. [18] focuses on threats such as cyber risks, privacy problems, and the psychological strain of the information age. Sinko A. S. [4] studies the transformation of information activity in the digital era and notes that the state must adapt its communication logic to faster and more fragmented information flows.

Nagayev V. M. and co-authors [16] interpret e-government as a form of public communication with civil society and show that open data and digital services can increase trust. Korvat O. V. [9] describes the evolution of e-governance into a digital ecosystem, which is important because it shifts the discussion from isolated online services toward interconnected institutional platforms. Diegtiar O. A. [7] develops theoretical aspects of digital democracy in Ukraine and pays attention to e-petitions and other participatory instruments. Kvitka S. A. and colleagues [19] similarly emphasize that public governance must move toward more flexible digital models.

International research also provides important conceptual tools. Eurofound's recent definitions clarify that digitalization concerns the broad transformation caused by digital technologies [30], while its conceptual materials distinguish digitalisation from digitisation and platform coordination [20; 21]. GovStack defines interoperability as the ability of different organizations, systems, and technologies to work together toward shared public service delivery goals [23].

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. The literature offers strong explanations of what digitalization is and why it matters, still several unresolved parts of the problem remain. First, many studies analyze either the technical side or the civic side, but not their practical interaction in a single model. Second, the Ukrainian case is often described through isolated examples such as Diia, while the broader ecosystem of regional inequality, legal reform, and cybersecurity is less fully

integrated. Third, existing work frequently lists the advantages of digitalization but gives less attention to implementation constraints, especially in transitional and conflict-affected contexts. Fourth, there is a need for a clearer linkage between theoretical concepts such as digital democracy, interoperability, and digital ecosystem on the one hand, and measurable governance outcomes on the other.

Formation of the objectives of the article (task statement). The purpose of this article is to analyze the practical aspects of state–society interaction in the conditions of digitalization and to identify the institutional, technological, and social factors that determine the effectiveness of this interaction.

To achieve this purpose, the article addresses the following tasks: (1) to clarify key concepts used in the study of digital state–society relations; (2) to review the most relevant scholarly and policy sources; (3) to summarize the practical experience of Ukraine, Estonia, and the European Union; (4) to identify the major barriers that prevent inclusive and secure digital governance; and (5) to formulate policy recommendations and outline future research directions.

The article is based on the assumption that digitalization improves state–society interaction only when technological innovation is combined with institutional coordination, legal protection, public trust, and digital literacy. In the absence of these conditions, digital tools may remain symbolic, fragmented, or accessible only to a limited part of the population.

Summary of the main research material. Ukraine offers a particularly instructive case

because its digital reforms developed under the pressure of modernization, decentralization, and war-related disruption. The most visible achievement is the Diia platform, launched in 2020, which has become a symbolic and practical center of digital public service delivery [1]. Diia allows citizens to access documents, administrative services, and certain communication channels with the state in a single environment. In practical terms, this reduces bureaucratic time, lowers the number of physical visits to offices, and increases the visibility of the citizen–state relationship.

At the municipal level, platforms such as Kyiv Digital demonstrate that digital governance is not only a national project but also a local one. Municipal apps can integrate transport, utilities, and communication with city authorities. Such systems improve convenience and can increase citizen satisfaction when they are combined with responsive service design. They also show that digital state–society interaction is not limited to legal documents and identification tools; it also includes everyday urban services.

The digital divide – the gap in technology access and literacy – remains a central obstacle in Ukraine, manifesting in rural connectivity issues, age-related gaps, and institutional disparities. While digitalization improves service delivery, it increases cybersecurity risks and infrastructure dependency, necessitating strategic technical and legal support. To assess the practical effectiveness of digital governance regarding inclusion and trust, the below measurable indicators are required.

The comparison confirms that the effectiveness of digital state–society interaction depends

Table 1

Practical indicators of digital state–society interaction

Indicator	Ukraine	Estonia	EU average	Interpretation
Internet penetration	89.6% [27]	~98%	~95% [28]	Higher access usually enables broader digital participation.
Online public services	Diia and related platforms [1]	Nearly all services via X-Road [29]	Broad but uneven coverage	Integrated services matter more than isolated digital tools.
Rural access	Lower than urban areas [26]	Near-universal coverage	91% rural household access in 2023 [28]	Rural inclusion is a decisive factor in equitable governance.
Digital literacy	Uneven and incomplete	Supported by Tiger Leap and later initiatives [30]	Policy priority in the Digital Decade	Skills shape the real usability of digital services.

Source: developed by the author using [1; 26-29]

not only on the availability of technologies, but also on their accessibility, usability, and the degree to which they are embedded in a coherent institutional framework. These findings further support the argument that successful digitalization requires a holistic and long-term approach, combining infrastructure, education, and governance reforms.

Estonia is frequently used as a benchmark because it combines institutional coherence with high digital maturity. The Estonian model is based on secure data exchange, a strong digital identity infrastructure, and a governance culture that values interoperability. The country's e-government system is repeatedly described as user-friendly, transparent, and effective [29]. Its long-term strength is not only that services are online, but that they are integrated into a coherent ecosystem. Estonia also invested early in digital literacy through initiatives such as Tiger Leap and later educational programs [30]. This shows that digital transformation is not only about platforms; it is also about human capacity.

The European Union offers another important frame of reference. Eurofound and Eurostat describe digitalisation as a broad transformation affecting society and the economy [30]. Recent EU data show that in 2023, 95 percent of households in EU cities had internet access, compared with 93 percent in towns and suburbs and 91 percent in rural areas [28]. This indicates that even advanced digital regions continue to

confront rural inequality, although the gap is narrower than in many transition economies.

This perspective aligns with the primary argument of this study: the bond between the state and its citizens is significantly enhanced when digital initiatives are treated as catalysts for, and components of, systemic institutional reform. Consequently, the effectiveness of a digital state is measured not just by its technological output, but by its ability to foster trust and ensure resilience through coordinated policy. To further illustrate these dynamics, we can compare different national and supranational approaches to digital transformation. Table 3 delineates the comparative digital governance models of Ukraine, Estonia, and the European Union, evaluating them across key dimensions such as service architecture, citizen access, and institutional coordination.

Comparing digital governance models demonstrates that the effectiveness of digital governance depends on the degree of systemic integration and institutional maturity. Estonia represents a highly coherent model, where interoperability, standardized processes, and early investments in digital identity and skills have resulted in a resilient and efficient ecosystem. At the European Union level, digital governance is shaped by coordination across multiple member states, which creates both opportunities for standardization and challenges related to uneven implementation. Ukraine, while showing rapid progress and innovation

Table 2

Comparative digital governance model

Dimension	Ukraine	Estonia	EU union level
Service architecture	Multiple platforms with strong flagship solutions.	Integrated data exchange environment centered on X-Road.	Integration is more effective than service-by-service digitization.
Citizen access	High overall access but uneven regional inclusion.	Very high access with strong identity infrastructure.	Accessibility must be combined with usability and inclusion.
Participation	E-petitions and app-based communication growing.	E-voting and digital participation mature.	Participation instruments work best when trust is high.
Institutional coordination	Still fragmented across agencies and regions.	High coordination and standardization.	Interoperability reduces duplication and delays.
Risk environment	Cybersecurity and war-related disruption remain severe.	Security-oriented design built into the ecosystem.	Digital governance requires resilience, not only convenience.
Skills policy	Needs broader digital literacy coverage.	Early and sustained investment in skills.	Human capability is a precondition for technological success.

Source: developed by the author using [19-24]

through flagship solutions, continues to face issues of fragmentation, regional disparities, and heightened risk conditions, particularly in the context of cybersecurity and ongoing external threats.

The development of digital governance does not occur spontaneously; rather, it is the result of consistent policy efforts, early investments in digital infrastructure and human capital, and the gradual implementation of interoperable systems. In this regard, Estonia, Ukraine, and the European Union provide illustrative examples of how digital transformation unfolds over time under different political and economic conditions. The following table systematizes the most significant milestones in the development of digital governance, highlighting the chronological progression of initiatives and reforms that contributed to the formation of modern digital ecosystems.

The timeline shows a clear pattern: successful digital governance is cumulative. Early investments in identity, schooling, and data exchange tend to produce stronger outcomes later. This supports the argument that digitalization is a long-term institutional process rather than a short-term reform. The timeline therefore confirms that successful digital governance is not the result of isolated reforms, but rather of sustained, long-term institutional development. The observed patterns also emphasize the importance of strategic continuity, policy coherence, and investment in both technological and human capital as key drivers of effective digital transformation.

Taken together, these findings suggest several broader conclusions. First, the interaction of state and society in digitalization

conditions is best understood as an ecosystem, not as a chain of isolated services. Second, the quality of digital governance depends on the combination of infrastructure, legal rules, institutional integration, and social capability. Third, citizen participation in digital form does not automatically improve democracy; it must be supported by transparency, trust, and protection from exclusion. Fourth, the Ukrainian case demonstrates that digital success can coexist with regional inequality, meaning that indicators of platform availability are not enough to judge the depth of transformation.

On this basis, several policy directions follow. The first is infrastructure development. Broadband expansion and stable connectivity remain basic conditions for equal access. The second is digital literacy. Citizens, teachers, local officials, and vulnerable groups need practical training in the use of digital public services.. The third is cybersecurity. A resilient state must treat digital security as a core governance function, not as a secondary technical matter. The fourth is legal reform. Laws governing personal data, digital signatures, interoperability, and online participation must be updated in line with modern standards.

The fifth policy direction is public-private partnership. Digital public services are difficult to scale without private technical expertise, telecom investment, and innovation capacity. The sixth is participatory design. Citizens should not only receive services but also help to shape them. This can be achieved through consultations, open data, digital feedback loops, and co-design mechanisms involving civil society and civic-tech organizations. In practical terms, these steps are necessary for moving

Table 3

Key milestones in digital governance

1996	Estonia launches Tiger Leap and begins early digital literacy investment.
1997	Estonia introduces the e-ID card, creating a foundation for secure digital identity.
2001	Ukraine develops early e-government strategy; Estonia expands digital literacy initiatives.
2010	The EU strengthens its Digital Agenda and broadband-related policy priorities.
2014	Estonia expands X-Road as a secure data exchange layer.
2015	Ukraine formalizes digital strategy and the EU advances the Digital Single Market.
2019	Diia is piloted in Ukraine; digital public service experiments intensify.
2020	Diia is officially launched; digital governance becomes a visible national reform.
2021	EU connectivity and digital skills policy deepen under broader recovery programs.
2023	EU digital regulation and rural connectivity remain policy priorities.
2025+	Ukraine expands Diia and related services while reconstruction raises new demands.

Source: developed by the author using [24-30]

from digitization of procedures to transformation of governance.

In the context of strengthening state–society interaction, particular attention should be given to infrastructure development, human capital, institutional interoperability, and trust-building mechanisms. The following table outlines the key actions, responsible actors, and expected results necessary to advance digital governance in a systematic and sustainable manner.

The successful implementation of digital governance reforms depends on a balanced combination of technological, institutional, and social measures. Expanding broadband infrastructure and improving digital literacy directly enhances access and usability, while interoperability of public databases and stronger cybersecurity frameworks contribute to efficiency and trust. At the same time, regulatory modernization and the expansion of e-participation tools ensure that digital transformation remains inclusive and aligned with democratic principles.

Conclusions. The integration of digital services in Ukraine, exemplified by the Diia platform and municipal initiatives like Kyiv Digital, has successfully transformed the citizen–state relationship by centralizing administrative tasks and reducing bureaucratic friction. These reforms demonstrate that digital governance is most effective when it operates at both national and local levels, integrating everyday urban services

with formal legal documentation. However, the Ukrainian experience highlights that high internet penetration does not automatically guarantee equitable participation. A persistent digital divide – driven by geographic disparities between urban and rural areas, as well as gaps in age-related digital literacy – remains a significant barrier to full practical inclusion. The government and stakeholders should prioritize infrastructure investment in rural regions to ensure that high-quality connectivity is consistent across the country. Beyond physical access, there is a critical need for comprehensive digital literacy initiatives tailored to marginalized groups and older demographics to bridge the usage gap. Furthermore, developers should focus on responsive, user-centric service design that prioritizes trust and accessibility to ensure that digital platforms are inclusive by default. Finally, the expansion of municipal-level digital integration should be encouraged in smaller cities and rural communities to ensure that the benefits of decentralization and digital modernization are felt uniformly across all levels of society, regardless of geographic location.

Several innovative directions for strengthening state–society interaction in the digital era can be proposed. First, a transition toward a citizen-centric digital ecosystem model is essential, where public services are designed as integrated user journeys rather than fragmented platforms. Second, the incorporation of AI-assisted

Table 4

Implementation roadmap for strengthening state–society interaction

Action	Responsible actors	Time horizon	Expected result
Expand broadband in underserved regions	Government, telecom operators, donors	2026-2028	Reduced connectivity gaps and better access to services.
Run a nationwide digital literacy campaign	Ministry of Education, NGOs, local authorities	2026-2027	Higher citizen competence and broader platform use.
Integrate public databases through interoperability standards	Ministry of Digital Transformation, IT agencies	2026-2029	Fewer duplications and faster service delivery.
Strengthen cybersecurity and incident response	National cyber units, law enforcement, auditors	2026-2028	More resilient systems and greater public trust.
Modernize legal and regulatory frameworks	Parliament, ministries, data protection bodies	2026-2027	Better legal certainty and stronger rights protection.
Expand e-participation tools	Local governments, civic-tech organizations	2026-2028	More feedback, consultation, and civic inclusion.
Support public–private partnerships	Cabinet of Ministers, private sector, donors	2026-2030	Greater scalability and faster innovation.

Source: developed by the author

governance with human oversight can improve efficiency in service delivery, risk detection, and feedback analysis while preserving accountability in decision-making. Third, the development of hybrid participation formats, combining digital tools with offline access points, would ensure inclusiveness for populations with limited digital skills or connectivity. The expansion of civic-

tech co-design practices, involving civil society, local communities, and independent developers in the creation and testing of digital platforms, can significantly improve usability, trust, and responsiveness of public services as these proposals highlight the need to move beyond basic digitalization toward more adaptive, resilient, and citizen-oriented governance.

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