

1.2 - Regulating the Internet

Translate into English

- a) Le message a été supprimé après avoir été signalé par plusieurs utilisateurs.
- b) On censure souvent certaines opinions sur les réseaux sociaux.
- c) La liberté d'expression sera toujours remise en question sur Internet.
- d) De nouvelles règles ont été imposées pour limiter les discours haineux en ligne.
- e) Les contenus politiques étaient étroitement surveillés pendant la campagne électorale.

Translate into English

- f) Les propos offensants doivent être signalés avant d'être examinés.
- g) La décision avait déjà été prise avant que le débat public ne commence.
- h) On est en train de redéfinir la notion de liberté d'expression sur Internet.
- i) Les commentaires auraient été modifiés sans l'accord des utilisateurs.
- j) Les publications sensibles devraient être traitées avec plus de transparence.

Translate into English

a) Le message a été supprimé après avoir été signalé par plusieurs utilisateurs.

The message was removed after being reported by several users.

b) On censure souvent certaines opinions sur les réseaux sociaux.

Some opinions are often censored on social media.

c) La liberté d'expression sera toujours remise en question sur Internet.

Free speech will always be questioned on the Internet.

d) De nouvelles règles ont été imposées pour limiter les discours haineux en ligne.

New rules have been imposed to limit hate speech online.

e) Les contenus politiques étaient étroitement surveillés pendant la campagne électorale.

Political content was being closely monitored during the election campaign.

Translate into English

f) Les propos offensants doivent être signalés avant d'être examinés.

Offensive remarks must be reported before being reviewed.

g) La décision avait déjà été prise avant que le débat public ne commence.

The decision had already been made before the public debate began.

h) On est en train de redéfinir la notion de liberté d'expression sur Internet.

The concept of free speech on the Internet is being redefined.

i) Les commentaires auraient été modifiés sans l'accord des utilisateurs.

The comments would have been modified without the users' consent.

j) Les publications sensibles devraient être traitées avec plus de transparence.

Sensitive posts should be handled with greater transparency.

Regulating the Internet

The regulation of digital technologies is a global phenomenon driven by the need to address challenges such as illegal data collection, monopolistic practices, and threats to domestic security.

These regulations encompass the laws, the rules, and the mechanisms to enforce them designed to set boundaries for companies, platforms, the users and their data.

In practice, it means **defining what is legal or illegal to publish** (hate speech, fake news, child safety,...) along with the legal responsibilities of platforms in the eventuality of a user breaching the rules.

It also includes the collection, the storage and the sharing of users' personal data, or the prevention of monopolies, the guarantee of net neutrality, etc.

Different approaches

The USA:

The adoption of new technologies is automatically authorised. Otherwise, it would infringe on the rights guaranteed by the **First Amendment** to the US Constitution, notably the freedom of expression. The government does not have the capacity to restrict this individual right. This leads to the possibility for no regulation of Big Tech's activities, and no need for moderation.

The Internet is therefore market-driven, the platforms being **not liable** for user content. In the event of legal challenges of this absence of responsibility, platforms argue that regulation means **censorship**.

Meanwhile, Tech firms use aggressive lobbying, the recruitment of former government officials, and the mobilization of their massive user bases to resist restrictive legislation. Critics say Big Tech has **bended/bent the knee to Trump, showing deference** to the re-elected President.

Tech giants were shocked by Biden's will to regulate their activities, and they campaigned for Trump in 2024, after having been vocal critics, mainly after the US invasion of the Capitol on January 6th, 2021.

In 2025:

- Meta (Facebook, Instagram) **rolled back** fact-checking tools and hurtful content moderation [*political shift*]
- Tech CEOs attended Trump's inauguration to show their support, as part of lobbying efforts [*corporate shift*]
- Tech firms also shifted their ideologies, **downsizing** DEI programs [*cultural shift*]

Different approaches

China:

The country's government is following two seemingly opposite objectives: making the country a very dynamic and competitive digital actor to boost their economy even further, while regulating the Internet with a centralised legal framework (Cyberspace Administration of China, CAC), whose role is to ensure national security, social stability, and the leadership and authority of the Party.

Content control and censorship allow for the control of information. Foreign platforms (Google, YouTube, etc.) are blocked to prevent foreign influence and national equivalents cooperate with government monitoring.

Recently:

- The national regulator enforced a crackdown on AI misuse, chatbots, and unauthorised news content.
- Alibaba was fined \$3b by the Chinese government for monopolistic activities, even though it is one of the most powerful companies in the country.

Different approaches

In The European Union:

The EU is providing member states with a framework to regulate the Internet while protecting the freedom and the personal interests of individual citizens. This has been said to anger the US government and to deter tech companies to invest in the region, because of increased costs of operation (related to the moderation of content and the enforcement of other rules).

Notable protective laws include:

- The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** from 2018 addresses the rules about how businesses collect and handle user information. Citizens have a “right to be forgotten”, meaning that they can request the removal of personal data. Companies may be fined up to from 4% of their worldwide annual turnover.
- The **Digital Services Act (DSA)** from 2022, about the platforms’ responsibilities regarding the content published. Users are now more easily able to notify illegal content, and platforms must react promptly. The DSA also allows the users to refuse personalised services based on profiling (cookies)
- The **Digital Markets Act (DMA)** from 2022, ensuring fairness and openness in digital markets, attacking potential “gatekeepers”, the name given to dominant players favouring their own services over competitors’ (the Google search engine on the Google Chrome browser ; pre-installed software on the Microsoft operating system). Sanctions may reach 10-20% of the company’s worldwide turnover.