



TMT NUGGETS: Q1 2026

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The first quarter of 2026 marks a transformative period for Africa's technology, media, and telecommunications sectors, characterised by a decisive shift toward infrastructure sovereignty, stringent regulatory oversight, and the rapid adoption of frontier technologies.

In Nigeria, the NCC and CBN have pivoted toward aggressive consumer protection, mandating real-time fraud monitoring and near-instant refunds for failed transactions, while massive capital injections, including the \$2 billion BRIDGE fibre project and Amazon's Project Kuiper entry, signal a race for universal high-speed connectivity.

Simultaneously, the continent is witnessing a landmark consolidation of tower assets and the operationalisation of AfCFTA's intellectual property protocols, creating a more unified and predictable commercial landscape.

However, this digital acceleration is met with heightened accountability; from the NDPC's crackdown on data privacy in the creator economy to global jury verdicts holding big tech liable for mental health harms, the message of Q1 2026 is clear: technical innovation must now be matched by ethical transparency and robust legal compliance.





TELECOMS

NCC PROPOSES REAL-TIME FRAUD MONITORING SYSTEM TO ENHANCE TELECOMS IDENTITY SECURITY

In March 2026, the NCC proposed the implementation of the Telecoms Identity Risk Management System (TIRMS), a proactive framework designed to monitor and flag high-risk mobile numbers in real time to combat escalating digital fraud.¹ The initiative recognises that mobile numbers have become the cornerstone of digital identity for banking and e-

commerce, making the mitigation of identity-related vulnerabilities a national security priority. Under the proposed rules, operators and financial institutions will be able to instantly verify a number's risk status, while new mandates will require telcos to report churned lines promptly and notify subscribers before any number reassignment.

ICASA IMPLEMENTS INFLATION-ADJUSTED FEE INCREASES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN TELECOMS

From April 1, 2026, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) will introduce a 3.2% increase in regulatory fees across spectrum, service licenses, and equipment approvals to align with current inflation rates.² This adjustment impacts a broad range of stakeholders, including telecom operators and device manufacturers, by raising the costs associated with importing hardware and certifying infrastructure. Beyond direct licensing fees, the hike is expected to increase the administrative and compliance burden for industries reliant on broadcasting and frequency management.

MAJOR ACQUISITION SET TO CONSOLIDATE CONTROL OF AFRICAN TELECOM INFRASTRUCTURE

In February 2026, a landmark \$2.2 billion acquisition was initiated to consolidate control of nearly 29,000 telecom sites across Africa, as a major operator moved to acquire full ownership of a leading tower company and take it private.³ The offer, priced at \$8.50 per share, values the infrastructure firm at approximately \$6.2 billion. This transaction signals a strategic pivot within the industry toward reintegrating physical assets to directly capture lease margins and future revenues, reversing previous trends of asset separation. The deal, which awaits final regulatory and shareholder approval, highlights an increasing focus on infrastructure sovereignty and the long-term financial optimisation of mobile networks across the continent.

¹ Tech Cabal, New NCC rules mandate telcos to flag suspected fraudulent numbers in real time - [NCC orders telcos to flag suspected scam numbers in real time](#)

² Price increases for South African telecoms industry announced- [Price increases for South African telecoms industry announced – MyBroadband](#)

³ Tech Cabal, MTN moves to take full control of HIS Towers in \$2.2 billion deal - [MTN moves to take full control of IHS Towers in \\$2.2 billion deal](#)

PAPSS TRANSFORMS CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS WITH FOUR YEARS OF PAN-AFRICAN INTEGRATION

Since its launch in January 2022, the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) has significantly streamlined intra-African trade by enabling instant settlements in local currencies, effectively bypassing the expensive and cumbersome correspondent banking networks of the US and Europe. Now operational across 19 countries, the system connects over 160 banks and 15 national switches, with Nigeria playing a pivotal role through the integration of more than 22 commercial banks. This expansion reduces transaction costs, accelerates settlement times, and lessens the continent's dependence on hard currencies, while the introduction of tools like PAPSSCARD further accelerates financial integration. The ongoing success of PAPSS highlights a transformative shift toward African financial sovereignty and a more unified economic landscape across the continent.

NIGERIA'S TELECOM SUBSCRIPTIONS HIT 182.2 MILLION AMID SURGING DATA DEMAND

In January 2026, Nigeria's telecommunications sector recorded a significant expansion, with active subscriptions climbing to 182.2 million, driving teledensity to 84.06 and reflecting robust year-on-year growth from 169.3 million. The latest data reveals a decisive migration toward high-speed connectivity, with 4G and 5G adoption accelerating as legacy 2G and 3G networks decline, while total internet subscriptions reached 151.6 million. This surge in data consumption underscores an intensifying reliance on digital services and highlights the success of ongoing broadband expansion efforts in strengthening the nation's digital economy.

NCC PROJECTS MOBILE OPERATORS TO EXCEED \$1BN NETWORK INVESTMENT IN 2026

The NCC projects that mobile network operators will surpass **\$1 billion**⁴ in capital expenditure during 2026, to further strengthen the nation's digital infrastructure. Building on a similar investment milestone in 2025, which saw the deployment of over **2,850 new sites**, this financial commitment aims to aggressively expand 5G services and broaden 4G reach into underserved urban and rural corridors. The sustained capital injection has already yielded measurable improvements in median download speeds and video streaming consistency, signalling a concerted effort by operators to meet the surging domestic demand for high-speed data.

The ambitious investment roadmap underscores a regulatory and commercial pivot toward achieving universal network reliability and closing persistent performance gaps.

NCC DIRECTS MOBILE NETWORK OPERATORS TO COMPENSATE SUBSCRIBERS WITH AIRTIME CREDITS FOR POOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The NCC has directed Mobile Network Operators to compensate subscribers with airtime credits when network quality falls below prescribed targets in specific locations, with payments linked to users' average spending and presence in affected areas. The measure complements the Commission's ongoing monitoring of Quality-of-Service Key Performance Indicators and extends accountability to tower companies, which will be required to channel regulatory fines into measurable infrastructure improvements.

⁴ Business Day, Mobile Operators to exceed \$1bn network investment in 2026-NCC, Mobile operators to exceed \$1bn network investment in 2026 - NCC - Businessday NG

The directive reflects a decisive regulatory shift toward enforceable consumer protection in Nigeria's telecommunications sector, moving beyond passive monitoring to impose direct financial consequences for service shortfalls.⁵

NCC GRANTS AMAZON'S PROJECT KUIPER SEVEN-YEAR LANDING PERMIT AHEAD OF 2026 NIGERIA LAUNCH

In January 2026, the NCC granted Amazon's Project Kuiper a seven-year landing permit to operate satellite internet services across Nigeria, forming part of a global constellation of up to 3,236 satellites.⁶ The approval covers Fixed Satellite Service for homes and enterprises, Mobile Satellite Service for portable and emergency communications, and Earth Stations at Sea for mobile platforms including ships, aircraft, and vehicles, with the network operating in the high-capacity Ka-band frequency to deliver multi-gigabit speeds, low latency, and affordable user terminals.

The permit provides Amazon with the legal certainty required to invest in ground infrastructure, local partnerships, and enterprise contracts, intensifying competition in Nigeria's satellite broadband market alongside existing players such as Starlink. The development signals a broader industry shift toward diversified connectivity solutions, with the potential to reshape pricing, service standards, and coverage across urban, semi-urban, and mobility-focused segments of Nigeria's digital economy.

NIGERIA ACQUIRES 49% STAKE IN \$2 BILLION WORLD BANK-BACKED BRIDGE FIBRE PROJECT

Nigeria has launched the financial advisory phase of the \$2 billion BRIDGE Project, backed by the World Bank, to deploy 90,000 kilometres of fibre-optic cable across all 774 local government areas, targeting 33 million currently unconnected Nigerians. Under the arrangement, the Federal Government will hold a 49%⁷ minority stake in a majority privately-owned Special Purpose Vehicle, with a \$500 million concessional IDA credit disbursed in milestone-linked tranches, beginning with \$150 million for initial equity and a 30,000 km first phase scheduled for early 2026.

The initiative delivers wholesale, open-access broadband infrastructure to underserved regions, with oversight coordinated through the Ministry of Finance Incorporated, the Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, and a dedicated Project Implementation Unit responsible for governance and ESG compliance.

CBN AND NCC PROPOSE JOINT FRAMEWORK MANDATING NEAR-INSTANT REFUNDS FOR FAILED AIRTIME AND DATA PURCHASES

In Q1, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the NCC jointly proposed a new regulatory framework requiring automatic refunds for failed airtime and data purchases within 30 seconds of a failed transaction, with a 24-hour window applicable to pending cases. Developed in collaboration with mobile network operators, banks, and value-added service providers, the framework holds telecoms and financial institutions accountable through enforceable service-level agreements, mandatory SMS transaction notifications, and provisions covering errors such as wrong numbers and ported lines.

⁵ Leadership, Poor Network Service: NCC Orders Telecom Operators To Compensate Subscribers, [Poor Network Service: NCC Orders Telecom Operators To Compensate Subscribers](#)

⁶ Tech Cabal, Amazon's Kuiper satellite secures Nigerian permit to begin operations in 2026 - Amazon Kuiper gets key regulatory approval to operate in Nigeria.

⁷ Tech Cabal, Nigeria takes 49% stake in World Bank-backed \$2bn fibre project- [Nigeria to hold minority stake in 90,000km national fibre project](#)

A central monitoring dashboard will track transaction failures, refund timelines, and compliance in real time, reinforcing accountability across the broader payments ecosystem. The policy marks a significant step toward consumer protection in Nigeria's digital financial services space, with over ₦10 billion already refunded ahead of full implementation, signalling strong early momentum for the initiative.

AIRTEL NIGERIA ANNOUNCES SECOND INTERNATIONAL INTERNET BREAKOUT POINT IN AKWA IBOM STATE

In Q1 2026, Airtel Nigeria announced plans to establish a second international internet breakout point in Akwa Ibom State, utilising the 2Africa submarine cable to route international data traffic through the South-South region alongside the existing MainOne connection outside Lagos. The project forms part of Airtel's broader infrastructure push, which has included over 2,200 new network sites since late 2023, a 25% fibre expansion, and a planned doubling of its 5G presence across Nigeria's top 20 cities.

The development addresses a longstanding structural vulnerability in which virtually all of Nigeria's international data flows through a single Lagos corridor, leaving the country exposed to systemic outages from cable disruptions. By diversifying these entry points and integrating Starlink satellite partnerships, Airtel signals a broader industry shift where competitive advantage is increasingly defined by network reliability and infrastructure redundancy rather than subscriber volumes alone.



MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

NIGERIAN FILM COMMISSION BILL ADVANCES LEGISLATIVE REFORM

In January 2026, the proposed Nigerian Film Commission Bill advanced in the House of Representatives, passing second reading as part of ongoing efforts to reform Nigeria's film industry's legal and institutional framework. The Bill is expected to modernise existing structures under the Nigerian Film Corporation Act and support a more contemporary

framework for film regulation, promotion, financing and distribution.

The development signals a possible legislative overhaul of the film sector and may strengthen institutional support for Nollywood, particularly in relation to licensing, industry funding and cross-border collaboration.

NFVCB ISSUES ENFORCEMENT NOTICE ON ONLINE CONTENT CLASSIFICATION

The National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) has issued a regulatory notice reaffirming that all films and video works must be classified before distribution, including content disseminated via digital and online platforms. The Board specifically clarified that skits, web series, and other user-generated audiovisual content fall within its regulatory purview and warned that non-compliant content may be subject to sanctions, including takedown.

NFVCB REPORTS STRONG CLASSIFICATION ACTIVITY IN JANUARY 2026

The NFVCB recorded a notable increase in classification activity in January 2026, approving over 100 films for distribution, representing a significant rise compared to late 2025 figures. A substantial proportion of these films were assigned higher age classifications, reflecting closer scrutiny of content standards.

The increase in approvals underscores both the continued growth in film production and a more active regulatory posture by the NFVCB, suggesting stricter enforcement of classification standards and greater regulatory visibility within the industry.

FEDERAL HIGH COURT REMANDS NETNAIJA CEO IN COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT CASE

In March 2026, the Federal High Court, Abuja, remanded Mr Emmanuel Analike, Chief Executive Officer of NetNaija Media Enterprises, following his arraignment on charges of alleged copyright infringement. The prosecution, brought by the Nigerian Copyright Commission, relates to alleged possession, reproduction and distribution of infringing works through a digital platform.

The case is a notable judicial enforcement development under the Copyright Act 2022 and signals increasing regulatory and prosecutorial attention to online piracy and unauthorised digital exploitation of protected works.

AFRICAN CREATORS SUMMIT 2026 HELD IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

The African Creators Summit 2026, held in Lagos on 29 January 2026, brings together creators, investors, brands and ecosystem stakeholders to discuss growth, monetisation and sustainability in Africa's creator economy. The summit was positioned as a platform for unlocking cultural commerce across borders and strengthening the commercial potential of African digital creativity.⁶

The event underscores the increasing economic significance of the creator economy within the wider media and entertainment sector and reflects rising interest in policy, infrastructure and investment support for creators.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR NIGERIAN CONTENT AT SUNDANCE 2026

Nigerian storytelling also gained further global visibility in Q1 2026 with the premiere of *Lady*, a Nigerian/UK co-production directed by Olive Nwosu, at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival, where it won a Special Jury Award for Acting Ensemble. The recognition reinforces the growing international appeal of Nigerian-linked productions and the continued relevance of festival exposure to financing, distribution and rights exploitation.

This development supports the view that Nollywood and Nigerian-affiliated productions are increasingly positioned for cross-border collaboration and wider participation in international content markets.

CONTINUED SHIFT TOWARDS DIGITAL AND MULTI-PLATFORM DISTRIBUTION

The transition of Nigerian media and entertainment from traditional single-channel distribution to hybrid models spanning cinemas, streaming platforms and other digital channels. This trend remains one of the defining commercial features of the sector and continues to influence how rights are licensed, monetised and enforced⁸.

For producers, distributors and investors, the shift underscores the growing importance of structured rights management, platform-specific licensing, advertising compliance and data protection governance across the content value chain.

NETFLIX DEAL TO ACQUIRE WARNER BROS COLLAPSES

The Hollywood streaming giant, as of 26th February 2026, published on their website that their proposal to acquire Warner Bros company has failed due to Warner Bros raising their demands as another bidder in Paramount Skydance (PSKY) outbid Netflix. The giant company Netflix declined to match the bid of Paramount Skydance.



INTERNATIONAL

YOUTUBE AND META FOUND LIABLE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH HARM

A California jury verdict has found Meta and YouTube liable for negligently designing platforms that contributed to a minor's addiction and mental health harm. The jury held that both companies

knowingly deployed harmful design features, failed to warn users of associated risks and caused substantial injury.

The suit instituted by Kaley, the plaintiff, alleged that prolonged exposure to social media platforms led to anxiety, body dysmorphia, and other psychological harms. The suit was initially against Meta, YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok. Snapchat and TikTok settled before trial. The Court awarded \$3 Million in compensatory damages, with additional punitive damages recommended. \$2.1 Million against Meta and \$900,000 against YouTube. Liability was apportioned at 70% to Meta and 30% to YouTube.

META FOUND LIABLE IN CHILD SAFETY CASE

A New Mexico jury has found Meta liable for violating state law by failing to adequately protect children on its platforms and misleading users about associated risks. The jury held that Meta engaged in "unfair, deceptive, and unconscionable" trade practices and awarded \$375 Million in damages. The case brought by the New Mexico Attorney General alleged that Meta's platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, enabled contact between minors and sexual predators, partly due to insufficient safeguards and platform design choices.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

NIPPS LAUNCHED TO BOOST IP PROTECTION, INNOVATION, AND INVESTMENT IN NIGERIA⁸

Nigeria has begun the full rollout of its National Intellectual Property Policy & Strategy (NIPPS), marking a shift from years of policy development to operational implementation. The policy, launched on 10th January 2026, aims to modernise the country's IP system, strengthen protection for creators and innovators, and boost economic competitiveness.

On 17th January 2026, the government activated NIPPS by inaugurating three key bodies: the Inter Ministerial Steering Committee, the Inter Agency Coordination Group, and the Technical Working Group. These teams are set to drive legislative reforms and preparations for establishing a future

⁸ <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-inaugurates-committees-to-implement-national-intellectual-property-policy/>

Nigerian Intellectual Property Commission. NIPPS also appears to have proposed updates to protect emerging IP categories, such as trade secrets, geographical indications, alongside plans for an industrial property tribunal to speed up dispute resolution.

AFRICAN UNION ADOPTS EIGHT ANNEXES TO THE AFCFTA IP PROTOCOL

In February 2026, the African Union officially approved eight detailed Annexes to the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights, providing the necessary legal framework to make the continent-wide agreement operational. These Annexes cover a comprehensive range of rights—including Patents, Trademarks, Industrial Designs, and Traditional Knowledge—aiming to harmonise IP systems across member states. For businesses and creators, this transition reduces cross-border complexity, fostering a more predictable legal environment for innovation-led industrialisation and commercialisation across the African market.

MOZAMBIQUE RATIFIES THE MARRAKESH TREATY

The Republic of Mozambique formally joined the Marrakesh Treaty on January 27, 2026, with the provisions set to take effect on April 27, 2026. This international agreement facilitates the creation and cross-border exchange of books and other works in accessible formats for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or print-disabled. By ratifying the treaty, Mozambique aligns its domestic copyright law with global inclusivity standards, significantly removing legal barriers to knowledge for its print-disabled population.

RESUMPTION OF OPERATIONS AT GHANA'S TRADEMARK REGISTRY

Administrative activities at the Ghana Trademark Registry returned to normal on March 24, 2026, following the suspension of a nationwide strike by the Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana (CLOGSAG). The industrial action, which began on March 9, had caused a temporary standstill in the processing and examination of trademark applications. While backlogs are expected as the Registry works to clear the delay, the resumption marks the end of two weeks of procedural uncertainty for brand owners in the region.

CHINA ENFORCES NEW PATENT GUIDELINES PROHIBITING AI INVENTORS

Effective January 1, 2026, the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) implemented revised Patent Examination Guidelines that explicitly mandate that an inventor must be a natural person. Under the new Rule 14, applications naming "AI" or any non-human entity as an inventor will be strictly rejected, aligning China with the current global consensus on human inventorship. The update also introduces "on-demand examination" to allow businesses to prioritise strategic filings and imposes stricter rules on dual filings for patents and utility models.

U.S. SUPREME COURT LIMITS ISP LIABILITY IN LANDMARK COPYRIGHT RULING

On March 25, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision in *Cox Communications v. Sony Music*,⁹ significantly narrowing the scope of contributory liability for Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The Court ruled that ISPs cannot be held liable for the copyright infringements of their users unless the provider actively induced the infringement or offered a service specifically tailored for illegal use. This ruling effectively overturns previous lower court interpretations and provides a massive

⁹ https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/25pdf/24-171_bq7d.pdf

victory for digital intermediaries, shielding them from massive statutory damages related to user-led piracy.

USPTO MODERNISES DESIGN PROTECTION FOR DIGITAL AND VIRTUAL INTERFACES

In March 2026, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) issued new supplemental guidance that expands design patent eligibility for digital designs, including Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs), holograms, and AR/VR projections. The update removes the antiquated requirement that a design must be shown on a physical display panel, acknowledging that digital icons are "articles of manufacture" in their own right. This shift provides tech companies with much greater flexibility and legal certainty when protecting immersive and software-driven visual innovations.

WIPO LAUNCHES GLOBAL "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INFRASTRUCTURE INTERCHANGE" (AIII)

On March 17, 2026, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) launched the AIII, a dedicated initiative designed to harmonise technical and operational IP standards for Artificial Intelligence worldwide. The platform serves as a global forum for expert dialogue on how to handle AI-generated content, training data transparency, and cross-border enforcement of digital rights. This move signals WIPO's proactive stance in preventing a fragmented global IP landscape as AI integration becomes a standard requirement for international commerce.



DATA PROTECTION

NDPC AND NACCIMA SIGN MOU TO STRENGTHEN DATA PROTECTION IN NIGERIA'S BUSINESS SECTOR¹⁰

On 9th March 2026, the Nigeria Data Protection Commission ("NDPC") and the National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture ("NACCIMA") signed a Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU") in Abuja to enhance data protection and

privacy standards across Nigeria's private sector.

The partnership aims to promote compliance with data protection laws, foster responsible data governance, and raise awareness of privacy best practices among businesses. NDPC's CEO, Vincent Olatunji, described the MoU as a milestone for advancing Nigeria's digital ecosystem, safeguarding personal and corporate information, attracting foreign investment, and boosting national competitiveness.

NACCIMA's President, Jani Ibrahim, emphasised that the collaboration would build trust, promote responsible business practices, and ensure transparent handling of personal data, ultimately benefiting both businesses and Nigerians.

¹⁰ <https://ndpc.gov.ng/ndpc-and-naccima-sign-historic-mou-to-boost-investor-confidence-and-drive-fdi-into-nigeria/>

META PARTNERS WITH THE NIGERIA DATA PROTECTION COMMISSION TO LAUNCH A PRIVACY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN IN NIGERIA¹¹

From 3rd February to mid-March 2026, the NDPC partnered with Meta to run a six-week nationwide privacy education campaign on Facebook and Instagram. The campaign aimed to educate Nigerians on using privacy and security tools, including Privacy Checkup, end-to-end encryption, Two-Factor Authentication (2FA), and Login Alerts, targeting over 60 million users to protect personal data and strengthen account security.

Meta highlighted that the initiative is part of its ongoing commitment to privacy education, having invested over \$8 billion in privacy programs since 2019. NDPC emphasised that the campaign aligns with its goal of embedding data privacy into Nigeria’s digital economy and safeguarding citizens’ rights under the Nigeria Data Protection Act.

NDPC INVESTIGATES TEMU OVER ALLEGED SALE OF NIGERIAN USERS’ DATA¹²

The NDPC has launched an investigation into the Chinese e-commerce platform Temu over allegations of selling users’ personal data in violation of Nigeria’s data protection laws.

The probe, initiated by NDPC National Commissioner Vincent Olatunji, focuses on concerns regarding Temu’s data handling practices, including online tracking, lack of transparency in data processing, and potential cross-border data transfers.

The NDPC emphasised that any breach of the law would attract regulatory sanctions. With Temu processing data from approximately 12.7 million Nigerian users and 70 million daily users globally, the regulator is scrutinising compliance with data minimisation principles and other statutory obligations. Additionally, the NDPC warned that third-party processors handling data on behalf of controllers must also comply with the law or face potential liability under Nigerian regulations.

NDPC LAUNCHES COMPLIANCE CHECK ON TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS¹³

The NDPC has commenced a nationwide assessment of universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education to ensure compliance with the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDP Act) 2023. On 19th February 2026, selected institutions received Compliance Notices requiring the submission of specific documentation within 21 days, including evidence of filing 2024 NDP Act Compliance Audit Returns, details of appointed Data Protection Officers, implementation of data protection measures, and registration as a Data Controller or Processor of Major Importance.

The NDPC warned that non-compliance may result in Enforcement Orders, fines, or prosecution. To support institutions, a regulatory clinic has been established to address privacy risks and assist with corrective actions.

NDPC HIGHLIGHTS ₦16.2 BILLION GROWTH IN NIGERIA’S DATA PROTECTION SECTOR¹⁴

The CEO of the NDPC, Dr Vincent Olatunji, said on 31st January 2026 that Nigeria is now a global player, as the country’s data protection and privacy ecosystem has reached approximately ₦16.2 billion in value.

¹¹ <https://about.fb.com/news/2026/02/meta-partners-with-the-nigeria-data-protection-commission-to-launch-a-privacy-education-campaign-in-nigeria/>

¹² <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/nigeria-opens-probe-into-temu-over-suspected-data-protection-breaches-2026-02-17/>

¹³ <https://punchng.com/ndpc-probes-tertiary-institutions-over-data-protection-compliance/>

¹⁴ <https://www.nigeriacommunicationsweek.com.ng/nigerias-data-privacy-economy-hits-%E2%82%A616-2bn-ndpc-commissioner/>

Dr Olatunji attributed this milestone to strategic initiatives by the NDPC following the signing of the NDPA into law. He emphasised that the growth of the data privacy economy reflects Nigeria’s rising importance in the global digital landscape, noting that the Commission’s efforts have created jobs, strengthened compliance, and fostered trust in digital transactions.

FREE MOBILE AND FREE FINED €42 MILLION FOR DATA BREACH¹⁵

In January 2026, the French data protection authority CNIL fined Free Mobile €27 million and its parent company Free €15 million (totalling €42 million) for a 2024 data breach impacting over 24 million contracts. The sanctions follow an October 2024 cyberattack that exposed customer International Bank Account Numbers (IBANs), poor security, and improper data retention policies.

NDPC WARNS CONTENT CREATORS TO RESPECT CITIZENS’ PRIVACY¹⁶

On 28th March 2026, the NDPC warned content creators against filming or photographing people without their consent, stating that such actions violate citizens’ privacy rights under Section 37 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the NDPA.

The warning follows concerns over a Lagos-based content creator who recorded unsuspecting members of the public for social media content. The Commission emphasised that using individuals’ images in this manner requires consent or another valid legal basis, which was lacking in this case.

NIGERIA SIGNS GLOBAL PACT TO TACKLE AI PRIVACY ABUSE¹⁷

Nigeria has joined over 60 countries in endorsing the “Joint Statement on AI-Generated Imagery and the Protection of Privacy”, a global agreement aimed at protecting individuals’ privacy from the misuse of AI-generated images and videos.

According to NDPC’s National Commissioner and CEO, Dr Vincent Olatunji, the endorsement reflects Nigeria’s commitment to responsible AI use, with compliance audits from major data controllers serving as a measure of accountability. This aligns with the country’s National AI Strategy and the NDPC’s General Application and Implementation Directive (GAID), which mandates privacy by design and by default in AI deployment.

NCC, NDPC SIGN MOU TO ENHANCE DATA PROTECTION IN TELECOMS SECTOR¹⁸

The Nigerian Communications Commission and the Nigeria Data Protection Commission have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance data privacy and protection in Nigeria’s telecommunications sector. The agreement establishes a framework for collaboration, regulatory synergy, and knowledge sharing between the two agencies.

NCC’s CEO, Dr Aminu Maida, emphasised that effective data governance is crucial for sustaining trust, innovation, and growth in the communications industry, particularly as Nigeria advances in digital technologies and artificial intelligence. NDPC’s CEO, Dr Vincent Olatunji, highlighted that the MoU complements rather than replaces the telecom regulator’s mandate and will be implemented immediately.

¹⁵ <https://www.cnil.fr/en/sanction-free-2026>

¹⁶ <https://www.arise.tv/ndpc-warns-content-creators-against-filming-nigerians-without-consent/>

¹⁷ <https://punchng.com/nigeria-signs-global-pact-to-tackle-ai-privacy-abuse/>

¹⁸ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/2026/02/06/ncc-ndpc-sign-mou-to-enhance-data-protection-in-telecoms-sector/>

TECHNOLOGY

23 NIGERIAN STATES INCREASE TECH BUDGETS TO DRIVE DIGITAL GROWTH IN 2026

Twenty-three Nigerian states plan to spend ₦132.45 billion (\$97.15 million) in 2026 to fund technology ministries and advance digital initiatives, based on data from Budget's Open States platform. The allocation marks a sharp rise from the ₦33.59 billion spent in 2025, reflecting renewed commitment despite previously low budget execution. However, tech

spending remains a small share of total expenditure, projected at just 0.53% in 2026. State governments have positioned the move as a step toward strengthening digital infrastructure and innovation. Ultimately, the investment aims to boost economic growth, improve governance, and create opportunities for young Nigerians.¹⁹

LEGEND INTERNET, SPECTRANET PLAN MERGER TO SCALE IN NIGERIA'S BROADBAND MARKET

Legend Internet Plc plans to merge with Spectranet in a deal aimed at strengthening its position as competition intensifies in Nigeria's broadband sector. The proposed transaction, disclosed in a filing to the Nigerian Exchange (NGX), will combine both companies under a unified structure, pending approvals from the FCCPC and NCC, with completion targeted for Q2 2026. The move reflects growing pressure on mid-tier ISPs to scale amid rising infrastructure costs and increasing competition from major telecom operators and new entrants. Ultimately, the merger is expected to enhance network capacity, improve efficiency, and expand urban broadband coverage, positioning the combined entity for stronger competition in Nigeria's evolving internet market.²⁰

CBN ISSUES UPDATED ATM GUIDELINES TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has released updated guidelines for Automated Teller Machine (ATM) operations in March 2026 to enhance security, efficiency, and customer protection.

The revised rules introduce stricter requirements on ATM deployment, including a minimum ratio of one ATM per 7,500 cards over three years, alongside improved standards for uptime, biometric authentication, and fraud prevention. The guidelines also mandate faster resolution of failed transactions within 24 hours for same-bank issues and 48 hours for interbank cases, while enforcing stronger compliance, monitoring, and reporting obligations for financial institutions. Ultimately, the new framework aims to improve service reliability, expand access, and strengthen trust in Nigeria's electronic payment system.²¹

¹⁹ [Here](#)

²⁰ [Here](#)

²¹ [Here](#)

NIGERIA LEADS AFRICA IN AI SURVEILLANCE SPENDING

Nigeria has emerged as the largest spender on AI-powered surveillance technologies in Africa, investing over \$470 million out of the \$2.1 billion spent by 11 countries across the continent.

The data from a March 2026 report by the Institute of Development Studies highlights Nigeria’s leading role in adopting AI-driven surveillance systems, alongside Kenya, Egypt, and Rwanda. The investment reflects Nigeria’s increasing reliance on smart technologies to enhance security and support smart city development. Ultimately, it signals a broader push to modernise infrastructure and strengthen public safety systems.²²

SKYPIXELS LAUNCHES WITH 1,000-DRONE LIGHT SHOW IN LAGOS

Skypixels, an indigenous tech company, has launched Nigeria’s first large-scale drone light show with a 1,000-drone display in Lagos, marking a new phase in digital entertainment and advertising. The showcase, held on March 22, 2026, featured GPS-enabled drones operating on pre-programmed flight paths to create synchronised aerial visuals, text, and animations.

The innovation offers a safer and more environmentally friendly alternative to traditional fireworks, while opening new opportunities for events, branding, and storytelling.

Ultimately, the launch signals growing adoption of advanced drone technology in Nigeria’s creative and tech ecosystem.²³

INTERPOL TAKES DOWN 45,000 CYBERCRIME SERVERS IN GLOBAL CRACKDOWN

INTERPOL has dismantled over 45,000 cybercrime servers and malicious IPs in a major global operation affecting Nigeria and dozens of other countries. The operation, known as Operation Synergia III, involved 72 countries and led to 94 arrests, targeting phishing, malware, and ransomware infrastructure. The crackdown highlights the growing scale and sophistication of cybercrime, with networks relying on global digital systems to run scams, fraud, and identity theft operations. Ultimately, the move underscores the need for stronger cybersecurity frameworks and international cooperation, as countries like Nigeria face increasing exposure to evolving digital threats.²⁴

NYSC LAUNCHES DIGITAL ID CARDS TO STREAMLINE CORPS MEMBER SERVICES

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has rolled out digital identity cards for corps members, advancing the scheme’s shift toward a fully digital experience. The new system enables corps members to instantly generate and download their ID from the NYSC portal, linking it to their personal registration profile. This reduces dependence on physical cards and manual verification during service. The initiative reflects Nigeria’s broader adoption of digital identity solutions and aims to improve convenience, security, and service delivery for corps members nationwide.²⁵

NIGERIA SET TO ENACT AI REGULATION BILL TO STRENGTHEN OVERSIGHT

Nigeria is poised to introduce the National Digital Economy and E-Governance Bill, a landmark legislation aimed at establishing the country as a leader in AI regulation in Africa. The bill empowers regulators to oversee data usage, algorithms, and digital services, with a particular focus on higher-risk AI systems in finance, public administration, surveillance, and automated decision-making. Developers

²² [Here](#)

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will be required to submit annual impact assessments, while regulators can demand information, suspend unsafe systems, and enforce compliance. Penalties for non-compliance may reach up to \$7,000 or 2% of an AI provider’s annual Nigerian revenue, signalling a significant shift toward structured accountability. The legislation also provides controlled environments for testing AI innovations, balancing oversight with support for innovation.²⁶

NIGERIA BECOMES AFRICA’S TOP SPENDER ON AI-POWERED SURVEILLANCE

Nigeria has emerged as the continent’s largest investor in smart city surveillance, committing over \$470 million to AI-enabled facial recognition and automatic number plate recognition systems. Central to this spending is the National Public Security Communication System, a \$470 million project financed through a federal contribution and an 85% loan from China Eximbank. Implemented by ZTE and Hikvision, the initiative aimed to equip major cities with nationwide surveillance and police communication infrastructure, but has faced years of setbacks, system failures, and allegations of mismanagement. States have also expanded surveillance independently. Lagos deployed 13,000 CCTV cameras in 2016 and added 10,000 facial-recognition-enabled units in 2019, while Oyo introduced its own high-definition monitoring system in partnership with Huawei and Hikvision. Although authorities cite security benefits, the rapid rollout has sparked concerns from privacy advocates, who highlight the absence of clear laws regulating mass surveillance and the lack of human rights impact assessments. Nigeria’s growing use of AI-driven monitoring continues to raise questions about whether its security ambitions align with citizens’ privacy protections.²⁷

RIGETTI DELAYS LAUNCH OF ITS 108-QUBIT CEPHEUS SYSTEM TO Q1 2026

Rigetti Computing has pushed the release of its Cepheus-1-108Q quantum system to the end of the first quarter of 2026, citing the need for further testing and optimisation. The company reported engineering challenges with tunable couplers requiring another chip iteration to reach its performance target of 99.5% median two-qubit gate fidelity. Current fidelity benchmarks include 99% for its 108-qubit system and up to 99.7% for smaller architectures. Despite technical progress, Rigetti remains unprofitable, with negative EBITDA and declining revenue over the past year. Its stock, however, has surged more than 151% amid strong investor interest in its modular chiplet-based design. The Cepheus 1 108Q, built from twelve 9-qubit chiplets, will become Rigetti’s largest system to date and one of the industry’s highest-capacity modular quantum architectures once launched. Analyst sentiment remains mixed: Benchmark and Jefferies trimmed price targets but maintained positive-to-neutral ratings, while Wedbush issued an Outperform rating based on Rigetti’s long-standing technical expertise. The delay underscores the complexity of advancing high-fidelity quantum hardware as Rigetti works to balance engineering milestones with commercial expectations.²⁸

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FINTECH

Africa's Q1 Funding Surge & M&A Wave:

The African tech ecosystem raised **\$711 million** in Q1 2026, with Fintech remaining the dominant sector, attracting **\$221 million**. A notable trend is "exit" activity, including **Flutterwave's acquisition of Mono** and Moniepoint's expansion into Kenya via Sumac Microfinance Bank, signalling a shift toward market consolidation.

CBN's New Fintech Regulatory Roadmap: The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) released a 2026 Policy Report outlining a "New Era of Regulation." The framework moves toward a more collaborative oversight model, focusing on **embedded finance** and mandatory compliance for "Fintechs of Major Importance" to stabilise the digital banking sector.

Cross-Border Expansion Beyond Africa: Nigerian fintechs are pivoting globally; **LemFi** expanded its payment services into Australia and Canada in Q1 2026, while **Payaza** deepened its footprint in Rwanda and Uganda, reflecting a move to diversify revenue streams away from local currency volatility.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Nigeria's Pioneering AI Legislation:

The National Assembly is set to pass the **National Digital Economy and E-Governance Bill** by the end of Q1 2026. This landmark law targets "higher-risk" AI in finance and surveillance, requiring developers to submit annual risk assessments and allowing fines of up to **2% of annual revenue** for non-compliance.

AI Surveillance Investment:

Nigeria has emerged as Africa's top spender on AI-

powered surveillance, investing over **\$470 million** in facial recognition and smart city infrastructure. While authorities cite security benefits, the rollout has triggered calls for a dedicated Human Rights Impact Assessment framework.



CLOUD COMPUTING

Global Cloud Market Surpasses \$1 Trillion:

Driven by Generative AI workloads, the global cloud market is on track to exceed **\$1 trillion** in early 2026. **GPU-as-a-Service (GPUaaS)** revenues are growing at over **200% annually**, reflecting the massive compute power required for LLM training and inference.

FinOps Becomes Mandatory for African Enterprises:

As cloud spending rises, Nigerian and South African firms are adopting **FinOps (Financial Operations)**

practices to optimise costs. Hyperscalers like AWS (31% share) and Azure (25%) are facing pressure to offer more localised, naira-denominated pricing to mitigate inflation.

Integration of Blockchain and Cloud: A 2026 trend shows top enterprises combining **Blockchain with Cloud storage** to enhance data transparency and security. This integration is being piloted in Nigeria's public sector to secure land titles and national identity registries within the Galaxy Backbone infrastructure.

CHILD ONLINE SAFETY & PLATFORM LIABILITY

Nigeria's Child Online Access Protection Bill: The House of Representatives approved this ambitious bill in Q1 2026, seeking to establish a national framework to curb online exploitation. The law would mandate **age-gating** and require platforms to remove harmful content involving minors within 24 hours.

Landmark Verdicts Against Meta and YouTube: In March 2026, a California jury found Meta and YouTube liable for **negligently designing addictive platforms** that caused mental health harm to a minor, awarding **\$6 million in damages**. This "bellwether" case signals a shift toward holding platforms accountable for product design choices, not just content.

New Mexico's \$375 Million Child Safety Ruling: A jury found Meta liable for violating state consumer-protection laws by failing to protect children from predators. The court ordered Meta to pay **\$5,000 per violation**, totalling \$375 million, marking one of the largest state-led penalties for platform design failures.

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