



SPEECH

**His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K.,
President of the Republic of Mauritius**

**EVENT: LAUNCH OF BOOK “DIGITAL AFTERLIFE -
A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR LAW, TECHNOLOGY
AND VICTIM JUSTICE”**

VENUE: LECTURE THEATRE 2, UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

DATE: 01 JULY 2026

TIME: 10:00 HOURS

Protocol

Pro-Chancellor, Professor Raja Vinesh Sannasee;

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Kavi Kumar Khedo,

Dr Paramasiven Appavoo, representing the Dean of the Faculty of Information, Communication and Digital Technologies,

Associate Professor and Author, Dr Sheeba Armoogum,

Distinguished Members of Academia,

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Students,

All Protocol Observed.

Introduction

Good morning.

It is a great pleasure for me to join you today for the launch of “Digital Afterlife: A Global Framework for Law, Technology, and Victim Justice”, written by Associate Professor Dr Sheeba Armoogum.

Allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to Dr Armoogum and all her collaborators, on this remarkable scholarly achievement.

Book Launch

A book launch is always a special moment.

It is particularly fitting that this launch takes place at the University of Mauritius, an institution that has, for many decades, nurtured generations of professionals, researchers and leaders who have contributed immensely to the progress of our country, in various disciplines.

And I have had the good fortune of a long association with this prestigious institution in various capacities before assuming the high office of Head of State.

I have always believed that the finest scholarship is that which anticipates emerging challenges, stimulates thoughtful debate and ultimately contributes to improving the human condition.

This book launch marks the end of a long journey of thinking, research, writing and revision.

But it also marks the beginning of another journey, in which the ideas of the book now move into the public space and begin to speak to readers, students, families, professionals, policymakers, and society.

Defining Questions

This book addresses one of the defining questions of our digital age:

What becomes of our identity, our dignity, our privacy and our rights when our digital presence survives us?

Only a generation ago, such a question would have seemed unimaginable. Today, it has become part of our everyday reality.

Many of us have seen birthday reminders for people who have passed away.

We have seen profiles of deceased friends appear in social media feeds.

We may have seen old photographs, anniversary prompts, or automated memories appear at moments when families are still grieving.

The book describes these as digital ghosts, not in a supernatural sense, but as algorithmic echoes of people who are no longer physically present.

And who can no longer interact or react naturally, except through artificial intelligence recreating the voices, images and personalities of those who have passed away.

But the book asks us to consider the other side as well:

- Who gives consent? Are we respecting memory, or turning memory into a product?
- Are we helping the living to heal, or keeping them trapped in an illusion? Are we protecting the dignity of the deceased, or allowing their identity to be used without permission?

These are no longer philosophical questions. They are questions of digital governance for governments and public at large.

They are questions for our legal system.

They are questions for technology companies.

They are questions for universities.

Above all, they are questions for society itself.

The book is not born only from technical curiosity.

It comes from real questions heard in awareness programmes, from families, from individuals, and from moments where grief suddenly meets technology.

Writing a book on a theme which is both topical, complex, thought-provoking fascinating, and which explores our digital life when our physical life has come to an end, requires exceptional intellectual

curiosity, rigorous research, perseverance and, above all, the courage to explore questions that many have yet to consider

Dr Armoogum writes from a very human starting point.

In a digital world, respect for a person should not end with death.

If we protect privacy, identity and dignity during life, we must also ask how these values can be protected after death.

One of the greatest strengths of this book lies in **its interdisciplinary approach.**

Dr Armoogum brings together law, cybersecurity, digital forensics, cyberpsychology, artificial intelligence, ethics, human rights and victim justice to examine a subject that no single discipline can fully address.

Digital Charter

Importantly, she does not merely identify problems.

This is where Dr Armoogum's proposed Digital Charter becomes important.

The book does not simply describe the problems. It also proposes a framework for action. It brings together principles such as dignity, consent, security, continuity and cultural respect.

It also outlines rights such as the right to be remembered or forgotten, the right to posthumous privacy, the right to informed consent for data use after death, the right to protection from digital exploitation, the right to appoint a digital executor, and the right to a dignified digital legacy.

She proposes a way forward through a **Digital Charter** that seeks to promote posthumous digital rights, ethical artificial intelligence, cybersecurity safeguards, platform responsibility and greater protection for victims.

Whether every recommendation is ultimately adopted is perhaps less important than the conversation that this work encourages.

Knowledge carries responsibility.

Research should never remain confined to libraries or academic journals.

It should inform public policy.

It should strengthen institutions.

It should guide innovation.

Above all, it should improve people's lives.

This book exemplifies this ethos, this ideal.

It reminds us that technology should never be judged solely by what it is capable of doing.

It should also be judged by whether it serves humanity with wisdom, fairness and compassion.

Technology must never outpace ethics.

Innovation must never lose sight of the human person.

Victim justice

The book also speaks clearly about victim justice.

This is a very important part of the work. In the digital world, harm does not always end when a person dies.

A deceased person's identity may be stolen.

Their profile may be misused. Their image may be exploited. Their data may be sold. Their family may suffer further distress because of fraud, impersonation, deepfakes, cybercrime or platform inaction.

When this happens, the victim is not only the deceased person. The family also becomes a victim.

Their grief is disturbed. Their memories are violated. Their trust in digital systems is shaken.

This is why protecting digital dignity must also include protecting families and communities.

Mauritian Context

For Mauritius, this subject is highly relevant.

We are moving further into a digital society. We speak of innovation, artificial intelligence, digital transformation, cybersecurity, online services, and data-driven development.

These are important for progress.

But progress must not be measured only by how advanced our technologies are. It must also be measured by how responsibly we use them.

A country that embraces digital transformation must also think about digital responsibility.

We must think about privacy, trust, safety, ethics, justice, and the protection of human dignity. The digital future we build must remain human-centred.

We are embracing digital transformation and aspire to become a **Hi-Tech Intelligent Island**.

But I believe our ambition should extend even further.

Mauritius should aspire not only to become a digitally advanced nation, but also an ethically advanced digital nation.

The true measure of digital transformation is not simply the speed of our internet connections, the sophistication of our artificial intelligence systems or the number of services we deliver online.

It is whether technological progress protects human dignity, strengthens justice, promotes inclusion and inspires public trust.

A nation may be digitally connected without being digitally responsible.

Our aspiration must therefore be to build a society where innovation is accompanied by integrity, where technology is guided by ethics and where progress never loses sight of the human person.

As artificial intelligence increasingly transforms education, healthcare, business, finance, public administration and daily life, ethics must evolve alongside innovation.

Our laws, our institutions and our values must continue to evolve so that technological progress remains firmly anchored in the service of humanity.

Mauritius and the Global Conversation

Mauritius has often demonstrated that a small nation can make a meaningful contribution to global debates.

Our diversity, our democratic traditions and our longstanding commitment to dialogue and international cooperation have earned us respect far beyond our shores.

In the same spirit, I believe Mauritius can contribute to the emerging international conversation on responsible artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital governance and digital ethics.

Our universities, our research institutions, our legal professionals, our technology experts and our policymakers have much to contribute.

The University of Mauritius, as the country's leading university, has a responsibility to encourage research that looks ahead, connects disciplines, and contributes to public understanding.

This book is an example of such work.

It brings together cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, law, ethics, cyberpsychology, culture, platform governance and victim protection.

Indeed, I hope that Mauritius will increasingly be recognised not only as a nation that adopts advanced technologies, but also as one that contributes to shaping the ethical principles by which those technologies should be governed.

This book is an excellent example of that contribution.

It demonstrates that intellectual output produced in Mauritius can enrich international thinking on issues that affect every society.

It also reminds us that knowledge knows no borders and that ideas born in one country can contribute to the well-being of the entire global community.

Acknowledgements

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A book of this nature does not emerge in isolation.

It is shaped by research, experience, review, reflection, and support.

I would like to acknowledge the University of Mauritius, the Faculty of Information, Communication and Digital Technologies, the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the publisher IndiePress, the reviewers, the contributors, and all those who have helped bring this work to this stage.

To Dr Sheeba Armoogum and her collaborators, I offer my sincere congratulations.

You have taken a difficult, sensitive and emerging subject and placed it within a clear framework.

You have reminded us that digital life must be governed not only by systems and platforms, but also by dignity, consent, compassion, justice and responsibility.

May Digital Afterlife reach a wide readership.

May it encourage discussion among policymakers, technologists, legal professionals, cybersecurity experts, educators, families, students and the public.

May it help us think more carefully about how we live online, how we remember, how we protect, and how we honour human dignity in the digital age.

Conclusion

As we stand on the threshold of an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and digital innovation, let us ensure that our humanity always keeps pace with our technology.

Let us build a future where innovation is inspired by wisdom, guided by ethics and dedicated to the service of humanity.

For in every age, nations are remembered not only for the technologies they create, but also for the values they choose to uphold.

May Mauritius continue to be guided by knowledge, inspired by innovation, and anchored in human dignity.

Before I end, allow me to share this prophetic quote:

"Just as we prepare wills for our physical possessions, we need to plan for our digital remains." - *The Conversation*

I wish this important publication every success.

Thank you for your attention.