

EXPERT PANEL
“Digitalization and Digital Exclusion”
AGH University of Science and Technology
&
Krakow University of Economics

Krakow, 22 January 2026

On 22 January 2026, the AGH University of Science and Technology and the Krakow University of Economics organized an expert panel within the ODDEA project, “Overcoming Digital Divide in Europe and Southeast Asian Universities,” HORIZON-MSCA-2021-SE-01-1. The event focused on digitalization, digital exclusion, and the future directions of global technological transformation. The meeting brought together business practitioners and members of the academic community, who shared their knowledge, experience, and research findings.

The meeting was moderated by Dr Hab. Eng. Joanna Duda, prof. AGH, and Dr Hab. Barbara Siuta-Tokarska, prof. KUE.

Among the participants were also:

From AGH University of Science and Technology:

- Dr Rafał Kusa;
- Dr hab. Eng. Jerzy Duda, prof. AGH ;
- Dr Rafał Kusa;
- Dr Maciej Woźniak;
- Dr Agnieszka Choczyńska;
- *Jewel Kumar Roy from Széchenyi István University in Győr, Hungary, who was completing his two-month research stay under the “ODDEA” project.*

From the Krakow University of Economics:

- Dr Tomasz Kusio;
- Dr Sylwia Kruk;
- Dr Agnieszka Thier.

The expert panel was held in a hybrid format: some participants attended in person at the AGH premises at 10 Gramatyka Street in Kraków, while others—experts and guests—joined the meeting online.

The panel consisted of two groups of specialists:

1. Business practitioners, who deal with digitalization on a daily basis within their business operations, as well as representatives of public institutions.
2. Members of the academic community—experts in new technologies, digitalization, and artificial intelligence.

Group I – Recognized Practitioners and Business Representatives. The panel included the following participants:

- **Krzysztof Karcz** – President of the SME Association “Krak Business”
- **Janusz Wala** – Owner of Online Group
- **Kamil Kaczmarczyk** – President of the Management Board, K Development

- **Dr Mariusz Filipek** – Deputy Ombudsman for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
- **Piotr Szalański** – Owner of Storymakers
- **Zbigniew Filar** – President of the Management Board, Tarnowskie Media Sp. z o.o.
- **Sebastian Scelina** – IT Manager, Małopolska Voivodeship Office

Group II – Representatives of Academia and Experts in New Technologies and Digitalization, including individuals bridging the academic, business, and/or public-sector environments:

- **Dr Grzegorz Piotr Pawlak, DSc, Eng., Associate Professor at Poznań University of Technology** – Entrepreneur and researcher, Institute of Computing Science, Department of Algorithm Theory and Software Systems
- **Dr Zofia Grodek-Szostak** – Krakow University of Economics, Department of Economics and Organization of Enterprises; specialist in technology transfer and digitalization
- **Dr hab. Eng. Piotr Maśloch, Associate Professor at General Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces**; expert in new technologies and AI
- **Dr Krzysztof Muszyński, Eng., MBA** – Łukasiewicz Research Network – Poznań Institute of Technology; specialist in data standards
- **Dr Karol Wałachowski** – Krakow University of Economics, Department of Economic Policy and Development Programming; adviser at the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy of the Republic of Poland

The meeting agenda covered three principal thematic areas:

Welcome and opening remarks

1. Thematic Panel I: Digitalization – including the understanding of the concept, definitions, key components of digitalization, core technologies, driving forces, and barriers.
2. Thematic Panel II: Digital Exclusion – including the understanding of the concept, definitions, main elements and sources of exclusion, and proposed actions to overcome it.
3. Thematic Panel III: *Quo vadis, o mundus?* – Where is the world heading, and what might the future bring?

Followed by:

Discussion and closing session.

The panel constituted a broad and multifaceted debate on contemporary digital processes, their impact on society, and the directions of global development in the coming years. The discussion began with an examination of digitalization as an irreversible and multidimensional phenomenon shaping the functioning of the economy, public administration, education, and social life. The experts emphasized that digitalization encompasses both the development of digital infrastructure and the implementation of key technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and advanced data analytics. Attention was drawn to the driving forces behind this transformation—growing global competitiveness, innovation pressure, changes in the labor market, and societal expectations—as well as to the barriers most frequently mentioned: insufficient digital skills, infrastructural limitations, high implementation costs, and data-security concerns.

The next part of the panel focused on the issue of digital exclusion, which remains one of the most significant challenges associated with technological transformation. It was highlighted that digital exclusion is multifaceted and results from economic, social, educational, demographic, and geographic factors. It affects not only individual citizens—particularly older adults and residents of rural areas—but also enterprises, especially those unable to keep pace with the rapid technological changes. The experts pointed to the need for actions that reduce the scale of exclusion, such as the development of broadband infrastructure, digital-education initiatives, technological support for the SME sector, and increasing the accessibility of online public services.

The final part of the discussion sought to answer the question of the world's future in the context of rapidly advancing digitalization. The panelists noted the growing importance of artificial intelligence, automation, the data-driven economy, and cybersecurity, stressing that the future will depend on societies' adaptive capacities, the flexibility of institutions, and the ability to combine innovation with social and ethical responsibility. They also emphasized the necessity of building digital resilience and trust in technologies that are becoming the foundation of modern states.

In conclusion, the panel confirmed that digitalization is an irreversible process and a key driver of economic and societal development. At the same time, digital exclusion remains a serious challenge that may deepen existing inequalities. The experts unanimously underlined the need to invest in digital competencies, modern infrastructure, and technological development to fully harness the potential of digital transformation and ensure its inclusive character.

The text was prepared by:

Dr Hab. Barbara Siuta-Tokarska, prof. KUE and Dr Hab. Joanna Duda, prof. AGH