

At Global Technology Summit, focus on regulating innovation

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India needs to have regulations such that innovators and regulators are able to work together smoothly, in order to balance public interest and incentives for innovation, said Ananth Padmanabhan, fellow, Carnegie India.

Discussions and feedback on policies also need to give more weight to meaningful comments, rather than take the quantity of comments into account, according to Padmanabhan, whose organization is hosting the Global

Technology Summit on 6 and 7 December in Bengaluru.

The summit will host discussions on how India can make use of the right policies to leapfrog legacy systems and benefit from advanced digital technologies.

In India, proposals on regulating new technologies that can significantly benefit people have often been knee-jerk reactions.

Drones developed by start-ups aided rescue operations during the Uttarakhand floods in 2013. Drones, which have increasingly become cheaper and more sophisticated, can benefit farmers by enabling what is known as precision

agriculture. They also spurred the use of aerial photography.

However, a 2014 directive by the Director General of Civil Aviation left the fledgling drone ecosystem in confusion, as it outright banned any civilian use of drones without getting multiple permissions. Two years later in April, it came up with some draft guidelines to regulate drones, but experts say those still leave a lot to be desired. This is a result of the reactionary approach to regulation.

Bitcoin and blockchain, the technology on which the virtual currency is based, is a big area of interest as the world looks to move to newer forms

Summit to host talks on using right policy to benefit from digital tech

of payments. However, the Reserve Bank of India hasn't come up with guidelines on this yet, except for a warning issued in December 2013 where it cautioned users about the risks associated with virtual currencies.

The impact that automation could have on IT and manufac-

turing is of far more concern, but there hasn't been a concerted effort in this area. The summit hopes to spark conversations like this, and bring such issues and possible solutions in focus.

"The purpose of the summit is to facilitate discussion among a wide variety of stakeholders including technologists, entrepreneurs, academia, policymakers, and thinkers in the space on how best to regulate technology and to create the next big framework for technologies out of India as well to think seriously about the incentive mechanism for innovation in India," said Padmanabhan.

How and where artificial intelligence can be used in India, protecting domestic innovation without stifling foreign entrants and the role of government in spurring technological innovation are some of the other themes that will be discussed at the summit.

The speakers include Bibop Gresta, chairman, Hyperloop Transportation Technologies; R.S. Sharma, chairman, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India; foreign secretary S. Jaishankar; Ofir Akunis, minister of science, technology and space, Israel; and R.K. Misra, founder director, Center for Smart Cities.

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