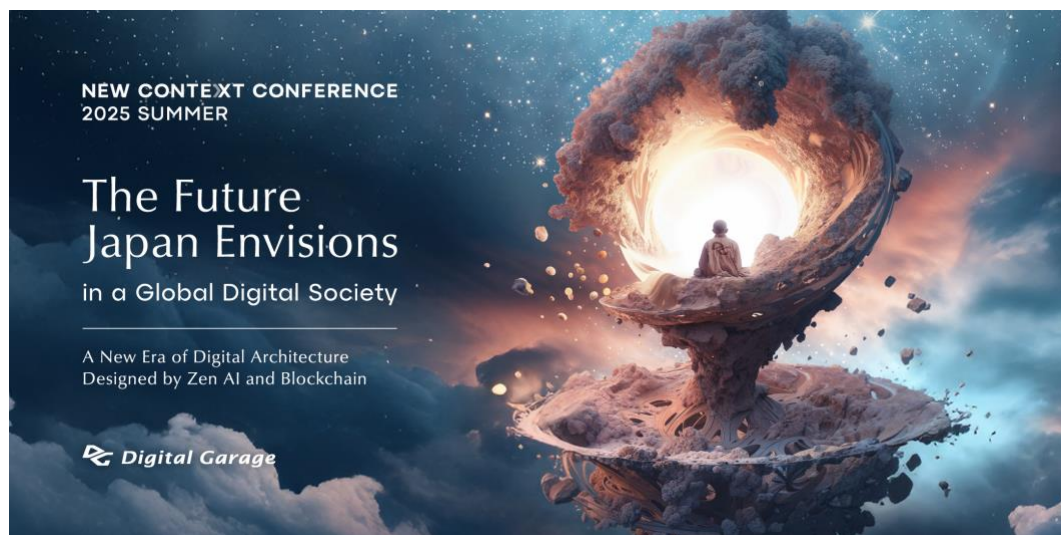**Digital Garage**

NEWS RELEASE

Digital Garage Hosts NEW CONTEXT CONFERENCE TOKYO 2025 Summer Under the Theme of "The Future Japan Envisions in a Global Digital Society"
～Exploring the Future of Japan's Global Digital Society with Diverse Experts from Japan and Abroad～

- **Digital Garage, Inc. (Digital Garage) will host NEW CONTEXT CONFERENCE TOKYO 2025 Summer (NCC TOKYO 2025 Summer), a conference to discuss "New Context" for a digital society, on June 30, 2025.**

NEW CONTEXT CONFERENCE (NCC) has been hosted by Kaoru Hayashi and Joichi Ito, co-founders of Digital Garage, since 2005. The conference brings together individuals interested in exploring cutting-edge internet technologies and the businesses that emerge around them. With a focus on the new contexts that contribute to the development of society, the conference aims to explore how digital technologies can be used to design a society based on global values such as equality, diversity, reflection, and sustainability. The event features speakers and participants who discuss and share their insights on these topics.

The Internet, since its inception in the 1960s, has evolved into an innovative infrastructure connecting people and knowledge worldwide. However, today's digital landscape reveals growing divisions in technological standards and ethical approaches among nations and corporations. While technologies like AI and blockchain create unprecedented value, they also bring challenges including privacy concerns, hallucination, social polarization, and environmental impacts due to massive power consumption.

In this complex global context, Japan has an opportunity to present a distinctive digital society model. Drawing on its traditional values of "harmony", "coexistence", and "trust", Japan can pioneer a sustainable approach that balances technological advancement with ethical responsibility.

In particular, the "Zen AI" concept—merging Japanese spiritual and natural perspectives with open-source principles—is gaining attention as offering a new direction for next-generation AI design.

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Today's world needs more than technological innovation; it is calling for a new "Digital Architecture" encompassing philosophies and social frameworks. "NCC TOKYO 2025 Summer," which marks the 27th event since its first launch in 2005, sets the theme 'The Future Japan Envisions in a Global Digital Society ~ A New Era of Digital Architecture Designed by Zen AI and Blockchain ~'. This year's NCC brings together experts to explore the integration of technology with spiritual culture, examining Japan's potential contribution to a more balanced global digital future.

The Speakers include Junichi Kanda, Member of the House of Representatives of the National Diet of Japan / Parliamentary Vice-minister of Justice; Ken Sakamura, Emeritus Professor of The University of Tokyo / The Director of INIAD cHUB, Toyo University / IEEE Life fellow and the golden core member of the IEEE Computer Society; Jun Murai, Senior Advanced Research Project Professor of Keio University; Ariel Ekblaw, Founding CEO of Aurelia Institute / GP of Aurelia Foundry Fund / Founding Director of MIT Space Exploration Initiative; and Eric Lagier, Founder and Managing Partner of byFounders. Various industry leaders with expertise in cutting-edge technologies will discuss society's future from multiple perspectives.

【Event outline】
· **Date and time:** June 30 (Monday), 2025, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (JST)
· **Form of Event:** Online
· **Organizer:** Digital Garage, Inc.
· **Collaboration partner:** Kakaku.com, Inc., Open Network Lab, BI.Garage, Inc., Digital Architecture Lab[1], Crypto Garage, Inc., DG717, GenLab Venture Studio
· **Official website:** https://ncc.garage.co.jp/2025summer/en/
· **Participation:** Free
· **How to register:** Peatix (https://ncctokyo2025summer.peatix.com)
· **Host:**
Kaoru Hayashi (Digital Garage Representative Director, President Executive Officer and Group CEO / Kakaku.com, Inc. Executive Chairman)
Joichi Ito (Digital Garage Board member, and Senior Managing Executive Officer and Chief Architect)

*The information of speakers and programs will be updated on the official website as needed.

*This information is current as of the date of the announcement. Program contents and speaker information are subject to change. Please be forewarned.

[1]: Digital Architecture Lab is a research organization established by Digital Garage to design and promote the implementation of next-generation social structures driven by the evolution of technology in 2022. (https://dalab.xyz/en/)

<Company profile>
Digital Garage, Inc. (https://www.garage.co.jp/en/)

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Representative: Kaoru Hayashi, Representative Director, President Executive Officer and Group CEO

Head office address: DG Bldg., 3-5-7 Ebisu Minami, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Shibuya PARCO DG Bldg., 15-1 Udagawa-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Date founded: August 1995

Business: Digital Garage's corporate purpose is "Designing 'New Context' for a sustainable society with technology." Digital Garage operates a payment business that provides one of the largest comprehensive payment platforms in Japan. In addition, Digital Garage has a marketing business that provides one-stop solutions in the digital and real world, and a startup investment and development business that reaches out to promising startups and technologies in Japan and overseas.

【Speakers】

Junichi Kanda
Member of the House of Representatives the National Diet of Japan / Parliamentary Vice-minister of Justice

Lives in Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture. He began his career after graduating from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Tokyo and earning his degree from Yale University's Graduate School, where he specialized in International and Development Economics. His professional journey started at the Bank of Japan, followed by positions at the Financial Services Agency and Nippon Life Insurance Company. He later served as an Executive Officer at Money Forward and as Managing Director of the Fintech Association of Japan. After winning the election to the House of Representatives from Aomori's 2nd district, he was appointed Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Cabinet Office in 2023, where he oversaw infectious disease crisis management, new capitalism initiatives, and startup policy. In November 2024, he assumed the role of Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice.

In the Diet, he has served on multiple committees including the Judiciary Committee and the Finance Committee. Within the Liberal Democratic Party, he holds several key positions including Deputy Secretary-General of the Finance Research Council and Deputy Secretary-General of the Digital Society Promotion Headquarters.

Ken Sakamura
Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo / The Director, INIAD cHUB, Toyo University / IEEE Life fellow and the golden core member of the IEEE Computer Society

He has led the TRON Project since 1984, designing its open architecture for IoT. μT-Kernel, TRON's real-time OS, is an IEEE standard. Its OS family powers consumer electronics and suits IoT edge nodes. IEEE designated TRON RTOS and the TRON Intelligent House as Milestones. In 2015 he received the ITU 150 Award for telecom innovation, and 2023 the IEEE Masaru Ibuka Consumer Technology Award.

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Jun Murai

Senior Advanced Research Project Professor, Keio University

Jun Murai received his Ph.D. in Computer Science from Keio University in 1987, with a Focus on the Internet and computer communications. He established JUNET in 1984, the first network in Japan to connect multiple universities. In 1988, he founded the WIDE Project, a Japanese research consortium focused on the Internet. He has long been engaged in research on Internet technology platforms and is widely known as the Father of the Internet in Japan," and internationally as the "Internet Samurai." He serves as Special Advisor to the Japanese Cabinet and Advisor to the Digital Agency, and he is involved in various governmental committees and international scientific associations. His honors include the 2011 IEEE Internet Award, the 2013 Internet Hall of Fame (Pioneer), and the 2019 Knight of the Legion of Honor from the French Government.

Ariel Ekblaw

Founding CEO, Aurelia Institute, GP Aurelia Foundry Fund & Founding Director, MIT Space Exploration Initiative

Dr. Ariel Ekblaw is the founder and CEO of Aurelia Institute and GP for Aurelia Foundry Fund, where she strives to bring humanity's space exploration future to life. Through space architecture R&D, education and outreach, and investments in new space start-ups, she is building an ecosystem to expand humanity's horizons, democratize access to opportunities in low Earth orbit, and scale up life in space. Ariel was the founding Director of the MIT Space Exploration Initiative, a team of 50+ students, faculty, and staff building and flying advanced technology for space exploration. Ariel graduated with a B.S. in Physics, Mathematics, and Philosophy from Yale University and designed a novel space architecture habitat for her MIT PhD in autonomously self-assembling space structures. Her research work and the labs she leads build towards future habitats and space stations in orbit around the Earth, Moon, and Mars.

Eric Lagier

Founder and Managing Partner, byFounders

Eric Lagier is the Founder and Managing Partner of byFounders; the community-powered venture fund investing in pre-seed and seed across the New Nordics. The fund is backed and supported by its unique Collective, consisting of some of the region's most accomplished founders and operators. byFounders portfolio includes Lovable, Corti, Monta, Safetywing, Cobalt, Datacrunch, Yaak and Parahelp.

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Robert Bench
Co-Founder and CEO, Radius

Robert is the co-founder and CEO of Radius. Prior to starting Radius, he served as the senior research advisor at the MIT Media Lab. Before that, he led the Federal Reserve's central bank digital currency research efforts. He was also previously the Deputy General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer at Circle.

Ken Hasebe
Mayor of Shibuya

Ken Hasebe was born in Tokyo in 1972. After working at Hakuhodo, he established his own NPO called green bird, which aimed at solving the garbage problem. He has conducted a number of promotional activities related to littering, starting from Harajuku/Omotesando area and it has spread to more than 60 places in Japan.
He was first selected in Shibuya-ku congressist election in 2003 and served his role for 12 years. In 2015, he was elected as Mayor of Shibuya and now serves his third term.

The Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi Rinpoche
Principal Researcher, the Chiba Institute of Technology / President & CEO, The Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at MIT

Philosopher, Educator and a Polymath Monk, The Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi Rinpoche is a Principal Researcher at the Chiba Institute of Technology. He is also President & CEO of The Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a center dedicated to inquiry, dialogue, and education on the ethical and humane dimensions of life. The Center is a collaborative and nonpartisan think-and-do tank, and its programs emphasize responsibility and examine meaningfulness and moral purpose between individuals, organizations, and societies. Six Nobel Peace Laureates serve as The Center's founding members and its programs run in several countries and are expanding.
Venerable Tenzin's unusual background encompasses entering a Buddhist monastery at the age of ten and receiving graduate education at Harvard University with degrees ranging from Philosophy to Physics to International Relations. He is a Tribeca Disruptive Fellow and a 2018 Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. His book "Running Toward Mystery—The Adventure of an Unconventional Life" was published by Random House US.
He also serves as a Visiting Professor at International College of Innovation, National Chengchi University in Taiwan and a Senior Fellow at Research Institute for Democracy, Society and Emerging Technology.

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Venerable Tenzin serves on the boards of number of academic, humanitarian, and religious organizations. He is the recipient of several recognitions and awards, and received Distinguished Alumni awards from Harvard (2013) and Le Moyne College (2021) for his visionary contributions to humanity.

Taro Fukuyama
Managing Partner, Rice Capital

Founded Fond, an employee benefits SaaS company, in the United States in 2012. Served clients including Salesforce, Facebook, and Visa. The company secured investments from Y Combinator, Andreessen Horowitz, and DCM. Sold to Edenred in 2023. Founded Rice Capital in 2024, investing in startups in both Japan and the United States. Serves as an outside director for SmartHR and Knowledge Work.

Mizuki Oka
Chief Researcher, Henkaku Center, Chiba Institute of Technology

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Henkaku Center, Chiba Institute of Technology. Ph.D. in Engineering. PM of the IPA (Information-technology Promotion Agency, Japan) MITOU Program. Chair of the Japanese Society for Artificial Life. CEO of ConnectSphere Inc. She conducts research on artificial life technology and on data analysis, generation, and utilization using LLMs. She also engages in R&D on social simulation and open-ended algorithms. She is an author of "ALIFE | Artificial Life - Towards a More Life-like AI" (BNN, Inc.), "Conducting and Utilizing ALife - Introduction to Artificial Life Model Theory through Implementation" (O'Reilly Japan), and "Open-ended Evolutionary Algorithms in Python."

Masaki Matsubara
The abbot of the Zen temple Butsumo-ji

Rev. Dr. Masaki Matsubara is an 18th-generation Zen priest in the Japanese Rinzai tradition. After completing his monastic training at Heirinji Monastery in Japan, he earned both his M.A. and Ph.D. in the history of religions at Cornell University, where his research centered on Zen Master Hakuin Ekaku.

He has held teaching positions at Cornell University, Stanford University, and the University of California, Berkeley. He currently serves as a Virtual Contemplative Mentor in Residence at Brown University and teaches at Hunter College. He is also a Visiting Professor at the University of Tokyo. In addition, he is a member of the Advisory Forum of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.

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In his scholarly research, he focuses on social memory and how people remember the past, while exploring the memory's selective dialogical process in light of present concerns. For him, the object of study is not the past, but the many projects the memory undertakes: healing, denial, revision, invention, creation, re-creation, and forgetting.

Rev. Dr. Matsubara is the abbot of the Zen temple Butsumo-ji in Chiba Prefecture, Japan, and frequently travels between Japan and the United States to lead seminars and retreats. He currently resides in New York City.

Hal Seki
Founder, Code for Japan

Based on the motto, "Technology makes communities more livable," he is actively involved in various communities beyond the company's boundaries. He is driving "Civic Tech," a technology that enables residents, government, and businesses to co-create a better society in Japan. He is also CEO of Georepublic UG, a system development company using open-source GIS, and President of HackCamp which supports corporate open innovation. He also drives "Civic Tech" as a senior expert at the Digital Agency, and supports the government's shift to open governance, data utilization, and digital applications as Chief Innovation Officer for the City of Kobe and Chief Digital Service Fellow for the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.