



BALANCING FREE SPEECH AND COMMUNITY STANDARDS: THE FUTURE OF ONLINE REGULATIONS

Discover our conference:

Because of the increasing relevance of online content, its moderation is now an important topic of debate, especially when it comes to the fine line between combating fake news and limiting **freedom of expression** and privacy.

In this conference you will deepen your understanding of the key goals and impact of the **Digital Services Act** and the **Digital Markets Act**, which are fundamental elements towards the establishment of a European digital 'Constitution'.

Our excellent guest speakers will analyse the impact of this EU regulatory regime on both social media platforms and users, bearing in mind legal, practical and ethical considerations.

Finally, we are going to explore how the surge of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is contributing to the creation of **Synthetic Media** and we will discuss what should be the next steps taken by the European Union to limit its dissemination.

Why is it important talking about ...?

Digital services make our lives easier, just think that we use them everyday simply to communicate, or find information. However, it is not easy to achieve a balance between the protection of freedom of expression and the removal of influence/harm of judgement.

On one hand, online content moderation aims at protecting freedom of expression and freedom and pluralism of online media, which are essential to ensure that young people grow up in an open and respectful environment, making sure that content adheres to local, national, and international law.

On the other hand, online users can publish anything they want and expose other users to unpleasant or downright illegal content. Moreover, online services are frequently misused by manipulative algorithms to spread **disinformation**. These threats and the way platforms deal with them have a significant impact on the fundamental rights of online users.

Key Words:

- **Freedom of expression:** This fundamental right, enshrined in article 11 of the European CFR, includes the freedom to hold opinions, to receive and impart information, and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers, as well as the freedom and pluralism of the media.
- **Disinformation:** While misinformation refers to false or inexact content, like rumours, disinformation designates fictitious information created and propagated on purpose, and which may cause public harm.
- **Digital Services Act:** With the DSA the Commission creates obligations for online intermediary services, aiming at improving the removal of illegal content. For example, the effective protection of users' fundamental rights is achieved by banning certain targeted adverts on online platforms or countering illegal goods, services or content.
- **Digital Markets Act:** It establishes obligations that large online platforms like Google, Amazon and Meta, as "gatekeepers" of the digital market, need to comply with. DMA was settled aiming to ensure fair competition between big technology companies and to stimulate innovation and quality in the sector.
- **Synthetic Media:** Also known as "deepfake", indicating the production or alteration of media content by AI algorithms. Due to the powerful technological tools of artificial intelligence, it is becoming increasingly difficult for users to not fall into deception.



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Statistics:

- 73% of internet users in the EU are concerned about disinformation in pre-election periods (European Commission, 2018)
- 19 online platforms and search engines already identified by the European Commission must comply with the rules for digital services
- 45 percent of young people aged 15 to 24 said social media is a “go-to” information source, according to a recent UNICEF poll (<https://thehill.com/policy/technology/582038-young-people-more-likely-to-turn-to-social-media-for-information-survey/>)
- 4 months for the DSA to be applied to online platforms after their designation

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- ChatGPT sparks data protection debate in Europe - EURACTIV, 14/04/2023, Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/chatgpt-sparks-data-protection-debate-in-europe/>