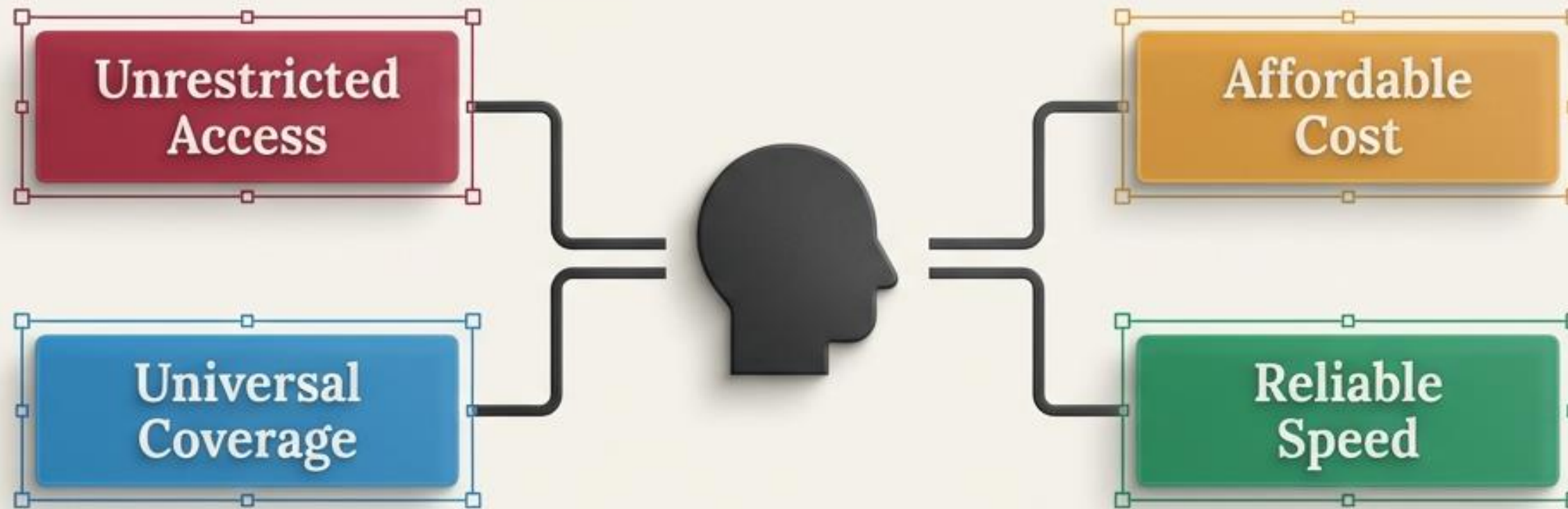


The Network Human Rights Index (NHI)

Measuring the Internet
as a Fundamental Right:
Taiwan Case Study &
Asian Benchmark

Internet access is no longer a luxury. It is a fundamental human right.



If we accept that every global citizen has the right to access information for equal opportunity and competitiveness, a new question emerges:

How do we measure a right?

The Measurement Blind Spot

Traditional evaluations focus on population coverage and technical speed. But coverage means nothing if a family cannot afford the data, and speed is irrelevant if vital applications and services are politically or economically blocked.

The Old Metric



Broadband Penetration & Raw Speed

The Blind Spot



Real-World Barriers

Defining the New Baseline: The 20 GB Standard



To measure affordability fairly, we must define basic necessity. Based on the GSMA's Mobile Economy Report 2025 projections for the Asia-Pacific region, we have adopted 20 GB per user per month as the physiological minimum required for survival in the modern digital economy.

We Asked the Users

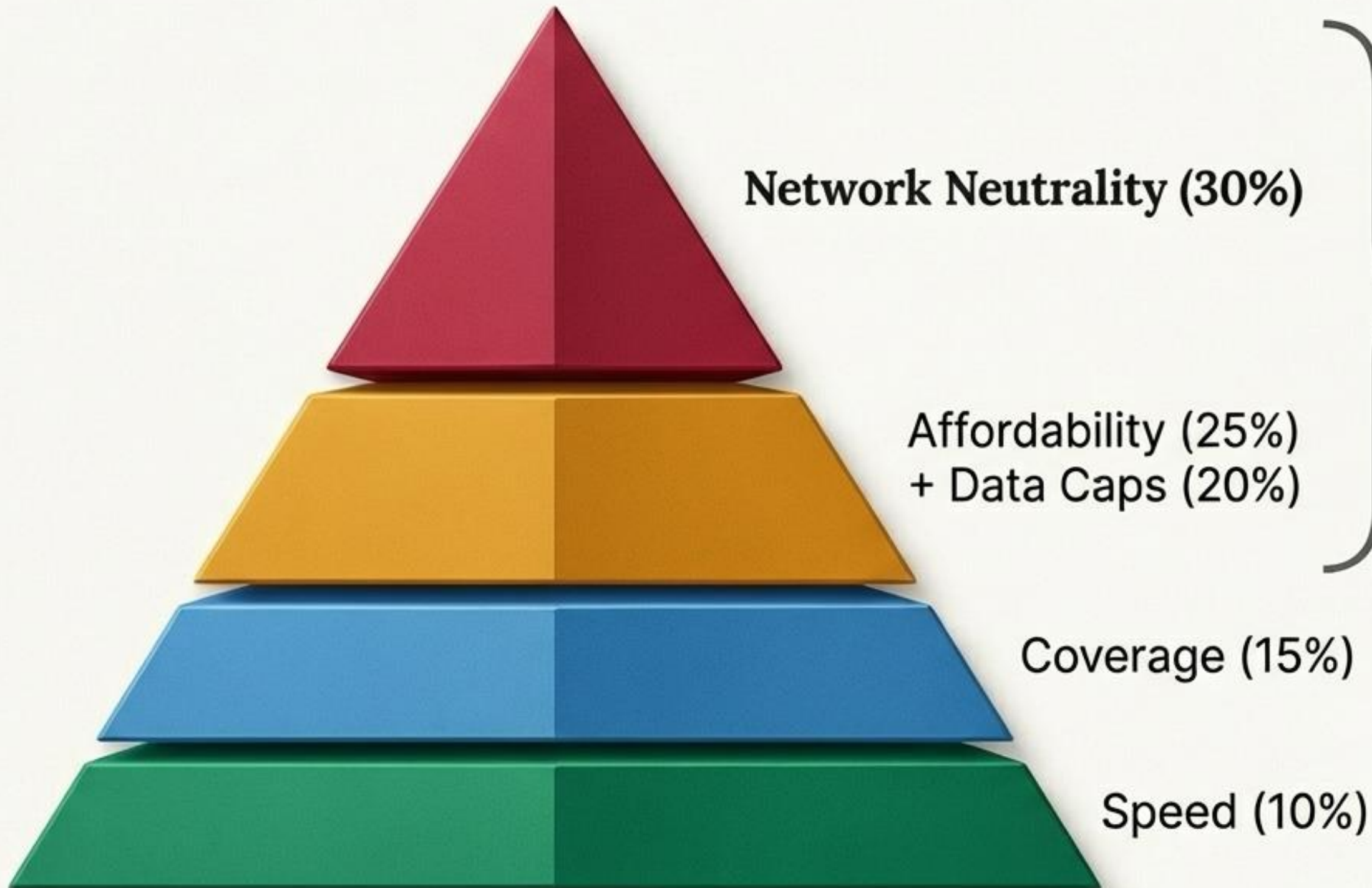


“Cheap plans mean nothing if there’s no signal.”



Based on an extensive user perception survey (N=165) across Taiwan and other Asian regions, probing what individuals actually require for equitable digital participation.

The Hierarchy of Digital Needs

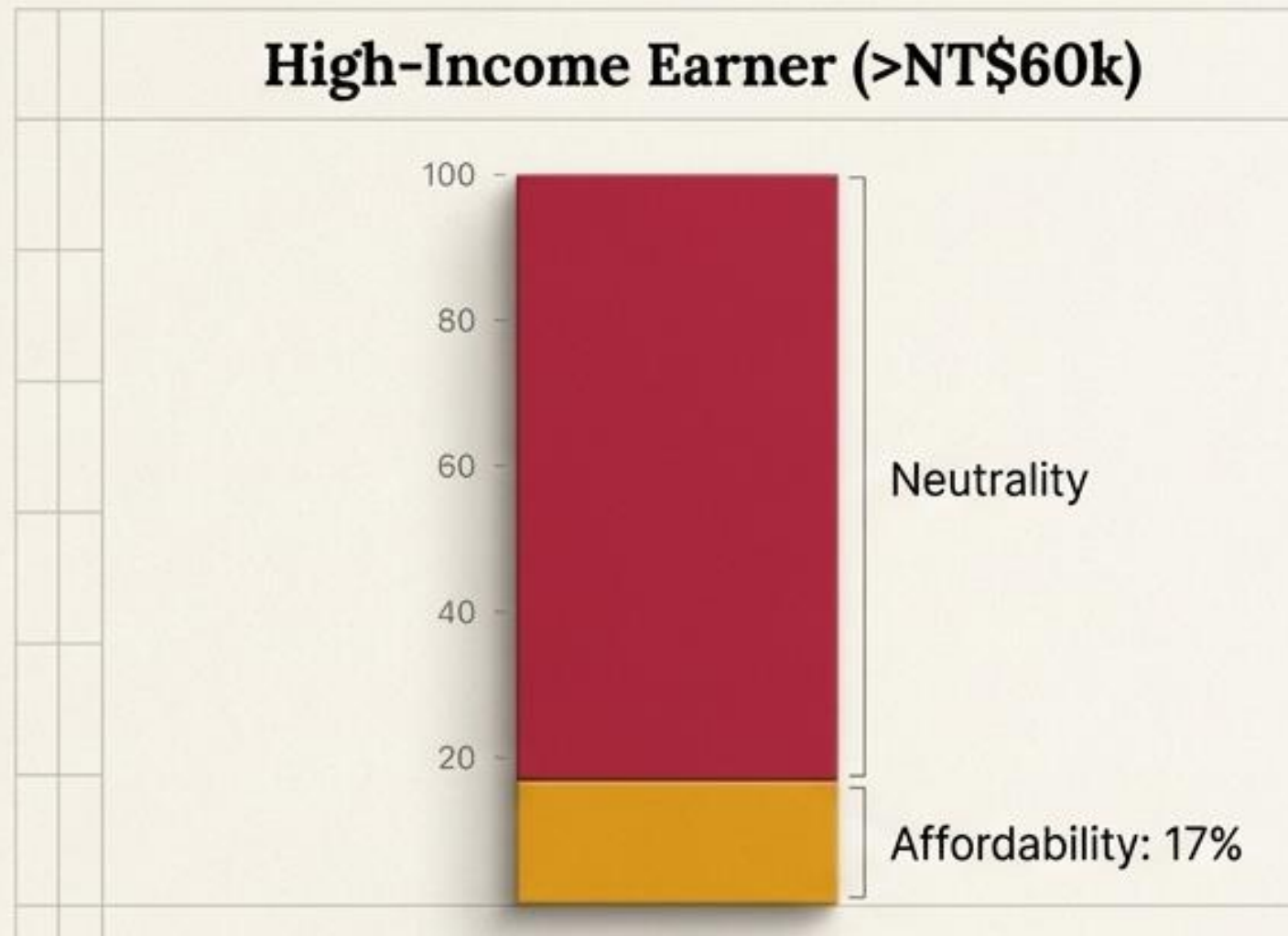


55%

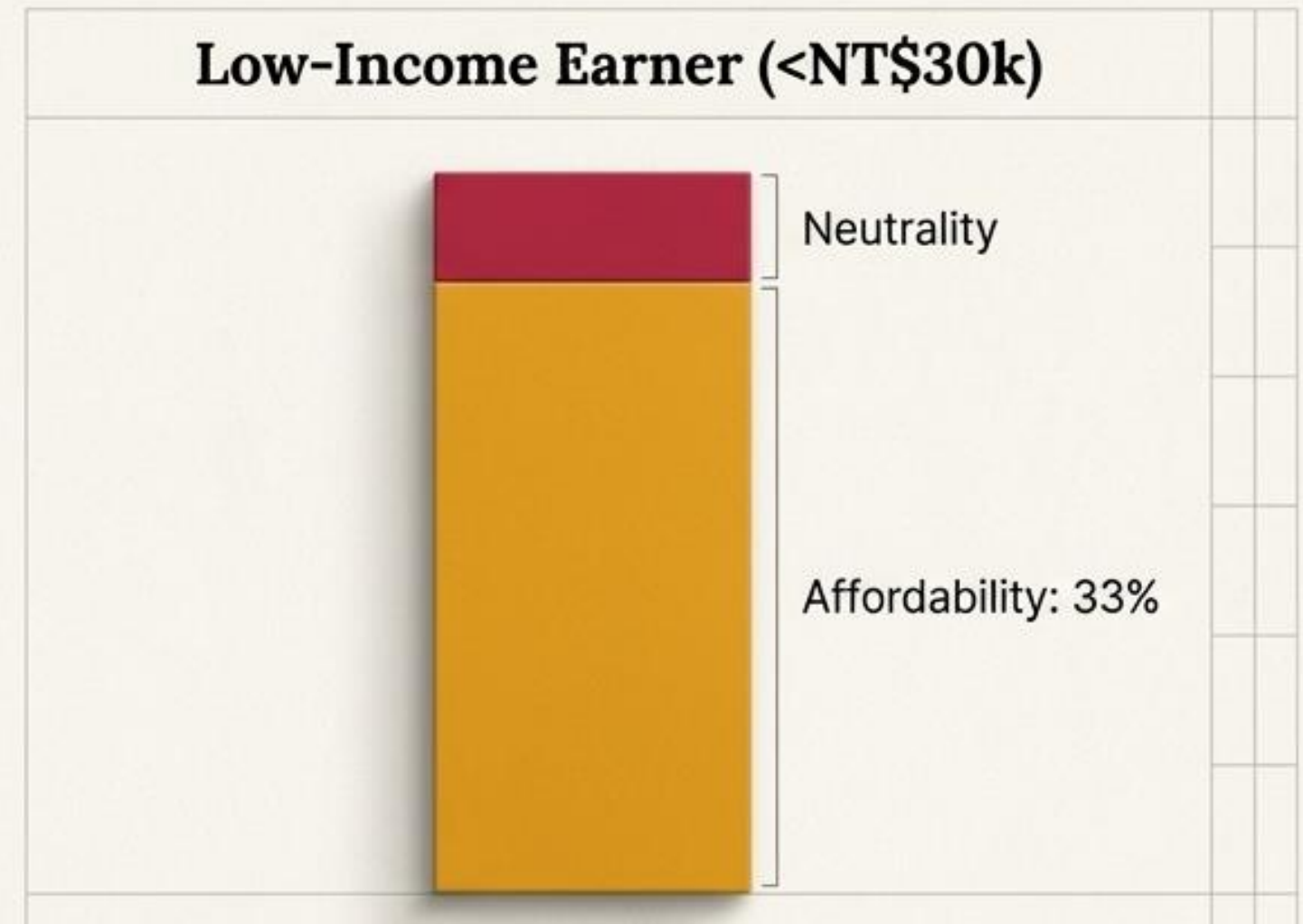
Users care significantly more about “Can I access what I want?” and “Can I afford it?” than peak 5G speeds.

Combined, Neutrality and Affordability make up 55% of the weighted importance for a basic digital human right.

The Affordability Divide



Prioritizes Neutrality & Stability
High-income users demand open access to global tools.

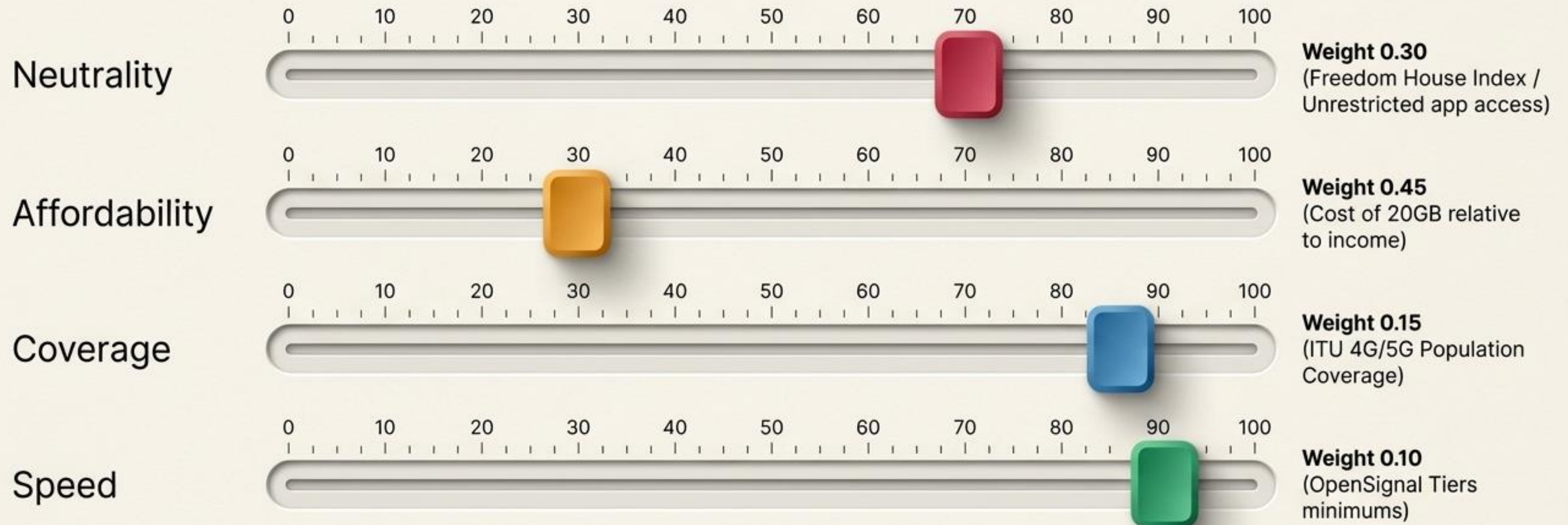


Prioritizes Cost
Low-income users simply need to afford basic connectivity to survive.

Price sensitivity is strictly inversely correlated with income.
True human rights metrics must account for the lowest common economic denominator.

The Digital Equalizer: The NHI Prototype

A standardized 0–100 score of true digital human rights.
A perfect score requires balancing all four frequencies.



The 2025 Asian Benchmark Scorecard

Country	Neutrality	Affordability	Coverage	Speed	Final NHI Score
Japan	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	93.4
Singapore	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	85.9
Taiwan	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	82.45
Hong Kong	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	72.7
Malaysia	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	65.5
Vietnam	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	61.95
China	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	61.45
Thailand	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	Data Point	36.7

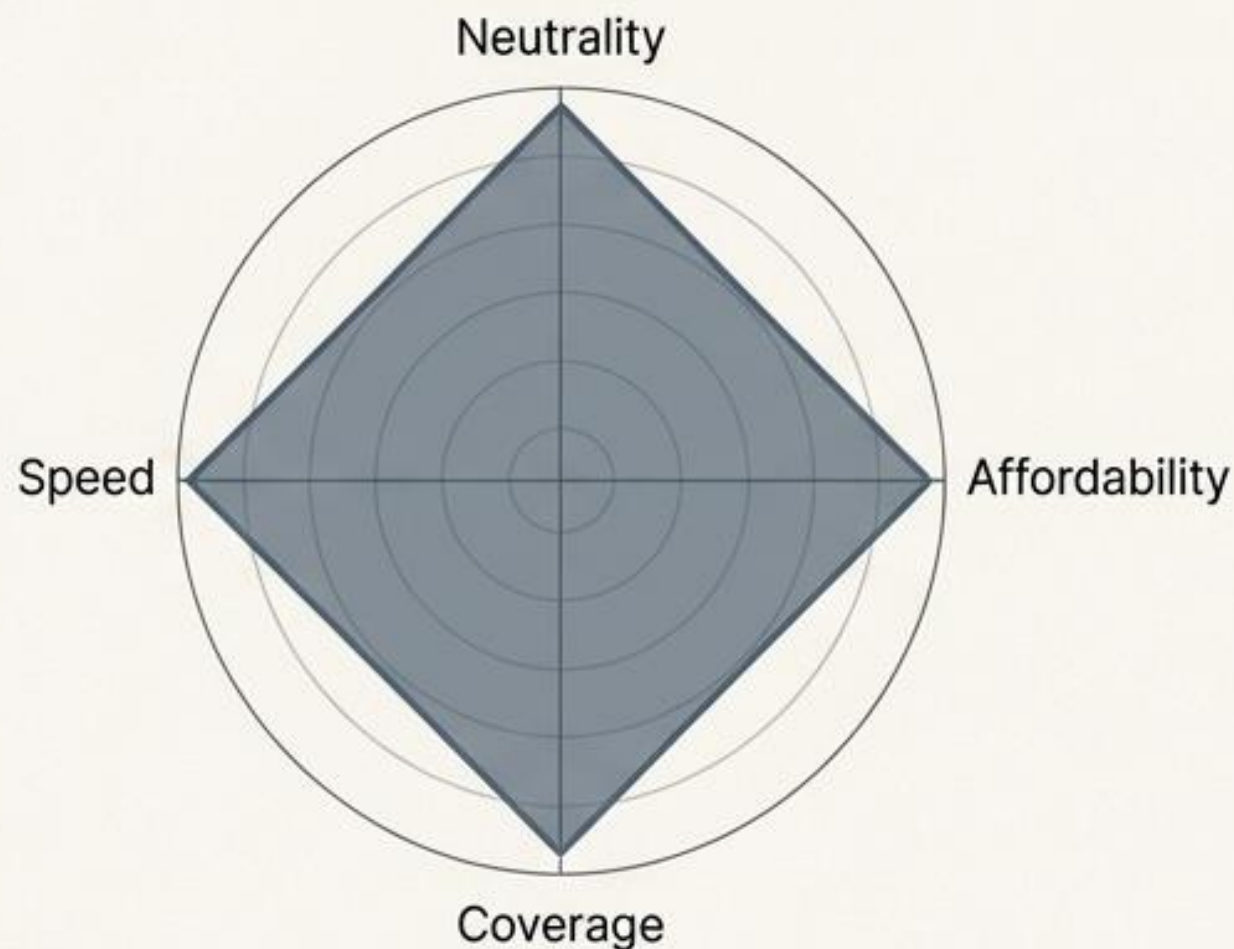
Three Distinct Ecosystem Archetypes



Plotting the two most critical human factors—Affordability and Neutrality—reveals three distinct archetypes of digital rights in Asia. Excellent technical infrastructure does not guarantee digital human rights.

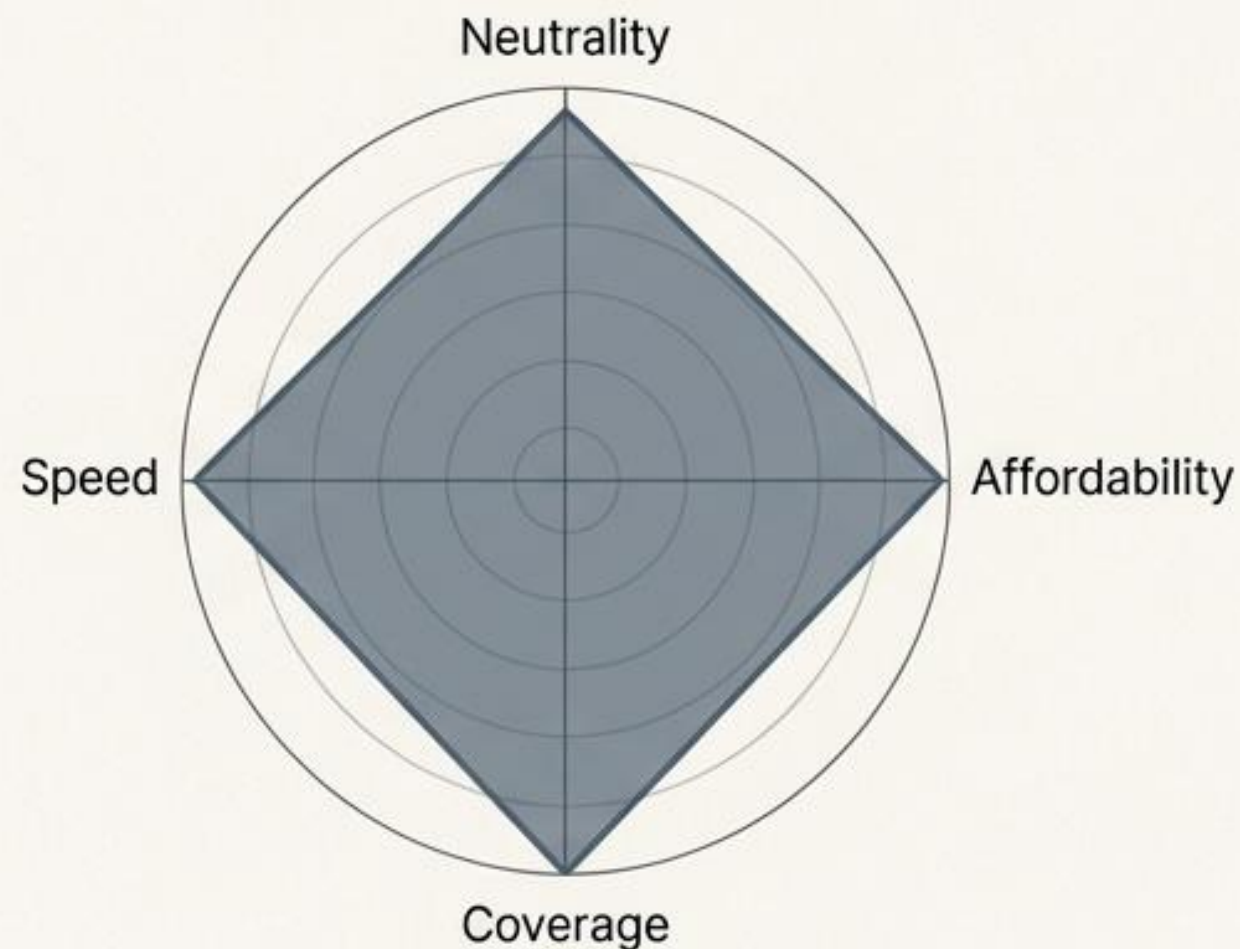
The Balanced Leaders: Japan & Singapore

These nations prove that hyper-accessibility and strong underlying infrastructure can successfully coexist with high levels of digital freedom and neutrality.



Japan (NHI: 93.4)

- ¥2,178 for 20GB (Only 0.63% of income).
- Strong neutrality (78).

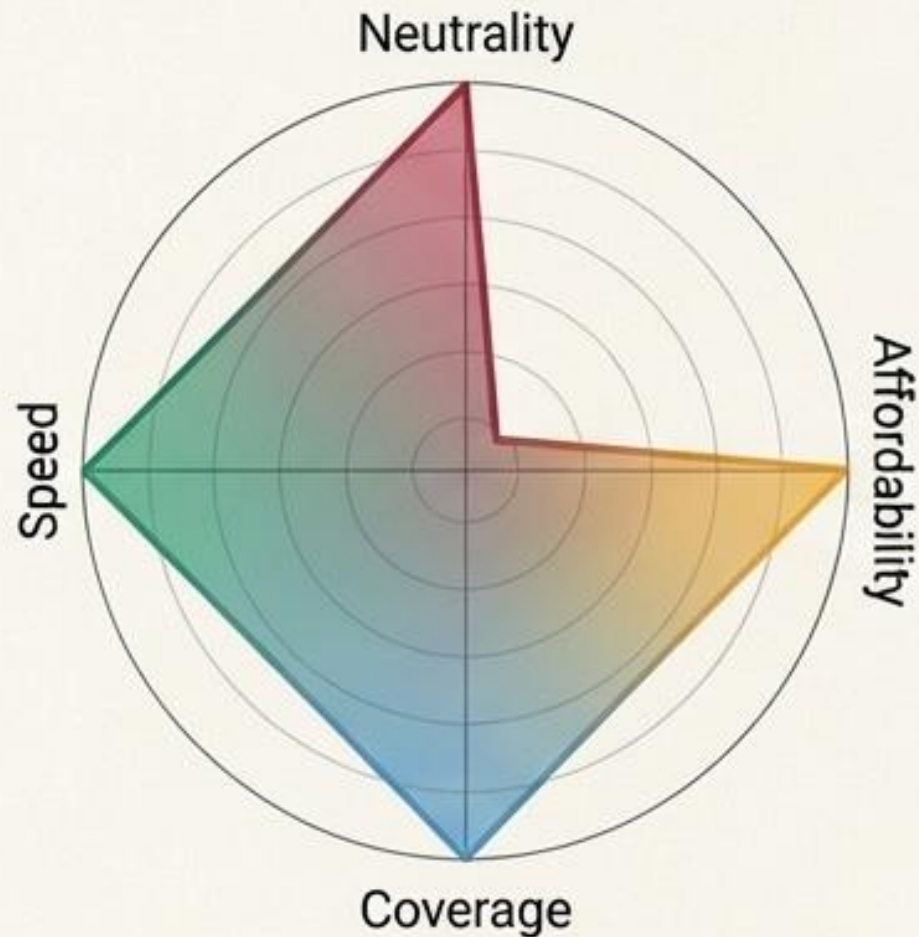


Singapore (NHI: 85.9)

- S\$5 for 400GB (0.09% of income).
- Unmatched hyper-accessibility.

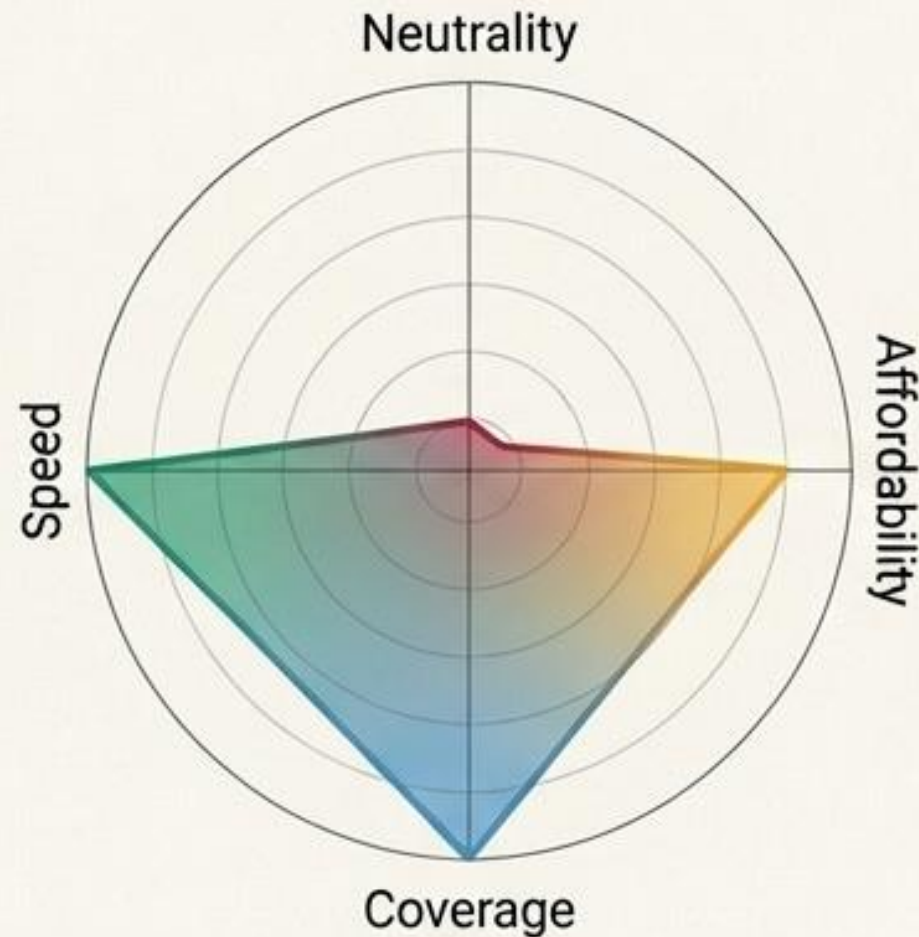
The Infrastructure Paradox

A modern paradox. Citizens have highly affordable access to world-class 5G networks, but are geographically barred from utilizing essential global information systems and AI tools.



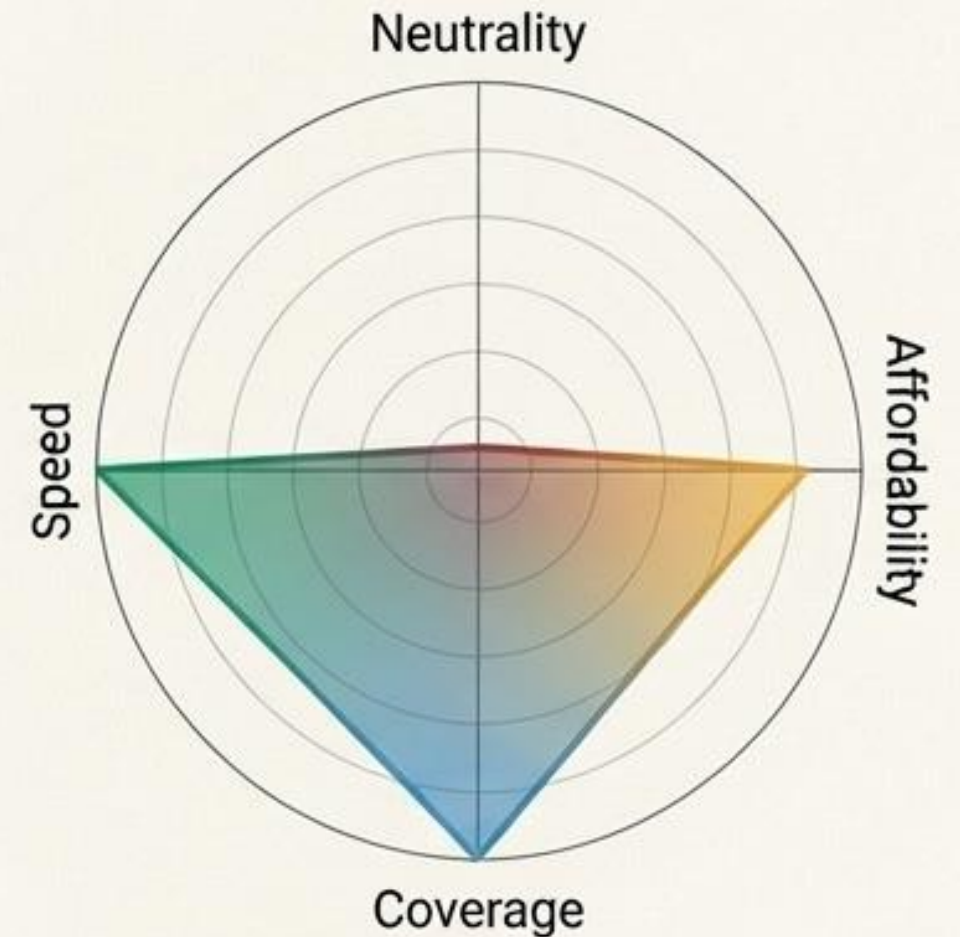
Hong Kong (NHI: 72.7)

Perfect affordability and speed, but a neutrality score of 9 due to ChatGPT/TikTok blocks.



China (NHI: 61.45)

99% coverage, but highly restricted access to global tools.

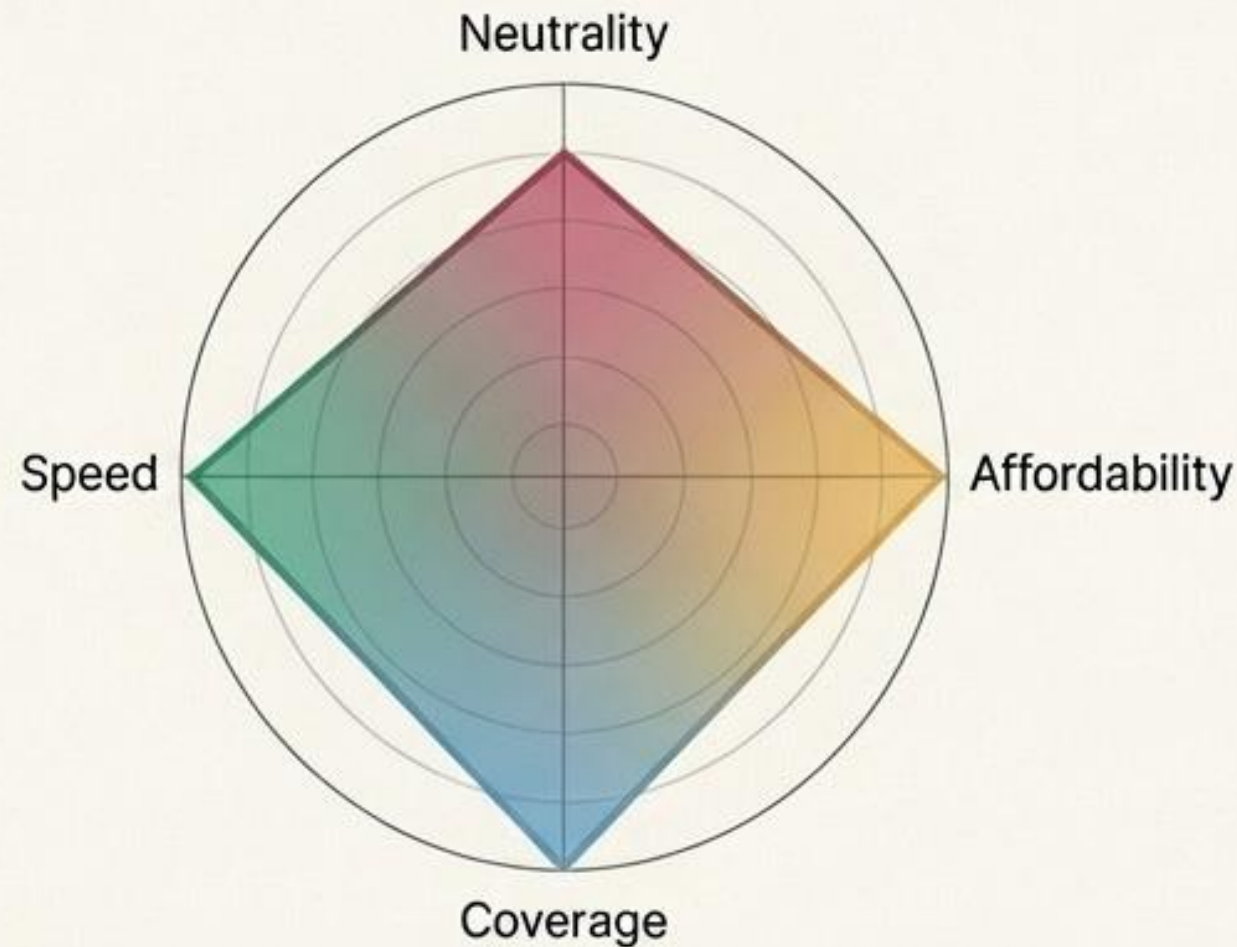


Vietnam (NHI: 61.95)

Strong infrastructure speeds, but severe constraints on open access.

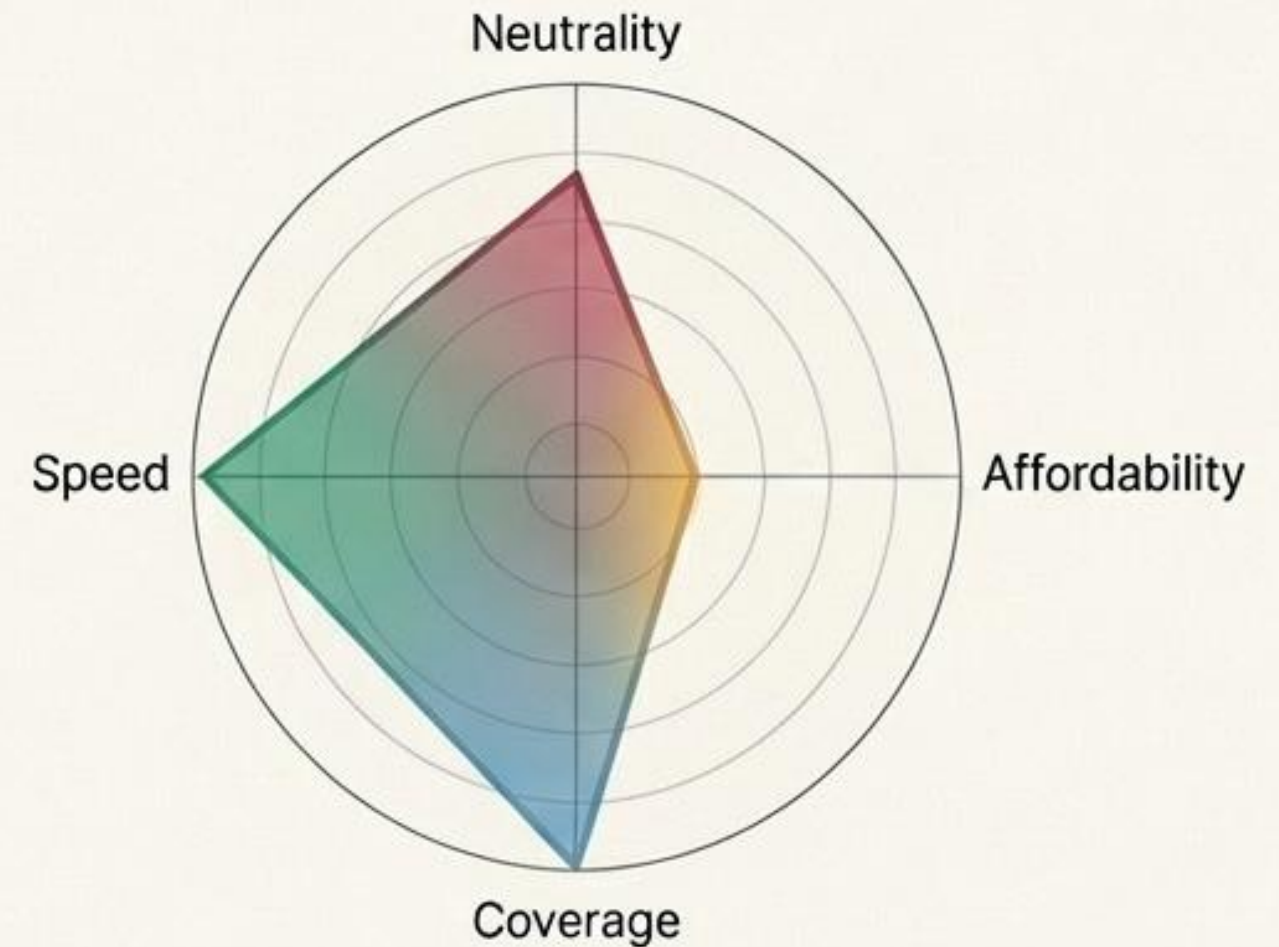
The Affordability Trap

The illusion of absolute pricing. While these plans look inexpensive to tourists, they act as a heavy digital tax on local lower-income populations, preventing equitable access.



Thailand (NHI: 36.7)

99% coverage, but the cheapest 20GB plan (299 THB) consumes 2.05% of the average monthly wage. Affordability score: 0.



Malaysia (NHI: 65.5)

RM 40 plan consumes 1.4% of average income. Infrastructure is excellent, but cost creates a severe barrier.

Taiwan in Focus: A Warning Sign on Cost

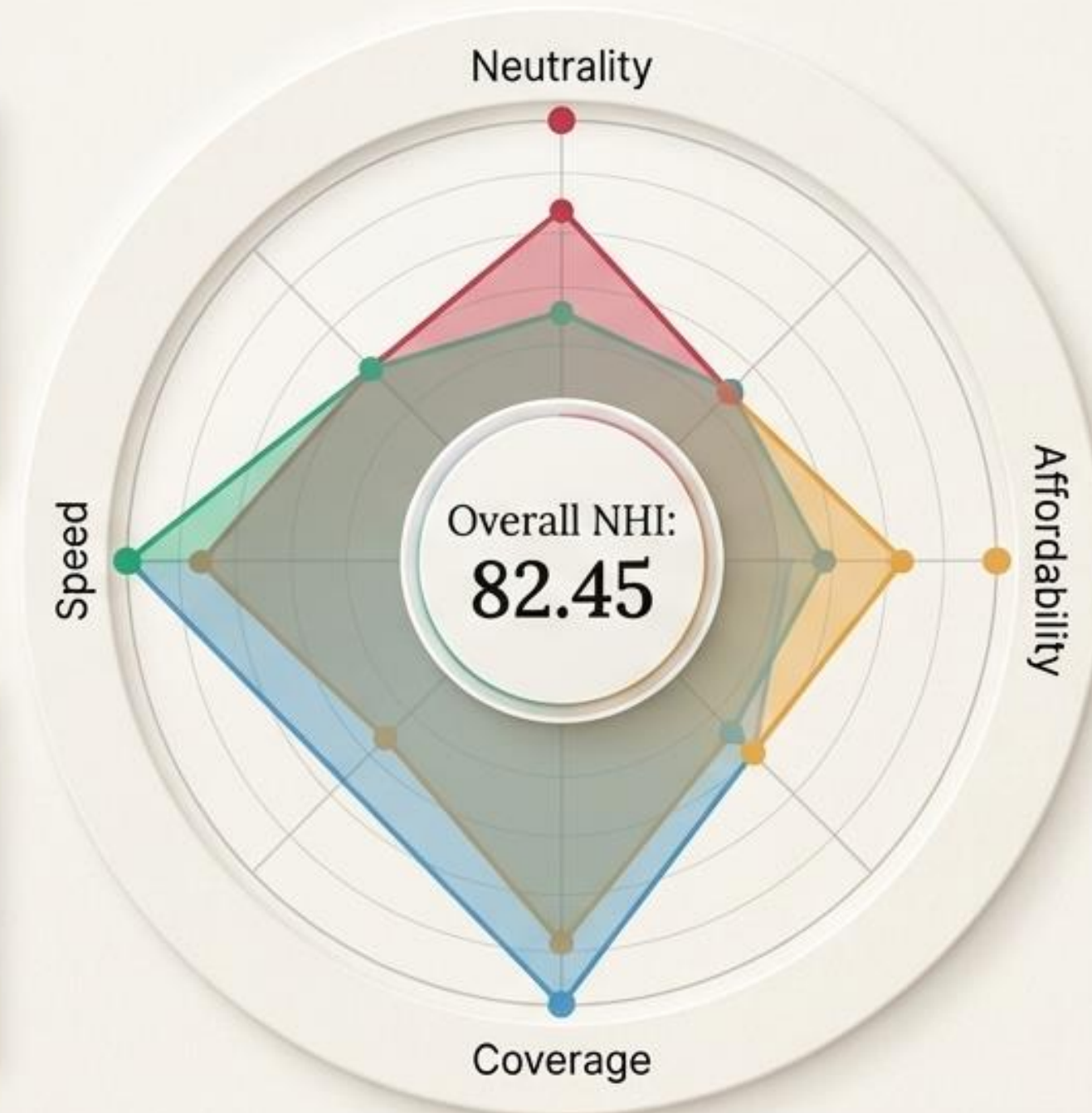
Taiwan maintains a highly inclusive, human-rights-aligned environment. An NT\$499 plan consumes just 0.8% of average income. However, recent market shifts are pushing the affordability boundary closer to the danger zone.

Coverage: 100

Maximized access. No geographical blocks.

Neutrality: 79


High commitment to open information.



Speed: 100

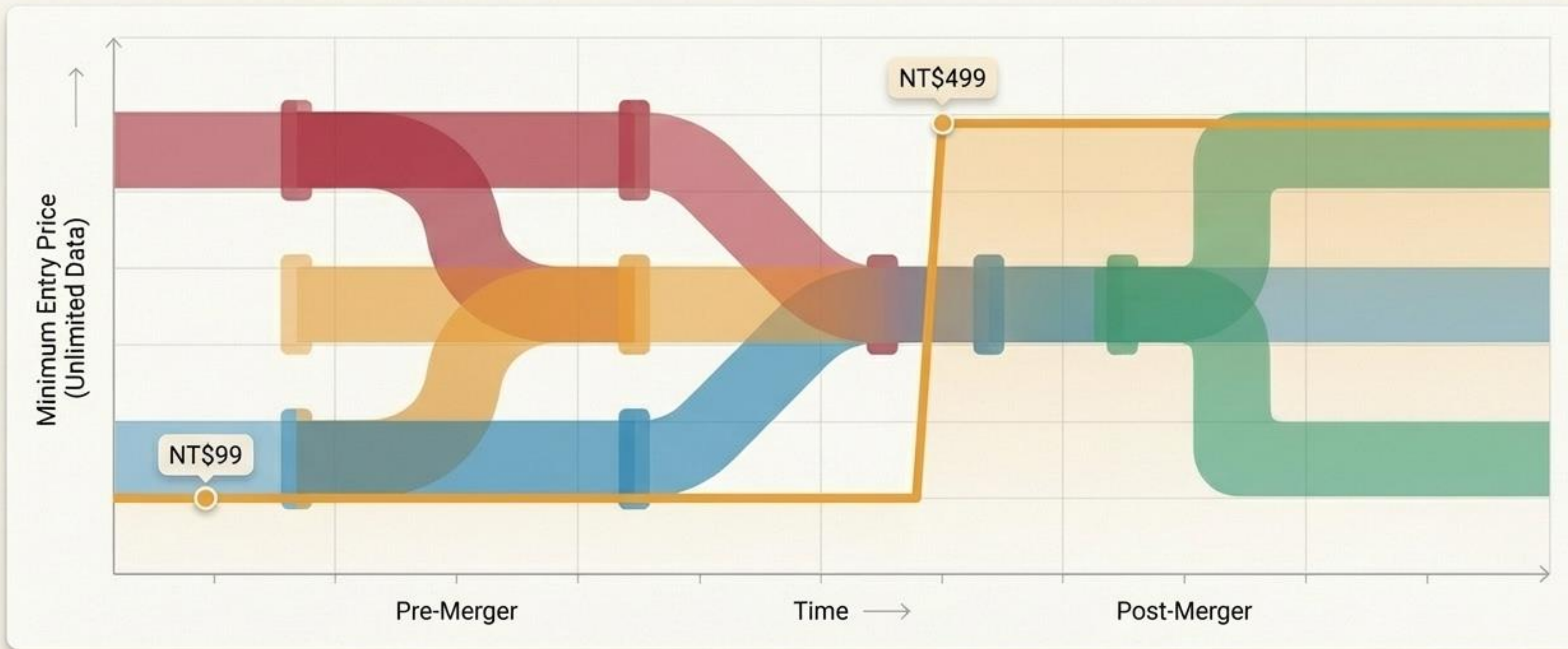
World-class network performance.

Affordability: 75

 Approaching danger zone due to rising costs.

Systemic Fault Line 2: The Merger Tax

Market consolidation is a human rights issue. As operators merge in regions like Taiwan, Thailand, and Malaysia, the lowest-tier affordable plans disappear entirely, disenfranchising economically disadvantaged citizens under the guise of market efficiency.



Evolving the Metric: Addressing the Controversies



Defining Neutrality

Should neutrality be based on local laws, or the right to access global tools like ChatGPT? We assert that digital human rights supersede local censorship.



Defining Affordability

Comparing major carriers (Japan's hidden rebates) against secondary operators (Vietnamobile's 12Mbps limits) requires deeper, localized context.

Local Action: Navigating the Divide in Taiwan



Families

Combine fixed home broadband (<u>NT\$600</u>) with basic mobile data plans (<u>NT\$149</u>) for cost-efficiency.



Disadvantaged Residents

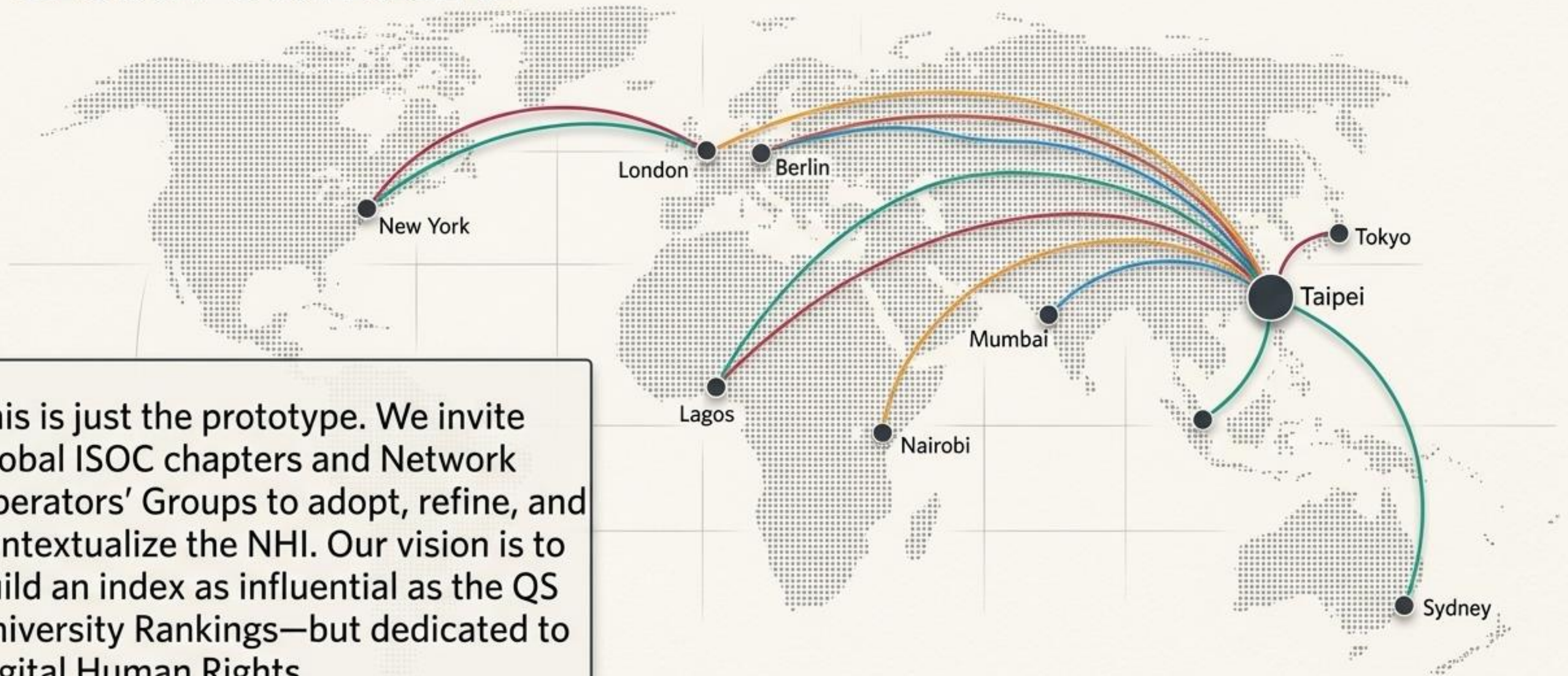
Avoid relying solely on free public Wi-Fi. Utilize 4G Caring Plans (NT\$199 for 15GB + 10Mbps unlimited).



Travelers

Utilize international eSIMs to save 30-50%, but exercise caution with Hong Kong-routed SIMs that may block AI tools.

From Asian Benchmark to Global Standard



This is just the prototype. We invite Global ISOC chapters and Network Operators' Groups to adopt, refine, and contextualize the NHI. Our vision is to build an index as influential as the QS University Rankings—but dedicated to Digital Human Rights.

Join the Initiative

Together, we can make the Internet a truly universal and equitable human right.



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Full Report