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Beware of the State – An International Comparison of Data Retention in Europe

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Abstract

Amidst growing public and scholarly attention for dataveillance practices of Internet platforms, the social sciences should not lose sight of concurrently expanding state surveillance. Accordingly, this article focuses on data retention as a prime example of modern state surveillance. Data retention refers to the mandatory and indiscriminate storing of communications metadata by providers of electronic communications services and the subsequent access thereof by public authorities, e.g., for national security (Whitley & Hosein, 2005). Compared to traditional forms of state surveillance, data retention focuses on communications metadata instead of content, targets whole populations and not specific persons of interest and outsources critical surveillance tasks to the private sector (Bernal, 2016). Accordingly, this modern form of state surveillance is associated with several risks, including discriminatory profiling, chilling effects, and shifting modes of suspicion (Murray & Fussey, 2019). Despite these concerns and an over two decades long struggle between civil-society organizations, policymakers, and courts on data retention, it has received short shrift, particularly in the social sciences.

Against this backdrop, this article provides a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of data retention in Europe. For this, it compares the current policy frameworks across 25 countries[1] according to five dimensions: (1) *why*, i.e., with what purpose, is data retained; (2) *who* is required to retain data; (3) *what* data is retained and for *how long*; (4) with *what safeguards*; and (5) how is *access* to retained data regulated? Special attention is on whether the risks of modern state surveillance are considered in the policy frameworks and attendant policy discussions. The comparative analysis rests on policy and legal documents as well as academic literature and national media coverage.

The findings show how the scope of data retention has continuously been expanded, e.g., justified by crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, policy discussions often focus on individuals' rights to privacy while data retention's broader societal privacy implications are widely neglected. Altogether, both national data retention laws and other supposedly alternative approaches to data retention like subscriber and IP-address retention, targeted data retention, and expedited data retention fail to mitigate the risks of modern state surveillance. This highlights the need to develop

precise and objective criteria for its necessity and proportionality and effective safeguards regarding data protection and security.

[1]The analysis includes Switzerland, the UK and all EU member states except for Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Malta.

Key Words

data retention, state surveillance, metadata vs. content, privacy, digitalization

Digitalising Switzerland. History and key players of the "Digital Switzerland" Strategies (1998-2022)

Authors

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Abstract

Starting from the 1990s, Switzerland saw in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) a great potential for the development of its society, both in public and private sectors, believing these technologies would enhance citizens' possibilities to interact among one another and to act in society, including their willingness to take part to the political debate (Swiss Federal Chancellery, 1998, p. 1869). While acknowledging the opportunities brought by digitalisation, the government also recognised risks and challenges associated to it, such as those related to the security of data and of people using ICTs (Swiss Federal Chancellery, 1998, p. 1869; 2012, p. 3355).

The Federal Council thus felt the need to regulate the introduction of ICTs through a specific political strategy, listing a series of guiding principles and goals to achieve in designated sectors; the first of these strategies was published in 1998, while the one currently in force in December 2022, for a total of seven strategies (Swiss Federal Chancellery, 1998, 2006, 2012, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022).

Defining policies as "political actions" which are "part of a strategy to attain specific" aims (Freedman, 2008, pp. 24, 3) and which reflect the administrative organisation of a state (Puppis, Simon & Van den Bulck, 2016), this paper offers a first analysis of the *Digital Switzerland* strategies and, as such, fills a gap in current Swiss policy research. Through the software NVivo 11, the sources have been coded according to five groups of nodes (actors, objectives, principles, sectors and sentiments); the frequency of each node has showed the ones to which the Federal Council has paid the most attention.

A great continuity in time emerges from these strategies, particularly regarding the guiding principles and sectors, which are constantly repeated over time; *national cooperation*, *access for all*, *digital competencies*, *security*, *economy*, *domestic politics*, and *education* are indeed considered as crucial in the construction of the digitalisation process. Moreover, specific attention is given to these actors: the *Swiss state* and *population*, *Federal Departments*, the *Federal Council,* and the *Federal Administration*. This finding underlines how the Swiss government sees itself as both a policymaker and an actor in the digital development of the country.

Overall, this analysis shows how the Federal Council sees digitalisation as a comprehensive phenomenon which must directly involve society in its entirety, from the Federal Administration to culture, via the infrastructures, political participation, the industry, and several other crucial sectors. Public participation is seen as the key to digital transformation, concerning not only elections' participation, but also increasing people's knowledge in ICTs, empowering people and favouring their engagement in Switzerland's digital transformation.

Together with the tendency of the Federal Council to see digitalisation and ICTs in a neutral way, with *opportunity* and *risk* collecting a significantly small number of codes, emerging is also Switzerland's uniqueness, with the long-lasting stability of its direct democracy and its decision-making process governed by the collegiality principle strongly impacting digitalisation strategies, making of these strategies a compromise favouring people's willingness to engage with them.

Taking stock of Canada's first decade of OGP membership: Advancing open government or openwashing in action?

Authors

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Abstract

Throughout the past decade, transparency initiatives have become a fundamental part of public administration reform initiatives around the world. Central to many such undertakings has been the drive to foster transparency and enhance civic engagement by making government held data publicly available in the form of open data. A key international proponent of these reform initiatives is the Open Government Partnership (OGP). As of December 2022, 77 countries and 106 local governments are OGP members. These governments have all committed to meeting specific criteria and participation requirements pertaining to fiscal transparency, access to information, citizens' participation, and public disclosure. Canada formally joined in April 2012. Since then, it has implemented four OGP national actional plans (NAPs) comprising 73 commitments. In September 2022, a fifth NAP comprised of five commitments was launched. Throughout the past decade, the focus of the Canadian government's action plans has shifted from an initial aim of enhancing transparency and openness to, more recently, pursuing principles of participation and collaboration. Its first and second action plans focused on four main areas: open data; open information; open dialogue; and strengthening the foundation for open government reforms. Canada's third action plan was structured around four domains: open by default; fiscal transparency; innovation, prosperity, and sustainable development. The activities set out in the fourth action plan, 2018-2020/21, complemented a number of initiatives from the earlier NAPs, and was oriented about three priorities: inclusion, participation, and impact. Canada's fifth, 2022-2024, national action plan which carries forward the latter principles into the realms of climate, democracy, corporate transparency, justice, and data for results. Responsibility for assessing the co-creation and implementation of all NAPs, and for ensuring member governments follow through on their commitments falls on to the OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM). As part of its responsibilities, the IRM publishes reports and makes recommendations at various stages of the action plan cycle. It also makes publicly available all the country data collected in the form of the OGP Explorer database. In this paper, we draw from the metrics and resources afforded by the OGP Explorer along with the relevant IRM reports pertaining to Canada to address the question: If the objective has been to open government domestically, how successful has the implementation of Canada's OGP NAPs been in achieving this goal? Contrary to the government's claims about its actions opening government, analysis of the IRM data reveals that, despite having completed or substantially completed more than one half of the 73 commitments, for the most part, these reforms had no to marginal impact on opening government in Canada. This gap between the supposed impact(s) of open government and the empirical evidence, in turn,

challenges the hypothesized potential of open government to transform both democratic practice and public administration

Protect privacy for whom? Comparing privacy practice between platform policies and users under the first Personal Information Protection Law

Authors

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Abstract

The Chinese government promulgated the first Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) on 1 November 2021, establishing a guiding framework to compel platforms to respond and formulate the state-dominated privacy policies. These policies significantly impact on how users build up understanding of digital platforms' usage in their everyday lives. Considering the interactions between privacy policies and platform users, this study aims to explore how privacy policies are discursively constructed, characterised, and implemented by Chinese digital platforms to comply with the PIPL and how users make sense of, feel about and engage with these policies. Thus, this study applies a triple-comparative approach based on a comparison of top-down policy levels of privacy policies across different platforms, a bottom-up user-level comparison of users' experiences and perceptions regarding the new policies, and a comparison between top-down and bottom-up levels to understand the synergies and discrepancies of digital privacy within the PIPL context.

The study has applied the conceptual frameworks of comparative privacy (Masur et al., 2021) between digital platforms and practical knowledge of online privacy literacy (Masur, 2020) from China's experience. As the PIPL is seen as a major milestone in the Chinese history of (digital) privacy concerns, nevertheless, little is known about new power relations, features of privacy policies, and the users' experiences of digital privacy within the PIPL context. This study firstly collected the textual materials of new privacy policies issued by three Chinese digital giants: Alibaba, Tencent, and Bytedance. Then, 28 users who used the said platforms daily were interviewed to collect their privacy practices. At the analytical level, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was employed to interpret these data. This method can help us demystify ideologies and power relations hidden in discourses to surface social dominance and social inequality (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

The study found that protecting the state and personal security is a dominant discourse embedded in the building of platforms' privacy regulations. Platforms continue to cement their hegemonic positions in the realm of privacy by employing multiple discursive strategies to normalise their utilisation of privacy information, users' rights, information protection, and notification models. Correspondingly, we found that users have been repeatedly notified of the new policies by these digital platforms. Users perceive limited privacy knowledge through notifications regarding these

policies, which help users identify the boundaries of information collected on these platforms and establish an awareness of protecting their personal information. However, users also highlighted vulnerability in these social media use. As agreeing to the updated privacy policies is a precondition to using these platforms' services, users feel a lack of autonomy of privacy because of the passive acceptance and the forced decision in which privacy practice is viewed as a mere formality. We thus conclude that platforms' in-progress hegemonic monopoly could lead to the domestication of privacy literacy for users who engage with them daily. However, the new policies have not solved user-oriented privacy concerns, as users still do not have agency in executing privacy power, resulting in the unsuccessful establishment of literacy regarding self-protection and self-determination.

Key Words
Platform privacy policy, online privacy literacy, China

Digital transformation narratives as emerging policies: South American cases

Authors

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Abstract

A recurring theme in many managerial discussions of IT design and deployment at the corporate level, the notion of Digital Transformation has also appear as a policy narrative in some countries, notably in South America. Considering that the region was host of many "information society" policy initiatives some two decades ago, the differences and but also the coincidences between these two notions are interesting: the need for public policies centered on the citizen is as important as the urgency to innovate and even disrupt. While Information Society had some hues of social science, digital transformation is just managerial-speak; the first was intently outward from the state to society, but the second is mostly inward. However, both show an significant issue regarding public policy for communication and digital technology: the ideational weight of international organizations and the lack of relevance of such policy narratives, that in the end have not been able to give any clear direction to state action towards better services at least, or societal transformation at the most. This paper will discuss the similarities and divergences between these two narratives and the resulting absence of ideational originality in the region resulting from dedicating resources to either of them.

Key Words

Digital Transformation; Digital public policy; South America; Communication policy

"Autonomous weapons" as a geopolitical signifier in a national power play: analysing AI imaginaries in Chinese and US military policies

Authors

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Abstract

"Autonomous weapon systems" (AWS) have been subject to intense discussions for years. Numerous political, academic and legal actors are debating their consequences, with many calling for strict regulation or even a global ban. Surprisingly, it often remains unclear which technologies the term AWS refers to and also in what sense these systems can be characterised as autonomous at all. Despite being feared by many, weapons that are completely self-governing and beyond human control are more of a conceptual possibility than an actual military reality.

As will be argued, the conflicting interpretations of AWS are largely the result of the diverse meanings that are constructed in political discourses. These interpretations convert specific understandings of AI into strategic assets and consequently hinder the establishment of common ethical standards and legal regulations. As an empirical case study, this article looks at the publicly available military AI strategies and position papers by China and the USA. The comparative study uses hermeneutical methods to analyze how AWS technologies, understood as evoking sociotechnical imaginaries, are politicised to serve particular national interests.

The article presents the current theoretical debate, which has sought to find a functional definition of AWS that is sufficiently unambiguous for regulatory or military contexts. Approaching AWS as a phenomenon that is embedded in a particular sociotechnical imaginary, however, flags up the ways in which nation states portray themselves as part of a global AI race, competing over economic, military and geopolitical advantages. Nation states do not just enforce their geopolitical ambitions through a fierce *realpolitik* rhetoric but also play around with semantic ambiguities which employ value-laden concepts such as machine *autonomy* and (human) *control* in the context of AWS. They are deliberately exploited in order to usurp efforts for effective AWS regulation.

This especially holds true for China and the USA, since they are regarded and regard themselves as hegemonic antagonists, presenting competing self-conceptions that are apparent in their histories, political doctrines and identities. The way they showcase their AI-driven military prowess indicates an ambivalent rhetoric of legal sobriety, tech-regulation and aggressive national dominance. AWS take on the role of signifiers that are employed to foster political legitimacy or to spark deliberate confusion and deterrence.

Effectively, both nations are undermining global efforts to prevent an AI weapons race—even if they are simultaneously promoting a rhetoric of appeasement and collaboration in the diplomatic arena.

A new way to justice? Multimodal meaning construction in Chinese online criminal courts through videoconference

Authors

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Abstract

In the era of COVID-19 out of a concern for public health, the Supreme People's Court of China in 2020 announced the temporary closure of physical courts and later issued new policies that led to the full use of video trials. In no more than two years, newly-established technology within preliminary levels of local courts has been hastily used in criminal cases where the liability of witnesses, confidentially of defendants and evidence, also the communication among each party are most imperative yet untested (Turner 2020; Fielding et al. 2020). If previously computer-mediated communication technology can be considered as a phased mode to assist court hearings, the new regulation now permits each separate party in different locations to altogether depend the process on the Internet, in each stage from pre-trial to judgment (Guo 2021; Yu and Xia 2021).

This sudden and novel change thus lifts the communicational and political question of how to evaluate the impact of the full adoption of videoconference technology on the reach of a life-altering sentence. Previous literature from legal discipline has in abundance discussed the constitutionality of defendants' physical presence/non-presence in criminal court, with few to empirically examine how videoconference in practice affects meaning-construction and inscribes power relations (Sung 2020; Shi, Sourdin, and Li 2021; Xu 2017). As many commentators and survey reports overwhelmingly agreed, remote hearings often inhibit effective communication between participants, particularly causing difficulties for the defendants to understand legal jargon and procedures (Turner 2020; Nir and Musial 2022). It thus requires an examination of what hinders the effectiveness of communication and whether is due process guaranteed through the Internet.

To provide certain insights, this research is conducted through a case analysis of one videoconference-based criminal court trial recording with the analytic framework of systemic functional linguistics – multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA). By building on Halliday's metafunctional principle of meaning – ideational, interpersonal, and textual, SF-MDA provides the framework for analyzing the effectiveness of communication through how meanings are constructed with various semiotic resources.

The case analysis suggests the current remote criminal court is textually unregulated, with inscribed unbalanced power relations which favors the Judge (and/or procurator) against the defendants. Through the examination of ideational meaning-making, the failure to clarify legal jargon and procedures to the defendants and the lack of defense support posits serious threats to the constitutionality and legitimacy of online courts. I argue that while remote criminal trials may be a welcome alternative to avoid criminal disposition delays and protect public health, the

existing disorganized structure fraught with technical malfunctions on the whole challenges the quality of the justice system. Given that online criminal courts are likely to be continued after the pandemic with the state's policy on Smart Court development, there is a critical need for special regulations and precautions to protect defendants' constitutional rights and the integrity of the justice system.

Key Words

A study on the influencing factors of social media users' cognition of governance norms on their willingness to continue use -- a survey from Weibo users in China

Authors

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Abstract

Research background and questions

As the top social media in China, the development of Weibo has been widely concerned by people. However, due to the emergence of a large number of user-generated content, social media platforms have also given rise to various communication ethics issues. In recent years, the Chinese government and relevant departments have begun to notice these problems and gradually adopted a series of corrective measures to reduce the anomalies on social media platforms.

China's Internet platform governance model is characterized by government leadership and social participation, that is, it often emphasizes the leading role of the government in Internet governance. On this basis, China's social media platforms also formulate platform rules in accordance with relevant laws and regulations and normative documents issued by the government, and review and supervise platform content and users.

At present, most of China's literature on platform governance is discussed from the perspective of managers, and there is a lack of empirical research based on the perspective of the public. Since the public is the user and creator of social media, the rationality of platform governance norms directly affects the public's feelings of using social media, and the public's perception of platform governance norms also affects the introduction of government regulatory policies. At the same time, users' perception of governance norms may be closely related to the degree of support for punishment and people's behavioral intentions may also be influenced by their emotional attitude towards something.

In view of this, this study takes Weibo users as the research object, discusses people's willingness to continue to use Weibo and its influencing factors, from the perspective of platform governance. In addition, this study starts from the two governance methods of social media platforms, normative guidance and punishment and deterrence, and analyzes the deep-seated causes of social media users' usage behavior, which is a supplement to previous user usage behavior research.

Question 1: What is the normative perception of Weibo users?

Question 2: Does the awareness of governance norms affect users' punishment support and governance satisfaction, and will these two factors become indirect factors between governance norm awareness and willingness to continue to use?

H1: The normative cognition of microblog users has a significant positive impact on the willingness to continue to use it.

H2: Penalty support has an intermediary effect in the influence path of normative cognition and willingness to continue to use.

H3: Platform governance satisfaction has an intermediary effect in the influence path of the normative cognition and the willingness to continue to use it.

H4: There is a chain mediation effect between punishment support and platform governance satisfaction between normative cognition and continuous use intention.

Research design and method

Before the official survey, we first sent out 53 questionnaires through the online platform for pre-testing. As of January 15, 2022, we has officially sent out the questionnaire through the online platform. A total of 493 questionnaires were returned, and 382 were valid, with a valid questionnaire rate of 77.49%.

In this study, SPSS Statistics 26.0 was used for data analysis and processing. Firstly, through descriptive analysis, the current status of Weibo users' cognition of governance norms, the degree of support and punishment, the satisfaction of platform governance and their willingness to continue to use are reported. Then, t-test were used to compare differences in gender, educational background, and age in governance normative cognition. Then, the Spearman correlation analysis method is used to explore the relationship between the variables. Finally, the process plug-in is used to analyze the chain mediation effects of governance norm cognition, punishment support, platform governance satisfaction and continuous use willingness.

Research results

First, this paper f that there are obvious differences in the cognition of governance norms among Weibo users of different genders, and male users are more willing than women to understand the governance norms published by Weibo platforms. Secondly, Weibo users of different ages, in general, elderly users with different educational qualifications have more understanding of governance norms and less understanding of governance norms.

Secondly, we found that the normative cognition of Weibo users has a positive impact on Weibo users' willingness to continue to use. There was no mediating effect between normative perception and willingness to continue use; in addition, platform governance satisfaction plays an important mediating role between normative cognition and willingness to continue to use.

Establish the chain mediation effect of punishment support and platform governance satisfaction between normative cognition and continuous use intention.

Key Words

Platform governance, Communication policy and ethics, Social media user survey.

Questioning public algorithms: issues of automation of state action in France

Authors

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Abstract

This paper examines the recent introduction and implementation of algorithmic devices, including those supported by AI, in public action. Scientific literature on "algorithms" has highlighted these tools' power of social transformation in various sectors of economy and work (e.g. Christin 2020, Pasquale 2020). However, the algorithmization of the State and public action has attracted comparatively little attention from the social sciences (see e.g. Engstrom & Ho 2020; on the French case e.g. Alauzen 2019 and Goëta 2017).

Our objective is, first, to question the effects of the use of algorithmic tools by public authorities on the conceptions of the State, its operating modes and its relations with the public (Fourcade & Gordon 2020). To do so, we will analyze recent attempts to transpose to the State the conceptions and operational modes generated within the techno-entrepreneurial milieu, at the heart of today's digital capitalism: the theory of the platform-State, of the agile State, and finally of the automaton-State, supposed to provide services to its clients and users in an efficient manner and at ever-lower cost. Such systems are frequently found in the United States, but some initiatives have recently been launched to this effect in France, in fields as varied as justice (Council of State and Court of Cassation), security (Gendarmerie and National Agency for Cybersecurity-ANSSI), health (several university hospital centers), economy, social security, ecology, and others.

This paper presents some first results of the IAction project (2023-2024), which aims to analyze the institutional frameworks, legitimization discourses, and the practices of the concerned administrations and other types of actors addressing the automation of State action. The project will make it possible to draw conclusions not only on the effects of innovations related to algorithms and AI on the management of digital infrastructures by the State, but also on their consequences for the concept of "digital sovereignty" (Pohle & Thiel 2020). Indeed, this concept, far from being confined to the sphere of law and political discourse, is now being put to the test on the ground by various entanglement of actors (institutions, civil society, private sector), digital technologies (databases, identification systems, etc.) and the intended audiences for these services. These entanglements generate a certain number of opportunities and constraints that need to be analyzed.

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Key Words
Algorithms, AI, State, Administration, Public action, governance, sovereignty

Anytime and anywhere: Labor and control on mobile working platforms

Authors

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Abstract

Mobile working apps have become quite common in China in recent years, especially due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. While a large body of literature focuses on the benefits of these smart technologies that have improved productivity, enhanced communication and collaboration, as well as encouraged innovation in a wide range of organizations, a dearth of research is extant pertaining to its flipside—resulting from its ability to "accompany" the user anytime and anywhere, seamlessly integrating workplace with individuals' private space and generating new ways of monitoring, controlling, and even exploiting. Therefore, there is a call for an integrative perspective by using the term digital workplace, through a holistic view toward the broad set of technologies, employees' experience and practices during the whole work process. By adopting the affordance approach and reviewing the existing digital labor studies, the present study aims to explore the technical characteristics of mobile working platforms, users' perception of the technologies and their impact, as well as users' strategic use of the apps. This study chose *ByteDance*, a Chinese IT company and its office automation platform *Lark* as a case, conducting a walkthrough analysis of the software's technological architecture and 18 in-depth interviews with employees taking different job types. The grounded theory approach was adopted for data analyses, with close attention paid to how mobile working apps alter the labor practices as well as how users perceive the platform. The findings suggest that the mobility affordance of the mobile working app has blurred the work-life boundary, making anytime-anywhere availability and timely responses become the new norms, while the *visibility* affordance has led to more undetectable labor control and enabled off-site surveillance. At the same time, digital workers have developed diverse strategies to game or negotiate with the platform, including boundary work, managing (in)visibility, and even disconnection, exploring the multiple meanings of *working in digital office*. Combining the affordance approach and digital labor perspective, this study develops a framework to understand the multilevel interplay between users' practice and the media platform in organizational contexts, which is of both theoretical and practical significance. By bridging the social-computational and political-economic properties of platforms, researchers can not only systematically explore the connections, interpersonal links and communication in everyday practice, but reveal the profound political, economic, and socio-cultural implications underlying it, contributing to the theory buildings on the dynamic relationships between technology and human beings. In terms of practical implications, the findings also show the diverse ideologies, regularities, and power relations embedded in the design and application of mobile working platforms that bears judicious scrutiny. While enjoying the convenience brought by mobile working apps, we

should not overlook its potential in generating new forms of labor surveillance and control, by which the business organization accomplishes its goal of improving efficiency and reducing cost.

Key Words

Mobile working apps; mobility; visibility; technology affordance; platform labor

ASEAN Media Representations of Digital China: A Framing Analysis on Big Data

Authors

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Abstract

In the era of big data, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)—China relations are becoming closer. The year 2022 marks the first year for building the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (AC-CSP). "Digital China" is getting more attention while the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has been in the spotlight. The ASEAN Media's View on Digital China Media Tour 2022 highlighted the emerging significance of "Digital China" with its two core issues: the digital economy and the smart city.

Existing research on China's image in ASEAN nations can be categorized into three groups: (1) Research on China-related mainstream ASEAN media coverage, typically adopting framing theory, constructivism, or contrastive analysis to examine the construction of the national image (2) Discourse studies of China's national image with corpora of ASEAN news sources (3) Cross-national surveys of ASEAN audiences' national image evaluation and perception using online questionnaires and interviews. These studies mainly employ qualitative techniques and content analysis. Generally, a content coding analysis of China-related news reports is conducted before summarizing China's national image based on some typical reports. Although the focus and the overall attitude of the media can be directly presented, there is a lack of supporting data and quantitative analysis. Also, many studies only look at one ASEAN country at a time, so they don't compare how different ASEAN countries view China. Even when research covers all ten ASEAN countries, the sample size of news stories is often small, and there is no analysis of large-scale news text data.

This paper creates a large-scale corpus of more than 1.7 million English news stories from ASEAN countries to address the issues mentioned above. Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam don't have enough samples to support the research, so this paper selects 61 newspapers from the remaining 6 ASEAN countries: Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, and the Philippines. We analyze large-scale news texts from two perspectives: topic distribution and semantic representation. On the one hand, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), a topic distribution model, is carried out to extract the subject feature words and outline the reporting framework of ASEAN mainstream media on "Digital China". On the other hand, we extract descriptors related to "Digital China" through the semantic model Word2vec. Based on the results, this study concludes by examining the image framing of using a macro-level framework, a meso-level framework, and a micro-level framework, and by discussing the variations in characteristics and inclination of ASEAN media.

This paper seeks to figure out how ASEAN nations comprehend and interpret the idea of "Digital China". Contributions are detailed below:

1. According to previous research, this paper is the first to develop and utilize a large corpus to examine ASEAN media representations of "Digital China" from the perspective of big data.

2. This paper examines "Digital China" from a variety of dimensions, combining framing analysis and computational communication methods.

3. This paper provides a framework for analyzing the framing of China-related images in ASEAN media and the media's role in shaping a nation's image.

Key Words
ASEAN media, computational communication, digital China, framing analysis

'A digital society based on European values and European rules': Digital Sovereignty as sociotechnical imaginary in EU Platform Regulation

Authors

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Abstract

Digital policy issues have perhaps never been higher on the European policy agenda. In 2019, the European Commission announced that it would be re-drawing the intermediary liability rules that have provided the legal foundation for online service provision in the EU since the E-Commerce Directive of 2000. Alongside this new 'Digital Services Act' (DSA), Brussels has also updated its competition policy framework via the 'Digital Markets Act' (DMA), layering new enterprise and consumer focused data protection rules (Data Governance Act), and seeking to more assertively regulate labour platforms and 'gig economy' providers. As Thierry Breton, the EU Commissioner for the Internal Market, put it in an memorable tweet sent in January 2022, a central aim driving these efforts has been to ensure that the platform economy is no-longer an unregulated, unruly, and lawless 'Wild West'.

These digital policy interventions are motivated by a complex set of economic, social, and geopolitical concerns. One of the main ways through which this challenge has become projected into public and policy discourse is through the notion of 'digital sovereignty' – a concept that has in the past years developed from a vague idea into an increasingly institutionalized policy vision seeking to increase the autonomy of European states, companies and citizens and to reduce their dependencies on foreign digital infrastructure and services. This narrative is an important, yet underexplored dimension of current debates around platform content governance, including through new regulations like the DSA.

The goal of this paper is to explore the way that 'digital sovereignty' has become an important part of contemporary debates and regulatory realities around platform governance in the EU. Drawing on existing research about digital sovereignty discourses and using the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries (Jasanoff and Kim, 2009, 2015; Mager and Katzenbach, 2021), which helps one highlight the material consequences of performative policy visions, we map the competing imaginaries of digital sovereignty at the EU level and retrace how they materialise in particular platform governance arrangements. To this end, the paper deploys an interpretive policy analysis of primary documents from key European policy actors, including both public documents (press releases, policy reports, legislative proposals) and related internal deliberative documents obtained via freedom of information requests.

We use the DSA negotiations as a central case study to highlight what we argue are three underexplored dimensions of how digital sovereignty is influencing platform governance in practice. Firstly, we show how competing imaginaries of digital sovereignty (e.g. sovereignty

understood as autonomy of the state, as economic independence or as individual self-determination) are leading to ideational contestation regarding the concrete objectives of platform governance arrangements. Second, we point to internal contradictions within these imaginaries that appear to lead to conflicts of interest and even inherent tensions between publicly stated policy goals (e.g. measures curbing platform's decision making authority via the DSA simultaneously entrusting platforms with even more 'private enforcement' roles). Third, we identify aspects of digital sovereignty imaginaries that do not materialise in the current DSA negotiations and, hence, appear purely rhetorical moves that help to increase the acceptance of digital sovereignty imaginaries (e.g. the repeated yet unprecise reference to European values).

Key Words

Platform governance, digital sovereignty, EU, digital governance

Seeing AI: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and their Implications for Disability Communication Policy

Authors

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Abstract

The launch of Microsoft's Seeing AI in 2016 offered new ways of navigating and interacting with the world for blind and visually-impaired individuals around the world. A free mobile application, Seeing AI uses machine learning and vision-to-language technology to allow its user to hear information about their surroundings, such as scanning and recognizing product barcodes, reading printed and handwritten text, recognizing and describing persons, scenery, and other images. Other uses of AI, such as Voiceitt and home voice assistants are some of the many ways that technology have come to mediate how disabled people interact with and live in the world around them. These forms of AI are celebrated for their potential impact to transform peoples' lives – in promotional corporate videos, and also by disabled influencers celebrating the transformational aspects of these AI on social media. Increasingly, these uses of AI herald the emergence of new sociotechnical imaginaries, what Jasanoff and Kim (2015) has defined as a set of shared desirable visions of the future – one where technology is mobilized for the good of society towards inclusion.

Amidst these moves to build a technologically enabled society where disabled people are embraced in the fabric of life, there is, however, growing concern over the need to govern AI and to ensure that AI and its development remains fair and just. Disability scholars have cautioned against the wholesale adoptions of technology, critiquing them for replicating social biases and projecting normative and ableist notions of body/minds (Whittaker et al. 2019; Newman-Griffis et al. 2023; Bennett and Keyes 2020; Trewin et al. 2019; Trewin 2018). The United Nations Special Rapporteur for disability (2022) has also reiterated the importance of centring disability rights in the adoption of AI.

We situate this paper within this conundrum – one which mobilizes AI for good in the everyday with its corresponding visions of the future, but yet also with its inherent problems and biases. Using Seeing AI as a case study, we examine a variety of sources, including policy texts, corporate marketing materials, and reviews of Seeing AI by disabled influencers on YouTube. We consider the following questions: What kinds of socio-technical imaginaries – shared positive desired futures – does Seeing AI project, and conversely what is deemed undesirable? Vis-à-vis the continued demand for governance and trustworthy AI, and growing calls for fairness, what kinds of policy initiatives need to be in place? And how do these new socio-technical imaginaries help us rethink the past, present, and future of policy paradigms (or the lack of) in understanding and governing these uses of AI for disabled peoples' inclusion?

Key Words

Disability, AI Ethics, Digital Inclusion, Internet Governance and Policy

Visibility games: Users' discourse expression strategies on Chinese social media platforms

Authors

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Abstract

Social media platforms are main carrier of user-generated content (UGC). However, the visibility of UGC is restricted by multiple standards and rigorous moderation mechanisms. Outside the platform, Cyber Administration of China formulates moderation standards; Within the platform, driven by profits and responsibilities, platforms further refine standards, establish moderation mechanism and implement it through artificial intelligence, moderators and other ways (e.g., Shao, 2021; Zhu, Xie & Zhang, 2022). The moderation, while determining the visibility allocation of UGC, is opaque to users (e.g., Gillespie, 2018; Roberts, 2019). Diverse interactions between users and moderation for content visibility naturally become normal. Cotter called the behavior of Instagram users who challenge algorithm as "playing the visibility game" (Cotter, 2019). Visibility games in this article refers to the diversified interaction practices between users and platform moderation.

From the "structure-action" perspective of structuration theory, the moderation mechanism allocates visibility resources, presents structural characteristics and plays a restrictive role for users. Meanwhile, users' active practices realize the allocation of individual power to structural resources, promote the inter-construction of moderation structure and user behaviors. Therefore, new visibility distribution structure is produced by users. Focusing on the interactions between users and moderation, this study puts forward three questions: What are users' attitudes towards platforms' moderation? How do users interact with platform moderation? What are the significance and implications of user practices?

The research methods are in-depth interview and text analysis. In order to understand users' perception of the moderation, their views and how they deal with the moderation, 40-minute semi-structured interviews are separately conducted with 15 in-depth users, who come from four Chinese main social media platforms (Weibo, Tieba, TikTok and BiliBili). In order to analyze the strategies, significance and influence of user practices, through purposeful sampling, 500 cases of users' interactive texts for moderation are collected from the above four Chinese main social media platforms as research samples.

The findings show that users have positive, neutral and negative attitudes towards platform moderation, and the differences in attitudes lead to the differences in user practices. The practices of users include assistance, negotiation and resistance. Users who hold a positive or neutral attitude towards moderation prefer to assistance and negotiation, whereas users carry out resistance strategies. In order to gain visibility, all practices revolve around moderation and show the characteristics of gamification. Assistance means users enhance their accounts reputation by

inappropriate content reporting or other ways of supporting moderation. Negotiation means users negotiate with moderators and pass the moderation by means of explanation and rectification. Resistance is that users adopt strategies to cheat and bypass the moderation. There are four specific discourse strategies of resistance: transforming discourse space by using links and QR codes to hide real content; Processing the presented content through mirroring the content in the form of pictures to flip, blur or hide in long pictures; Replace the meaning of symbols and enrich the signified symbols, which include the use of pinyin, homophony and emoji that agree upon among users to refer to the content; Innovate the expression style and use metaphorical rhetoric, which hide true thoughts through acrostic, doggerel and allusive metaphors.

A new structure of visibility distribution is produced by user practices. Nevertheless, according to the self-stratification model of action, user resistances inevitably ignore the action conditions, which often lead to the emergence of danger and result in unexpected consequences. The visibility games not only show the increasing subjectivity of users but also expose the ambiguity of users' consciousness of responsibility and rights, as well as the platforms' insufficient of consideration in user experience. The platform should pay more attention to the user experience, try to explain the moderation results, improve the UGC service quality and the user's attitude to the platform management rules, which are effective ways to improve the transparency and governance of the digital platforms.

Key Words
Visibility games; Users' discourse expression; social media platforms

"Order, Innovation and Value Orientation"——A Research of China's Live Streaming Policy from the Perspective of Policy Tools

Authors

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Abstract

Background and Aim: The rapid development of technology has created an opportunity for live internet streaming. Live streaming has attracted numerous commercial resources with its huge realization capacity, providing a good social experience for the public. At the same time, the veiled nature of live internet marketing has given rise to a series of value misconduct issues. The many disorders in the profitability of these live streaming have also become a primary issue for government governance. This study aims to understand the application of regulatory governance policies for live webcasting in China and to further reflect on the improvement of live streaming policies.

Methods: This paper conducts text mining of Chinese live policy to study the evolution of the live policy agenda. The policy texts studied in this paper are specifically: unstructured media texts (where some policy claims exist in natural languages such as news and commentary) and semi-structured policy texts (the most direct source of policy information). And the live policy texts involved in this study are all policy documents issued at the national level. According to the content quantification method in the policy texts, the content of the texts was divided into three dimensions: basic policy tools, policy objects, and the live streaming development cycle. Referring to Howlett and Ramesh's classification, the live streaming policy tools are categorized as voluntary, mandatory, and hybrid, and this is used as the X-dimension of the analysis. Y-dimension policy objects, according to the platform function, are divided into two categories: e-commerce platforms and social content platforms. The division of the Z-dimension live development cycle is mainly characterized by reference to the analysis of the content of the policy text, which is the budding period (2015-2016), the growth period (2016-2018), and the early stage of maturity (2019-present). The policy text was coded by the software of NVivo 11 Plus.

Findings: The findings conclude that the live-streaming policy has effectively curbed the brutal development of new media platforms and the live-streaming industry by virtue of vigorously promoting mandatory policy content. In addition, live streaming policy development has moved from an emphasis on orderliness into a phase of innovation and security. However, the adoption of hybrid policy tools is relatively absent. For immature places, it is necessary to fully apply comprehensive policy tools to deepen the governance of multiple subjects and achieve effective governance of policies.

Key Words

(Pragmatic) Collaboration for Progress or Threat to Autonomy? African Views on Chinese Technology in Nigeria and Ghana

Authors

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Abstract

China's economic and political engagement in Africa has been portrayed as an ambiguous trend in Western media discourses, which often point to the downsides of Chinese influence. Themes about exploitation and the support of autocratic regimes are not uncommon in media narratives about Chinese-African collaborations. However, claims that China pursues an imperialist project in Africa seem exaggerated. While Chinese geopolitical ambitions are clearly driving its foreign policy decisions, African agency often appears almost absent from these discussions. African perceptions and assessments of China's presence are nuanced and indicate a complex relationship. They point to a wide spectrum of benefits and risks attached to China as an economic, political, and cultural partner. Recent trends in Chinese-African collaboration concern digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and related ICT innovations. Transfer and cooperation in these areas is considered essential for progress across societal domains. Examples are educational initiatives in AI for young Africans led by Chinese tech companies or projects to increase Internet access in rural areas.

It is crucial to analyse local contexts in which different stakeholders "get to speak" about China and tech, i.e., fill the issue with meaning, offer interpretative frameworks, construe benefits and risks, and engage with opposing perspectives. News media are an essential site where such tech narratives circulate and influence the formation of local digital cultures. The present study's main objective is to chart African news media discourses on China's role in regional/local technology developments. Critically analysing these discourses enables a better understanding of how local stakeholders discuss this complex issue in front of local audiences.

The study critically analyses news media from two African countries that have a long and complex history of developmental collaboration with China: Nigeria and Ghana. Their respective media ecologies are very dynamic and host different voices, though political control and violations of press freedom are realities in both countries.

The study aims to answer three research questions:

- *How do Nigerian and Ghanaian news media portray China in their coverage of digital technology developments?*

- What benefits and risks are associated with Chinese-African collaborations centred on digital technology?

- Who are the key actors in local discourses about digital technology and China?

The main method is a content analysis of news texts (and user-comments) that cover China, Chinese governmental organisations and/or companies, and developments pertaining to digital technology involving African partners, especially from Nigeria and Ghana, respectively. *Digital technology* stands here for current trends in AI, big data, digital platforms, ICT, and telecommunications. The methodological approach combines computational methods for text analysis (topic modeling) with manual analytical steps.

The study makes two novel contributions: regarding theory, it places focus on how local discourse cultures give meaning to digital technology and assess them regarding relations to foreign partners, including their geopolitical implications from within affected contexts in the Global South. Concerning empirical research, it proposes a mixed methods approach for critically analysing local media discourses, which enables the identification of agency and voice in technology developments.

Key Words
Digital Africa, AI, China, ICT, News Media, Global South

The Platform Governance Archive: A longitudinal dataset to study the historical evolution of platform policies

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Abstract

Platform policies contain the spelled out rules about what is allowed and prohibited on a service. As such, they constitute both a normative framework as well as a means of public communication for platforms. Studying the evolution of the increasingly complex web of policies that platforms have developed can therefore enable researchers to trace the emergence of a specific normative order, as well as identify how they have reacted to public controversies, political debates and legal regulation.

A coherently collected dataset of all historical versions of platform policies, however, is missing, Although platforms have become increasingly transparent about when they are changing their rules and have introduced public archives of past policy versions, these records often do not contain all of the historical versions of a policy and relying on them entails trusting the platforms to provide complete information. It therefore remains hard to systematically study how the rules and norms of platforms have evolved over time.

The Platform Governance Archive (PGA) aims to close this gap by providing a comprehensive and uniformly collected dataset of all the historical versions of platform policies which does not rely on the platforms' own public records. The current dataset described in this paper contains all historical versions of three types of policy documents (Terms of Service, Community Guidelines, Privacy Policies) by four major platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram) in the time period from the inception of each policy until the end of 2021.

In our paper, we detail the automated and manual processes of data collection and data cleaning, which we employed, as well as the methodological and theoretical questions we were faced with. Starting with our definition of a relevant change to a platform policy, we lay out how we used the

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine to identify past versions of platform policies, collect them, and then automatically and manually check them for changes.

The paper furthermore provides an overview of the resulting final corpus of the Platform Governance Archive which is a dataset consisting of 354 policy documents with a total of 6,036 pages. By detailing the structure of our public data repository, we offer a guide on how to access and work with the data. We furthermore describe the characteristics and details of each platform and policy type to account for the fact that each of them has taken a specific historical trajectory.

To conclude our paper presents a structural analysis of the general trends and patterns which are visible in the dataset over a time period of up to seventeen years on the document level. Using a quantitative analysis, we analyse how the change frequency and the word count of each platform policy has developed over time. A comparative visualisation of these findings allows us to show how the extent of the policies has grown over time, to identify periods of high growth and frequent changes and to draw comparative conclusions about the four different platforms.

Key Words
Platform governance, platform policies, platform history, content moderation, digital constitutionalism

AI-enabled Smart Media Use and Surveillance Anxiety

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Abstract

Surveillance anxiety was defined as the worries and concerns that the personal information of individuals can be monitored, recorded, and analyzed by governments and corporations, whose intentions may not be immediately clear. The rise of AI-enabled devices capable of discrete monitoring has reignited relevance to surveillance anxiety, causing more concerns about being surveilled. Some recent studies suggested surveillance anxiety increases fear and worries about losing control over AI. Furthermore, surveillance anxiety is reported to cause various negative effects, such as concerns about freedom, democracy, and human rights. The current study adds to the literature by examining the relationship between AI-enabled smart media use, such as virtual assistants in everyday life and surveillance, as well as the role of smart media efficacy and perceived usability in the relationship.

Smart media use is defined as news consumption through AI-enabled media, including AI digital assistants and smart speakers. Smart media efficacy refers to individual confidence in the knowledge about smart media. Perceived usability is defined as the subjective evaluation of smart media from the perspective of usability. Surveillance anxiety is measured by the concerns and worries about being watched by technology companies and the government. We propose a serial mediation to test the relationships. We hypothesized smart media efficacy as the predictor of smart media use, smart media use as the mediator 1, perceived usability as mediator 2, and surveillance anxiety as the outcome.

An online panel survey was conducted in China in September 2022 (n = 524, male = 251, female = 273, mean age = 30.4). Measures include smart media use, perceived usability of AI assistants, smart media efficacy, surveillance anxiety, and demographics. We employed SPSS macro PROCESS Model 6 with bootstrapping methods (Hayes, 2017) to test the serial mediation model. The results indicate that smart media efficacy positively predicts smart media use (β = .07, SE = .032, p < .05), which means that individuals with more confidence in their knowledge about smart media tend to use smart media more frequently. Smart media use is positively related to perceived usability (β = .12, SE = .038, p < .01). For the direct effects, smart media efficacy is also positively associated with perceived usability (β = .23, SE = .028, p < .001). Smart media use is also positively related to surveillance anxiety (β = .22, SE = .071, p < .01), suggesting that more use of smart media would make individuals have more concerns and worries about being watched. Perceived usability negatively predicts surveillance anxiety (β = -.31, SE = .082, p < .001), indicating that if individuals

perceive the AI-enabled smart media to be more useful, they would be less likely to feel surveillance anxiety. For the direct effects between smart media efficacy and surveillance anxiety, the relationship is negative but not significant (β = -.01, SE = .056, *p* = .84). Implications, limitations, and future studies are also discussed.

Key Words
Surveillance Anxiety; Smart Media Use; Perceived Usability; Smart Media Efficacy

What Drives Users' Support for State Regulation on Data Protection: Big Data Awareness and Presumed Privacy Risk on Self and Others

Authors

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Abstract

There is a worldwide shift from corporate to state platform governance on data protection through rising public inquiries like user data leakage and privacy invasion in recent years. In China, data protection laws and policies like the Personal Information Protection Laws (PIPL; NPC, 2021) have been enacted to safeguard users' privacy away from platforms' technological threats by data mining.

Previous studies mainly concentrated on the enforcement and compliance of data protection laws and policies based on proxy agency actors like the government and platforms, with little attention to users. Concerning audience studies on privacy and data policy, the perspective of users' self-oriented privacy protection dominated, while few studies took users' altruistic motivations into consideration even if one's support for state regulation may benefit other digital citizens. Therefore, this study introduces the influence of presumed influence (IPI) theory to explore the factors of users' support for state regulation on data protection.

IPI focuses on one's presumed media influence on others and how this evaluation affects one's subsequent attitude or behavior. In IPI studies, support for state regulation is a typically dependent variable, while prior knowledge is a predictor of users' support. As prior knowledge, big data awareness (BDA) refers to users' awareness of data mining functions and impacts in daily life. This study investigates how big data awareness shapes young algorithmic media users' attitudes toward state-dominated data protection. To explore the mechanism, this study examines the mediating role of users' presumed privacy risk on self and three other age groups (PRO) including teenagers (12-17), other young adults (18-30), and elders (65+) respectively.

This study distributed an online questionnaire in China on the Sojump platform. The age of 624 valid samples was required from 18 to 30 years old. All the hypotheses were estimated using SPSS 26.0 and PROCESS (Model 81), with demographic information, algorithmic media use, and trust in platform privacy policies as covariates.

In terms of the direct effect, big data awareness was a significant predictor of users' support for government regulation on user data protection. Concerning indirect effects, presumed privacy risk on self (PRS), privacy risks on teenagers (PRO-t), and young adults (PRO-a) separately mediated between BDA and users' support of government regulation, while presumed privacy risk on elder users (PRO-e) failed. Besides, presumed privacy risks on self (PRS) and that on teenagers (PRO-t) serially mediated between BDA and users' support, so did PRS and PRO-a.

This study reveals that big data awareness promotes users' support for data protection policies and legislation directly. Furthermore, BDA triggers users' high privacy risk evaluation of themselves, teenagers, and other young adults, which drives their support for state regulation. Despite a high level of presumed privacy risk on elders, young adult users are not aroused by PRO-e when supporting state regulation. As for policymakers and legislators, the results shed light on young adult users' particular privacy concerns on the teenagers and young adults, which matters in the enforcement and perfection of data protection laws and policies.

Key Words
state regulation, influence of presumed influence, privacy, big data awareness

Be Safe Online: Policies and Literacies for Online Safety

Authors

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Abstract

Online safety threats have emerged with the increasing popularity of Internet use and the development of digital technologies. These threats include online bullying, Internet addiction, online harassment, hate speech, fake news/disinformation, malware, etc. (National Online Safety, 2023). Many governments have developed regulations and policies to protect citizens from being harmed by online threats. However, some of these are effective while some are not (Shafqat & Masood, 2016). Meanwhile, not all Internet users are aware of and taking proper measures to protect themselves online. Therefore, this study aims to find solutions for developing effective online safety policies and measures by taking a multi-method approach.

First of all, this study analyzes and compares the safety polies adopted by governments in different countries, including the United States, UK, Singapore, and Taiwan. Secondly, this study examines users' online safety perception and behaviors through both in-depth interviews and surveys. By examining both the existing policies and the users' perception and behaviors, we hope to propose the best solutions for governments to make effective online safety regulation and policies that can help more people to protect themselves online.

More specifically, to investigate why some implement protections whereas others do not (even when they are aware that some safety threats may exist) and how to encourage people to do so, this study examines the coping mechanisms that underlie online safety protection behaviors by employing panel data from a Taiwan Communication Survey. On the basis of the protection motivation theory (PMT, Rogers, 1983) and Technology Threat Avoidance Theory (TTAT, Liang & Xue, 2010), this study explores the effects of participants' perceptions of online threats and their coping mechanisms on their actual online safety protection measures. In addition, this study revisits the PMT and TTAT models and introduces the protection evaluation model (PEM), a more specific model for evaluating safety protection and its motivations. The PEM integrates social influence (subjective norms) and the value of protection measures. The model yields good fit and demonstrates the relationship between PMT and other online safety predictors.

The results reveal that people undergo the coping process (i.e., the evaluation of self-efficacy and response value) after perceiving online safety threats. People's threat perception, self-efficacy, and response value are positively related to their safety protection intention and behaviors. Subjective norms moderate the relationship between self-efficacy and safety intention. However, through in-depth interviews, we find that many users rely on the governments to protect their safety online.

Based on the results of the surveys and interviews, this study provides detailed practical suggestions for governments to revise their online safety regulations and online safety-related literacies (media and information literacies) that can help users better protect themselves online.

Overall, this study contributes to current communication policy research by providing practical policy suggestions based on the integration of international policy comparison and actual user behaviors, and also by providing a new theoretical framework, PEM, for designing online safety protection measures and policies.

From laissez faire to regulatory winter?: The shape of platform antitrust in China

Authors

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Abstract

Leading China-based internet companies, like Tencent and Alibaba, have achieved significant market integration through investments, mergers, and acquisitions during the 2010s while facing little intervention from the state that aims to foster its own "national champions" in the internet sector (Hong, 2017; Cao, 2020; Jia, 2021). As a result, dominant internet companies now often take lead in multiple, distinctive markets from online to offline sectors. The state's urgent halt on the IPO of Alibaba-associated company Ant Finance in 2020, however, is considered to signify a regulatory turn on the platform antitrust (Colino, 2022; He, 2022), and it is followed by a wave of penalties specifically targeting major internet companies by the State Administration of Market Regulation (SAMR). Drawing on the empirical data of 126 penalized cases associated with antitrust and anti-competition in the internet sector announced and enforced by the SAMR between 2021 and 2022, this research provides a holistic analysis of China's recent development in antitrust regulation, objectives, and enforcement as well as the challenges, and it highlights how China's latest moves in antitrust regulation and enforcement align with, and/or contradict, its existing policy goals set so far for the digital economy and internet conglomerates at the industrial and (geo)political levels.

This paper firstly sketches the timeline of China's recent anti-monopoly wave between 2020 and 2022, including the state's shifting policy discourses, key regulation revisions, and iconic events and penalties. In particular, it looks into the type and nature of the SAMR's actual anti-monopoly penalties and enforcement over major internet companies, to what degree such enforcement has combated the market concentration of the leading players, and how it is related to the state's industrial and (geo)political policy goals set for leading internet companies and the digital sector in general. Further, this research also looks into the challenges imposed to the Chinese regulators when attempting to restrict the aggressive expansion of leading internet companies, such as the increasingly arbitrary determination process of "market dominance" for platform companies when a conventional revenue-based approach may no longer be effective enough as well as the rapidly shifting affordances of digital platforms, which allow the companies to enter another market with relative ease compared with traditional sectors. This on-going research, therefore, opens up opportunities for theory building around the anti-monopoly regulation of platform companies both in the Chinese context and at the more general level. It further contributes to a more nuanced understanding about the power interplay at multiple dimensions over the regulation of

major platforms' market dominance, especially the different, competing policy goals that the Chinese state's anti-monopoly enforcement so far has entailed.

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Key Words

Uncovering the Underlying Factors of Global Internet Censorship: An Empirical Study on the Blockade of Media Information Flow

Authors

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Abstract

The Internet has made the world seem like a global village, yet many scholars have found that access to the Internet is disrupted in some countries due to various forces. Despite a wealth of research on Internet censorship, the flow of information and how it is blocked on a global scale has yet to be studied. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the worldwide flow of media information and how it is blocked on the Internet.

The study collects unique data by tracing the path of accessing 20,000 media-related websites in over 100 countries through either human or server-based tracers using either ICMP or TCP-based echo request packets. Two separate studies are conducted based on two datasets: the blocking network between countries and the accessibility of media websites.

Study 1 explores the determinants of country-wise blocking relationships using social network analyses and Exponential Random Graph Models (ERGMs) by incorporating theories from international relations and communication. The study finds that key countries such as China, Iran, and North Korea play a crucial role in disrupting the flow of information, with geopolitical and cultural factors (such as democracy, media freedom, language differences, and cultural distance) being the most important drivers of the blockade.

Study 2 analyzes the accessibility of particular media in a specific country through multilevel modeling of media-level characteristics (such as language, content focus, type, and bias) and country-level differences in geopolitical and cultural factors. The results show that both media-level and country-level factors play a role in determining the accessibility of a media website.

The findings of the study lead to the proposal of the Authoritative Information Control Theory, which has important theoretical implications for the fields of international relations, communication, and information science.

The study's findings also have implications for media organizations and journalists looking to disseminate information on a global scale. The results show that both media-level and country-level factors play a role in determining the accessibility of a media website. This suggests that media organizations may need to take into consideration these factors when creating content, or choosing which countries to target, in order to maximize accessibility.

Additionally, the study's use of unique data collected through tracing the path of accessing 20,000 media-related websites provides valuable insight into the worldwide flow of media information

and the factors that contribute to its blocking. This data can be used to inform future research on the topic and help develop strategies for overcoming information blockages on the Internet.

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the worldwide flow of media information and how it is blocked on the Internet, and have practical implications for media organizations, journalists, and policymakers.

Key Words

Internet Censorship, Media Information Flow, Information Control Theory, Media Accessibility

Policy meets science: Taming the algorithm for collectivist action

Authors

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Abstract

Predominantly hands-off U.S. government policies toward Big Tech have enabled social media companies to unleash powerful behavioral modification architectures (Frischmann & Desai, 2018; Zuboff, 2019). Animated by algorithms, these choice recommendation architectures have been blamed for tarnishing cornerstones of human flourishing by facilitating an information environment that forefronts the "engaged," content-addled individual and that behavioral outcome as a metric of success (Bauder, & Liedtke, 2021; Fuchs, 2017).

Meanwhile in Europe, the recently approved Digital Services Act will challenge that U.S. paradigm and potentially facilitate non-manipulated and more positive outcomes for people, who will be able to opt out of nudging and tracking (Satariano, 2022; Vernick, 2022).

These contrasting policy frameworks and the technological architectures that are shaped by them provide researchers with an opportunity to investigate their intersection with behavioral outcomes on the platforms and to determine the effectiveness of these policies, particularly in fostering greater autonomy and agency for people to explore other potentialities.

To that end, this research provides a foothold into these conversations and a transferrable theoretical model — the psychological oriented, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2009) — that can benefit analysis of the intersections of policy, social media architecture, and behavior.

Supporting this approach, the research analyzed the accounts of 45 U.S. residents interacting with several social media choice recommendation architectures, from Facebook to TikTok. Conveyed in interviews and focus groups, they shared how they felt their behavior and agency expressed itself in response to the prevailing surveillance and personalization nudging systems of U.S. social media platforms, i.e., personalized feeds and other algorithm-powered widgets. Participants reported being derailed from critical life goals into "rabbit holes" of content facilitated by the architectures. They indicated these outcomes substantially hindered other areas of their lives they needed and wanted to focus on.

Their responses to the architectures also corresponded with behavioral explanations afforded by social cognitive theory. Findings indicate the theory can offer researchers a psychological-oriented explanatory framework to evaluate behavioral trajectories resulting from interactions with these architectures. The research also contextualizes these findings, casting participant behaviors and reported behavioral variance, explained by social cognitive theory, through the conditions that overtly shape user trajectories, U.S. policy and Big Tech aims.

It also argues this approach can be used to evaluate alterations to nudging architectures mandated by the Digital Services Act, including assessing if those changes foster positive behavioral outcomes,

such as improved self-regulation of social media use and better management of life trajectories, perhaps also of a societal/collectivist impetus (Bandura, 2018).

Additionally, the study posits that use of rigorous psychological frameworks to evaluate policy and technology conditions can better position our research to provide informed, data-supported perspectives, particularly on future policy implementations and concurrent social media architectural adjustments.

Discussion will conclude with how policymakers, researchers, individuals, and society may all gain from a more tamed, and far less manipulative, algorithm. It is further argued that an optimal policy state — in contrast to the U.S. zeitgeist — would foster a paradigm of co-flourishing and co-evolution of humans and technology architectures.

Key Words
policy, Digital Services Act, social cognitive theory, behavior, co-evolution, algorithms

Disruptive conflict-based innovation and perverse economic logics: the case of the disinformation ecosystem

Authors

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Dr. Angel Gómez de Ágreda - Spanish Air Force

Abstract

1) Introduction and context:

Innovation ecosystems do not only involve pacific and productive techno-economic arrangements in which innovation emerges as an effect of adaptation to changes in the network of players' interactions and its environment. Sometimes, innovation ecosystems involve conflict of powers, disequilibrium and perverse economic logics as a transformative consequence and as a source of social change. In the current information ecosystem, a set of new intermediaries (from state-sponsored think tanks to PR holdings and surveillance tech companies) conform an emerging *disinformation industry* that increasingly alters the informational ecology in contemporary societies, acting as a transformation driver that forces innovation into the media ecosystem (fostering the appearance of new players, such as fact-checkers or troll-farms; and new processes, such as verification, network analysis and profiling.

In this paper we approach an analysis of the disinformation ecosystem as a specific mutation (and a factor of change) of the information ecosystem. While most current approaches to disinformation tend to obviate the systemic picture, focusing on the product ("fake news") and its effects (e.g., political polarisation), in this paper we argue that the ecosystems approach to disinformation may be useful to overcome its perception as a mere by-product of current social transformations, such as algorithmic dysfunctions or social networks dynamics.

2) Research questions:

In order to explore the disinformation ecosystem and its impact in the information ecology of contemporary societies we address three main research questions in this paper:

A) Which are the main players that conform the disinformation ecosystem and what is their relation to disinformation industries?

B) Which are the functional or operative roles stakeholders play in the disinformation ecosystem?

C) Which is the value network that define the nature of prevalent interactions amongst players in the disinformation ecosystem?

3) Methodology

Techno-economic ecosystems allow categorizing players within a given range of activities that generate value in a complex network of interactions that produce consistent outputs. Accordingly,

value network analysis enables ascertaining the ways in which ecosystem's defining interactions produce value in the terms of its participants.

Shaped after the discourse analysis of a sample of public narratives about 10 international and local disinformation cases, we propose some conceptual and structural basis for the modelling of the disinformation ecosystem.

4) Results

A set of players with different implications as to their intentional involvement are identified as active or passive subjects in the disinformation ecosystem: States, enterprises and corporations, political parties, social actors, individual actors, facilitators and intermediaries, media, partisan media and social digital platforms. Intentionality and strategic orientation articulate as well functional roles within the ecosystem: triggers, boosters, legitimizers, spreaders, re-lauchers, conditioners. Modalizations of players and actions in the narratives include attributions of intentionality, allowing to identify intentional and instrumental (non-intentional) players. Based on the same modal structures, we define a set of value vectors that define the value attributions of the disinformation ecosystem, that is the structure of interrelated aims that sanction success in players' operational terms. These include political influence, economic impact, monetization, disruption of affective networks, undermining social cohesion and undermining social institutions. Results remark the strategic, adaptive, and purpose-oriented nature of disinformation processes in contemporary societies, shedding light on the operational synergies that weave their actual complexity.

Key Words

Disinformation, media ecosystems, value networks, social players, innovation, informational ecology

Redes de transformación digital: Una metodología para el mapeo de los ecosistemas de comunicación en entornos locales y regionales como base para el desarrollo de políticas de innovación

Authors

Prof. Inmaculada José Martínez - Universidad de Murcia

Dr. Carmen María Robles López - Universidad de Murcia

Dr. Paloma del Henar Sánchez Cobarro - Universidad de Murcia

Abstract

INTRODUCCIÓN: El ecosistema de la comunicación conforma no sólo a los medios convencionales, sino también un amplio conjunto de empresas intermediarias, facilitadoras y complementarias que componen un entorno complejo y diverso con un indudable peso económico y cultural. El ecosistema de la comunicación se encuentra inmerso en un profundo proceso de transformación, derivado de la irrupción de tecnologías disruptivas en todas las fases de la cadena de valor. En este escenario, los cambios implican la desaparición, transformación, fusión y aparición de nuevos actores, con el consiguiente impacto en los procesos de interacción y las relaciones entre ellos, que a su vez configuran la dinámica cambiante del ecosistema. El ámbito local y regional no es ajeno a estas transformaciones. Por el contrario, en los entornos locales pueden observarse fenómenos y variables específicos que requieren un enfoque en profundidad.

PREGUNTA DE INVESTIGACIÓN: Esta comunicación propone una metodología específica para cartografiar los medios y las industrias de la comunicación en entornos locales y regionales. Esto implica una clasificación de actores y categorías, la evaluación de variables específicas y la identificación de interdependencias entre ellas. Mapear adecuadamente los ecosistemas regionales es clave para identificar cómo la innovación emerge y contribuye a las redes de valor a escala regional, conformando una valiosa herramienta para el desarrollo de políticas públicas regionales orientadas a la innovación y el emprendimiento.

METODOLOGÍA: La metodología ha sido testada en la Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia, una región uniprovincial de tamaño intermedio y alta tasa de población en España. Se han realizado análisis y pruebas posteriores en Extremadura, Valencia, Aragón y Madrid, conformando una muestra relevante de entornos regionales diversos, diferenciados por tamaño, población, indicadores económicos o industriales y estándares de desarrollo de políticas públicas. Los resultados se plasman en un mapa infográfico que permite visualizar los diferentes actores implicados, las categorías a las que pertenecen, su dimensión estratégica, las principales amenazas y retos y su correlación estratégica con otros actores del entorno. La propuesta metodológica implica una primera fase de delimitación conceptual de los subsectores y categorías de actores, que abarca más de 15 tipos diferentes de actores. La segunda fase consiste en el filtrado de las empresas que componen cada subsector y categoría, seleccionadas a partir de bases de datos

oficiales, páginas web y recursos disponibles de la administración regional. La tercera fase consiste en el análisis individualizado de cada subsector, con atención a la evolución de las empresas y actores implicados.

RESULTADOS ESPERADOS: Los resultados ofrecen un análisis en profundidad de una muestra muy relevante de empresas que conforman un sector con una importante facturación anual y con una proyección cultural, social y política relevante en sus entornos regionales. Permiten también identificar algunos problemas y retos de futuro; como la prevalencia del empleo precario y el autoempleo, particularmente en áreas sensibles a la innovación digital como la producción audiovisual, el diseño gráfico, la programación web y la organización de eventos. El mapa permite también identificar los niveles de fragmentación del mercado y el predominio de micropymes con cifras de negocio muy bajas, lo que crea importantes barreras para la innovación sostenible.

Key Words
Ecosistema, comunicación, digitalización, organización interna, estrategias, alianzas, políticas, adaptación

Telecommunications Policy in a 5G Era

Authors

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Dr. James Meese - RMIT University

Prof. Catherine Middleton - Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU)

Abstract

The latest generation of wireless telecommunications technology, 5G, aims to fulfill traditional promises associated with generational changeover like faster (bandwidth and latency) and more reliable connections. However, 5G also represents a significant shift for telecommunications, with the 5G standard offering much more than the expected upgrade to infrastructure and mobile networks we have seen with previous generations. Ushering in a constellation of new technologies, 5G may represent a step-change in mobile telecommunications. Existing networks of larger cell towers will be loaded with hundreds more ports or antennas – technology that is known as "massive MIMO" (multiple input, multiple output) – that dramatically increase network traffic capacity. To streamline the delivery and flow of all this increased data, 5G also utilises a range of other technologies to send focused streams of data to users ("beamforming") and manage two-way flows of data (through a signalling or switching system called "full duplex"). In this way, the underlying technology can support high-density network use (in busy locations like stadiums). The "full 5G vision" promises foundational infrastructure for IoT and smart technologies; its network can also be "sliced", which allows providers to dedicate a certain part of the network to social, commercial, or industrial applications. This means that 5G is not just a mobile network upgrade but forms a critical part of the gradual transition to a more mobile and connected future.

In this paper, we introduce a series of active policy issues associated with the introduction of 5G. The paper presents a series of short case studies on the resource allocation mix between fixed-line broadband and wireless; debates around efficient spectrum allocation; the relationship between mobile broadband and universal service obligations; implications for net neutrality requirements; and, the policy challenges that attend the increasing virtualization of radio networks. We argue that despite the novelty of 5G, stakeholders are essentially grappling with long-standing policy issues that increasingly carry over from one mobile generation to the next. Of course, these enduring debates have a different resonance in a 5G context, and we outline how discussions have changed in response to this new generation. The paper will end with a discussion of emerging policy issues that may become increasingly relevant as the technologies associated with 5G mature.

"If I want to watch it, I just go to my mum's phone": Emerging issues and policies of online safety for young people

Authors

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Abstract

Widespread online harm, algorithmic profiling, targeted advertising and privacy breaches have ignited calls for stronger regulation to improve young people's online safety and privacy. Governments are responding with new laws and regulatory reform to counter the market dominance and power of big technology firms, referred to as the 'Regulatory Turn' (Flew, 2021). The EU's Digital Services Act, the UK's Online Safety Bill (2022), the Australian Online Safety Act (2021) and the Australian Online Privacy Bill (2021) are examples of proposed or new legislation with stricter requirements for how social media platforms handle young people's personal data, with an emphasis on age verification and increased parental oversight. While many welcome stronger regulatory powers, there is very little research on the practices of and attitudes to these by young people and their parents or carers. What do parents and young people think about them? How will new legal protections work in practice and will they strike the right balance between protections and young people's rights to digital participation? How are young people being included in the regulatory reform processes that will impact on their online experiences and social worlds? This paper presents research from our Australian eSafety Commissioner funded project that examines the emerging online safety issues for Australian young people in the context of new laws and regulatory responses. The project used a multi-phase, mixed methods research methodology involving a series of focus groups (n=7), co-design workshops (n=3) and a large-scale national survey (n=~1200) with participants aged 12-14 and 15 -17 years old and parents and carers of the same age groups. This paper draws on findings from the focus groups supported by the survey, focusing on the attitudes and responses to the Australian Online Privacy Bill (2021). These revealed that while parents and caregivers were enthusiastic about having stronger laws in place to help protect their children's data, there was a strong rejection of the mechanisms needed to do this, such as providing proof of age documents; app tracking; and need for ongoing age verification. These approaches invoked a narrative of 'big brother' and claims of over-reach by platforms as well as concerns that the changes would result in more work by parents. For young people, the changes were seen as reducing their freedom, impacting the ability to connect socially and shape their identity, and would likely lead to finding loopholes. In conclusion, we suggest that platform regulation intervenes in young people's online safety and the parental mediation (Clark, 2011; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008) of children's digital lives in complex ways that creates its own set of demands and trade-offs, and may lead to resistance or rejection. The implications of the

findings for policy suggest the need for a multi-layered approach that is sensitive to the complex interplay of responsibility for online safety in a shifting regulatory landscape, grounded in evidence of young people's own practices and understandings, enhanced online safety skills, greater involvement in policy-making and recognition of young people's right to digital engagement (Livingstone & Third, 2017).

Key Words

eSafety, online safety, young people, youth, policy, regulation, parental mediation

Decentring policymaking and communications through an ecosystem approach: A case study of Australia during COVID-19

Authors

Dr. Bernadette Hyland-Wood - Queensland University of Technology

Abstract

Abstract

New approaches to policymaking and communications emerged in response to the potential for catastrophic impacts on humanity. In response to the imminent risk that the SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19) posed, communities of experts and disparate data from around the world were mobilised. The *ecosystem* metaphor is a novel way to characterise emerging policy responses, especially during a crisis. We conceptualise *policy ecosystems* as a 'third movement' in the progressive opening-up of policy and communications during crises, representing a radically decentred form of policy action. We synthesise existing literature to define policy ecosystems and develop a tripartite framework of critical elements required for public policymakers to include 'organic adaptation', 'institutional conformity', and 'instrumental responsiveness.' This framework is applied to a qualitative case study of the policy processes surrounding Australia's COVID-19 response, focusing on how expert communities and public data were mobilised to inform policymaking. In-depth interviews with public health experts reveal tensions between the organic, institutional, and instrumental dimensions and the resulting impact on communicating recommendations to policymakers. The paper concludes that policy ecosystems and expert communities are a form of hybrid policymaking and that 'keystone actors' must manage tensions and conflicts within the ecosystems to ensure their effectiveness and survival. These factors offer insights on challenges and opportunities that are generalisable beyond Australia to other countries decentring policy action and adapting their communication strategies in preparation for future crises.

Recent decades have witnessed the opening of many aspects of the policymaking process to new participants, along with numerous scholarly efforts to understand and evaluate these trends. This paper addresses the rise of policy ecosystems, which we interpret as a 'third movement' in the progressive decentring of policy processes. Data-driven ecosystems contrast with the first movement of policy action, dominated by iron triangles and monocentric decision-making, and the second movement, which featured more loosely organised policy subsystems, networks, and coalitions. Policy ecosystems represent a radical decentralisation of policy action premised on spontaneous adaptation, expert communities, public data, and a profound interdependence between elements. While the ecosystem metaphor holds promise in helping to understand the operation of contemporary decentred forms of policy and communications and provides a set of normative criteria on which to judge the effectiveness of policies, the rise of policy ecosystems generates a series of research questions. We seek to answer the following in this paper: what is the

relationship between policy ecosystems and older, more established forms of policymaking? How do data-driven policy ecosystems operate in practice and under different conditions, such as periods of policy equilibrium or radical change? Do policy ecosystems experience unique tensions, especially during crises, and how can these be communicated and managed?

Key Words

cooperation, data policy, data commons, data policy, society and technology

With senior citizens in mind? Affordances and constraints in how Swedish government user interfaces offer different contact channels to its users

Authors

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Abstract

As one of the leading countries when it comes to the access and use of ICTs (OECD, 2018), Sweden has also been on the forefront of the digitalization of government services. The Agency for Digital government, has launched the principal of Digital First, which means that digital encounters should, when relevant, be prioritized in the interaction between government agencies and citizens (Agency for digital government, 2023). At the same time, research has shown a divide in the diffusion and use of ICTs in Sweden, where increased age plays a negative role for access and literacy (Olsson et al, 2019). Against this backdrop, it is therefore important that the praxis of Digital First, thus the increased digitalization of the encounter between government and citizen, is inclusive also for the less digital savvy citizens, as some groups of elderly. This, in order for digitalization to enable rather than restrict citizenship.

The current study, which is part of a larger project on senior citizens' encounter with the digital welfare system in Sweden, analyzes the affordances and constrains of government user interfaces. Using multimodal critical discourse analysis, the study focuses on how government agencies, through the semiotic elements of their online user interfaces, offer and limit engagement and interaction with citizens–both digitally and off-screen. Moreover, the analysis has the overall ambition to discern the explicit and latent characteristics that the user interfaces require the users to have. The user interfaces studied belong to the Swedish pensions agency, 1177 (the Swedish healthcare system's official website), The municipality of Växjö, and the municipality of Älmhult.

The study discusses the affordances and constraint of the user interfaces in relation to digital citizenship (Schou & Hjelholt, 2018), a figure that is discursively construed by policy and the user interfaces themselves, but that is also materialized by the new forms of governance in advanced capitalist societies, where the slimming of government passes tasks to the citizen. The study argues that the naturalization of digital citizenship risks making senior citizens, an already vulnerable group, even more vulnerable, as the user interfaces require a certain level of digital literacy. Therefore, light needs to be shed on how user interfaces meet the needs of different groups of citizens, which in turn requires more empirical research on the actual encounters between citizens and government user interfaces.

Digital Barricades and Blackouts: Internet Shutdowns in India

Authors

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Abstract

In India, there have been several protest movements that were responsible for changing the course of national governance and policy. One such movement in the recent past has been the Farmers' Protest that lasted from September 2020 to November 2021 which led to the repealing of the three controversial farm laws. The protestors who were mainly farmers, held a sit-in protest at the bordering villages of the national capital, Delhi at Singhu, Tikri, and Gazipur, for over a year. This civic dissent by the farmers was interrupted by the state at various points, sometimes coercively, through the use of water cannons, tear gas, and barricades; and some other times by disrupting or suspending information infrastructure, through internet shutdowns, and network throttling.

Using internet shutdowns as a reaction to civil unrest is not uncommon in India. In the year 2020, India ranked no.1 in the total number of hours spent 1,655 hours in internet blackouts, and four times more spent in throttling networks. In 2021, India ranked no.3 with 1,157 hours of blackout; and in 2022 in ranks no.6 with 1,533 hours in shutdowns. Several state and central governments have used this tactic to suspend the flow of information either to curtail the ability of citizens to organise through social media networks or to dominate discourse around the event, or both. Several of these have been instances of violation of the right to peaceful assembly.

Moreover, a shutdown can also be viewed as an act of reclamation of the internet by a nation. What once used to be thought of as a globally unifying and uniform technology, has been challenged in many ways. One very useful theoretical framework that allows us to recognise the inequality and non-uniformity of the internet is infrastructure studies. This opens a whole new way of looking at shutdowns not only as regulatory or censorship practices, but it exposes the ways in which the internet is fragmented by different countries. I would like to argue that disrupting critical information infrastructures, through internet shutdowns is one way that allows countries to become digitally sovereign.

In this paper, I would like to place the farmers' protest as a vantage point from where one can look at how the Indian state has used internet shutdowns to protect its status quo; and what this trend of shutdowns means for global internet governance. I will be using in-depth interviews to bring in the voices of the stakeholders in this event. I have conducted interviews with several protestors who sat with the farmers, journalists who covered the event, and internet advocacy groups which continue to follow and question the actions taken by the state. I will also be speaking to government representatives to understand how they view these drastic measures and what it means to govern the internet. I will be using the event of an internet shutdown as a precipitating point where all other phenomena condense.

Key Words

La pression douce du faire-faire des plateformes : le cas de Meta Business Suite

Authors

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Abstract

Notre recherche vise à comprendre comment le dispositif de plateforme Meta Business Suite, par le biais de sa production de sens, tente de maintenir une production de contenu soutenue de la part des usagers. Pour situer notre recherche, nous prenons appui sur la figure du community manager, dont l'une des tâches récurrentes demeure la production et l'éditorialisation de contenus (Alloing & Al., 2021, p.144). Aussi, nous proposons de mettre en tension la pratique éditoriale susmentionnée avec un outil d'écriture (Souchier, Candel, Gomez-Mejia, 2019) proposé par la plateforme Meta (anciennement Facebook) : La Meta Business Suite. Nous nous sommes attachés, dans notre recherche, à caractériser les capacités potentielles de *faire-faire* de ce dispositif, en relevant et en catégorisant les unités sémio-discursives observables sur son interface. Souchier & Al. (2019, p.213) définissent le *faire-faire* comme "*l'orientation de l'investissement du lecteur, par les écrits d'écran, dans la manipulation, la configuration et l'actualisation des contenus*". Quelles sont donc les formes sémiotiques des prescriptions intégrées dans la Meta Business Suite ? Comment l'action algorithmique combinée aux formes sémiotiques de la Meta Business Suite impose-t-elle une certaine normalisation de la pratique éditoriale du community management ?

Pour répondre à ces questions, nous avons mis en place une méthodologie mixte qualitative. Premièrement, nous avons mobilisé et actualisé la typologie proposée par Davallon & Al. (2003). Les auteurs analysent la relation et les échanges entre un site médiateur et l'usager, postulant que l'écriture numérique observable sur ce site prescrit certains usages ainsi qu'une certaine manière de coopérer. Nous avons couplé cette analyse sémiotique à une dizaine d'entretiens semi-directifs, réalisés auprès de community managers et social media managers, en France et en Belgique. Ces entretiens nous ont permis de comprendre la manière dont ces communicants font sens avec les algorithmes de Meta.

Ainsi, d'après nos entretiens, il est difficile pour les professionnels de faire sens avec les algorithmes de Meta. Ces agents non-humains (Bucher, 2017; Kang et Lou, 2022) demeurent contraignants, présentant une asymétrie informationnelle (Richard, 2018) ou apparaissent comme "*capricieux*" (Duffy, 2020). Aux antipodes, notre analyse sémiotique à mis en exergue une inscription sémiotique très didactique sur la Meta Business Suite. Un grand nombre d'indices d'usage (Davallon & Al., 2003), facilitant l'usage et la coopération de la part de l'usager, sont observables. Outre leur portée pédagogique, les indices d'usage reposent sur plusieurs leviers incitatifs identifiables: (1) L'incitation à la publication régulière, présentée comme vectrice de

résultats; (2) La créativité et l'inspiration, supportées via des mécanismes de comparaison sociale (regarder ce que font les autres), qui servent à maintenir une publication régulière et, in fine, servent la performance; (3) La publicité, présentée comme une intensification du pouvoir effectif de l'usager (Candel, 2019, p.143). *In fine*, il apparaît que l'inscription sémiotique de la Meta Business Suite rassure et oriente l'usager vers un scénario d'usage profitable pour le modèle publicitaire et en crowdsourcing de Meta. Ces *pressions douces* encouragent une production régulière et soutenue de contenus, et une utilisation des dispositifs de valorisation publicitaire. Cet univers discursif positif apparaît finalement en tension avec le sentiment d'absence de contrôle des community managers sur les algorithmes de Meta.

Key Words

plateforme, community management, sémiotique, algorithmes, factitivité

Made in Surveillance: What reforms are necessary to improve the trade control of government hacking technologies?

Authors

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Abstract

Government hacking is a practice that may involve malicious code and the use of vulnerabilities in systems to obtain information desired by authorities. The legal uncertainty regarding spyware tools used to achieve this goal, however, are of particular concern to civil society (Zittrain, 2016). Despite recent cases of abuse and monitoring of human rights defenders and journalists - such as Jamal Khashoggi - contracts between companies and public authorities related to these surveillance tools continue with little or no oversight (Scott-Railton et. al, 2022; Amnesty International, 2022; Access Now, 2022). Although officially designed to target criminals and terrorists, these systems can be also used to attack activists and members of civil society. Dozens of spyware companies offer a variety of smartphone surveillance tools - from video and audio recording to location and text monitoring - to governments with records of human rights violations (Herpig, 2018; Pfefferkorn, 2018).

Besides the monopoly of the surveillance market by a few players, the lack of multistakeholder dialogue and public participation regarding the adoption of technologies is highlighted in different regions of the globe (Lubin, 2023). In this way, closed spaces of deliberation prevent change as old structures reflect and reproduce oppressive power relations making visible the presence of power asymmetries and lack of dialogue between the involved actors (Freire, 1987 in Benjamin, 2018). The lack of transparency regarding the purchase and operation of these tools by countries even inspired a report published in 2019 by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression. In the document, he called for an immediate moratorium on the sale, transfer and use of surveillance technology until regulatory frameworks compatible with human rights are built (Kaye, 2019). In 2022, the European Parliament created the PEGA Committee to investigate alleged infringement or maladministration in application of EU law in relation to the use of spyware surveillance.

Given this scenario, the main objectives of this paper are to (1) investigate the the dispute of narratives and (2) efficiency of current legal measures in Europe related to the export of spyware technology in order to (3) identify necessary reforms to spyware/ dual-use trade controls in the EU and international instruments in order to raise public awareness to the matter.

As a way of achieving an in-depth qualitative analysis, this project entails a mixture of methods, i.e., (1) desk-based analysis of documentary sources; (2) and semi-structured interviews. As many point out, documents can be considered as "physical traces" (Coffrey, 2014) of the result of social dynamics and are a key object of study for those who seek to understand the dispute of narratives in a certain context. (Webb et al., 2000). To this study, analysed documents are going to be

considered as dynamic artefacts that are part of political and social events. Formal and recorded interviews are also going to be used. It is important to note that members from all sectors (public, private, academia/ technical community and civil society) will be contacted. Understanding the ethical impacts of this kind of technology is an interdisciplinary endeavour, therefore, a panel made up of different communities within each sector will be formed and surveyed in order to ensure a diverse range of expertise and perspectives.

To date, neither the domestic legal frameworks governing the import and deployment of these technologies, nor the industry's self-regulation are effectively preventing or addressing the abuses or issues reported (Lubin, 2023). As certain activities are perfectly legal in some countries and criminalised in others - especially regarding the restriction of the right to privacy and the application of the law - a debate on the matter should be encouraged. After all, respect for civil liberties and human rights exist and are guaranteed through the establishment of legal protection of the democratic rule of law. Therefore, it is expected that this paper results in a clear set of standards and guidelines related to the export and import of these technologies that involve government transparency and cooperation with stakeholders from civil society, the scientific community and the private sector.

Key Words
government hacking, privacy, surveillance, human rights, regulation, spyware, export, Pegasus

One spectrum, various voices: Techno-populism in Transnational Network Agenda Setting of 5G Issues

Authors

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Abstract

Emerging internet and communication technologies (ICTs) exemplified by 5G/digital infrastructure are experiencing a period of global proliferation, which is represented by international public opinion shaped by four types of subjects: international organizations, nation-states, telecommunication operators, and terminal equipment vendors. The majority of existing studies focused on mass media and public opinion, but did not analyze the rich corpus of social media produced by other political and economic actors. As a result, they cannot adequately address the issues of political economy, technological diffusion and power, nor can they explain the emergence of techno-populism on communication technologies in the process of international communication.

This study combines the corpus of transnational multi-subject discussions on 5G technology on Twitter since 2015 (four countries, four types of subjects) with network agenda-setting theory to answer two questions: what are the characteristics of the issue structure of different 5G technology-related subjects? What responsibilities do various subjects play within this integrated structure? In this manner, we attempt to detect the hidden techno-populism and power structure in the construction of network agenda.

The study uses a structural topic model (STM) to characterize the changes in the depiction of 5G issues in various historical periods, which are classified into three stages: standard implementation, product implementation, and trade friction. Using time series analysis and QAP (quadratic assignment procedure), the study finds that international organizations only play an agenda-setting role in the discussion of standards implementation, whereas nation-states, telecom operators, and terminal equipment vendors influence other actors through their own channels during the product implementation and trade friction phases, contributed to the emergence of techno-populism. In terms of theoretical contributions, the study measured the concept "techno-populism" by a combination of national and affective attributes agenda setting.

Key Words

5G,transnational network agenda setting,techno-populism,technological diffusion

Going west: Transnationalizing technological culture of Chinese characteristics

Authors

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Abstract

Increasing scholarly attention has been given to Chinese companies' globalizing endeavors, as they export capital, labor force, and work culture to other countries (Alon & McIntyre, 2008). While Chinese companies' going-out initiatives in developing countries have been criticized as "neocolonialism" (Hung, 2016; Zhao, 2014), scant scholarship thus far has examined how Chinese companies have fared in more developed regions. Drawing upon thirty-five depth interviews with coders, engineers, human resource managers, and other staff working for Chinese transnational technology companies (TTCs) in North America, Europe, and developed Asia, this study unpacks how they navigated uncharted industry environments and complex sociopolitical landscapes. The findings indicate that they have created **a stratified labor regime**, maneuvered **soft controls to extract loyalty from employees,** and blended **covert forms of discriminatory practices with diversity claims**.

First, Chinese TTCs created **a stratified labor regime** in which Chinese ex-pats sent from parent companies sat at the top while locally hired foreign and Chinese nationals held more informal jobs and lower positions. To ensure Chinese head offices' control over foreign subsidiaries, management teams were usually sent directly from China. To facilitate their access to local markets, Chinese TTCs tend to recruit locals to perform functional roles. While this seems to indicate a reversal of power hierarchy between Chinese and locals from the developed regions, the power differentials between Chinese and non-Chinese locals point to a new form of labor exploitation. Protected by labor laws and local industry ecology, native staff and Chinese with citizenship rights (e.g., US Greencard holders) were largely exempted from excessive exploitation. Instead, most overtime work has been shifted to Chinese nationals. Yet, under such arrangements, foreign employees also felt heightened levels of peer pressure while Chinese nationals became increasingly disgruntled toward unfair work assignments. Chinese TTCs, hence, experienced high rates of employee turnover. Ultimately, the dual treatment of different types of employees led to a highly stratified, unstable labor regime.

Although in/famous for their tight control of employees back in China, Chinese TTCs tried to sell the image of non-hierarchal, flat organizational structures to fit industry narratives in the developed world. Management, therefore, had to keep the delicate balance between maintaining their authority over local employees and forging ostensible equitable relations with them. Instead of issuing orders from above, they first tried to directly transplant Chinese-style workplace gaslighting tactics into these new sites. Yet, not only did native employees refuse to be

manipulated, but their Chinese colleagues also increasingly realized and defy these toxic maneuvers. The management, hence, resorted to other **soft control strategies**. Invoking the rhetoric of extended family and through family days or happy hours in luxury bars, managers tried to elicit belongingness and pride in the employees. By constantly adapting their relations with local employees, new management styles emerged at the intersection of Chinese and local values, e.g., family orientation and respect.

Lastly, due to both market concerns and legal requirements, Chinese TTCs have increasingly attended to diversity concerns, albeit at the face value, while perpetuating inequalities by borrowing **covert discriminatory practices** from their peers in the West. On the one hand, to pander to local markets, Chinese TTCs have gradually included and prioritized diversity in their strategic business goals. Emulating many Western companies, Chinese TTCs have explicitly enforced diversity hiring. The management teams also added diversity training and language and culture courses for new hires. On the other hand, gender and racial gaps were aggravated through more implicit means. Replicating technology industry's preexisting gender and racial imbalances, senior positions were predominantly held by Chinese male ex-pats and white male talents poached from local competitors. In lieu of overt discriminatory practices as in China, women and racial minorities were relegated to marginal posts in operation and logistics units. The precarity of these positions rendered female employees particularly vulnerable. After maternity leaves, women usually were displaced from their original positions and transferred to even menial jobs. Chinese TTCs, in this way, learned more hidden discriminatory practices to fit in seemingly more diversity-conscious environments in the West.

All in all, by negotiating the differences between Chinese business practices and overseas industry environments, Chinese TTC invented new ways of domination in labor practices, management styles, and employment diversity. This study contributes to understanding how globalizing initiatives by Chinese TTCs have impacted labor processes both in and outside China. Future studies may follow this line of inquiry by delving into paths and varieties of globalizing labor and work cultures in technology and other sectors.

Key Words
technology; labor; management; diversity; stratification; soft control; China; developed regions

The new journalistic privilege in online platform policy

Authors

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Dr. Michèle Ledger - Universitè de Namur

Abstract

The journalistic profession has long enjoyed privileges in recognition of its role in enabling an informed public to participate in decision-making. Now, in various attempts to combat harmful content and behaviour on online platforms, a new kind of journalistic privilege is being institutionalised in the policies aimed at governing these services. This paper presents findings from a comparison of the way journalistic exceptions or privileges are treated in platform policy in the European Union(EU), Australia and the UK. We argue that these new privileges differ from the older ones that enable the production of journalistic content. They instead are intended to ensure the dissemination of content, and they are also more dependent on media institutions and editorial responsibility than on notions of the public interest or the purpose of journalism.

The *public interest* concept has long been used to distinguish journalism from other forms of content and served as a rational for legal privileges such as in privacy law or shield laws that protect journalists from disclosing their sources. Courts in the US and Europe have extended public interest based privileges to citizen journalists, or non-professionals, even in the early days of blogging (Flanagan, 2013; Papandrea, 2006). Data protection rules in various jurisdictions include exemptions for the use of data for *journalistic purposes*. The Court of Justice of the EU has notably interpreted these as linked to the journalistic activity of disclosing information to the public rather than a specific professional role or media institution and has applied it to non-professional content creators (Flanagan, 2013; Wong, 2020). The notions of public interest and journalistic purpose have often been inclusively applied in liberal democratic contexts. We sought to discover what role, if any, they play in the rationales and design of journalistic privileges appearing in new laws aimed at limiting harm from online content platforms.

Our investigation compared platform policies in three jurisdictions in the liberal democratic tradition that have the potential to be standard setting for similar systems, and that had laws already in place or advanced drafts in legislative process. The EU's approach was examined in the Online Terrorist Content Regulation, the Digital Services Act and the proposed European Media Freedom Act. Australia's was evidenced in the 2021 Online Safety Act and the UK's in its Online Safety Bill as of its second reading. These policies place obligations on platform providers that amount to expectations of content moderation and require balancing freedom of expression concerns with potential harm from certain content. We found all three approaches limit journalistic privileges to those working in a professional capacity, and in the EU and the UK these were also dependent on the institutional source rather than the purpose or public interest. We also found the application of the privileges determined by platform providers, state bodies or

regulators. In conclusion, we argue these risk entrenching the power of platform providers and large media at the expense of freedom of expression and the public interest.

Key Words

platform policy, journalistic privilege, public interest, online safety, content moderation

Local responses to challenges for news media in the global platform era: The collaboration between government and publishers in Taiwan

Authors

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Abstract

Global digital platforms have been reshaping the news media industry worldwide. In recent years, Taiwanese publishers and policy makers have been concerned with the impact of transnational online services—such as Google, Facebook, etc.—on local news media as the development of regulations forming in Australia, Canada, and the United States since 2021. While policy interventions in the platformized communication era has become a crucial social and economic agenda, the challenges for an authority of a semi-peripheral country when regulating transnational big techs, and the difficulties for publishers of a relatively small scale market when negotiating with global platforms, remain important topics for researchers to explore. Based on an industrial survey and in-depth interviews with leading local publishers and researchers, this paper aims to understand the influences of global digital platforms on Taiwanese news industry and investigate possible policy choices within Taiwanese political and economic contexts. Firstly, this research examines how digital platforms have transformed Taiwanese news market in the last decade. The domination of Google and Facebook in local news dissemination has resulted in the "revenue destruction" and "distribution dependency" for publishers. In the previous ten years, circulations of local news publishing have decreased by 50%, and advertising revenues of newspapers and magazines have declined by 80% and 60%, respectively. The combined share of local advertising market of newspapers and magazines has declined from 30% to 3.5%, and that of the Internet has increased from 20% to 65%. While traditional publishers' incomes have been "destructed," emerging digital incomes were mainly limited by the monopolistic shares of Google and Facebook, estimated at 60-80% in the Internet advertising market. Meanwhile, as news distribution is controlled by the two transnational giants, which account for 70% of local news websites' online traffic, search engines and social media algorithms have determined the curating content. They, therefore, have influenced the rules of journalistic production. Local news publishers become dependent on global platforms because Google and Facebook rarely explained the changes in algorithms or altered the results of content moderation. Secondly, we reviewed various approaches to regulating platforms in Australia, North America, and European countries and analyzed the opportunities and threats faced by Taiwanese regulators. We held several focus group discussions with media outlets and researchers. Most interviewees believe that individually negotiating with global platforms is difficult for Taiwanese publishers, which are relatively small

companies, compared to mainstream news media in western societies. Therefore, this paper suggests that (1) local media associations organize collective bargaining with digital platforms; and (2) the Taiwanese government establishes a public fund supported by the tax transnational technology firms paid based on their advertising revenue or profits in the local market to subsidize quality journalism.

Key Words
Digital platforms, communication policy, quality journalism, local media, Taiwan

Understanding algorithmic (un)awareness through a representative survey in Spain

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Abstract

Research on algorithmic awareness is incipient and, therefore, still limited to properly informing public policies aimed at curbing or diminishing digital inequalities and exclusion provoked by low or inexistent levels of algorithmic awareness.

Results of a representative study* on the key factors of algorithmic awareness we carried out in Spain confirm some of the results of the most relevant studies on the subject published to date, but contradict other relevant ones.

Drawing on this, our paper raises a substantial discussion on: 1) the limits of quantitative studies to explain a phenomenon as complex as algorithmic awareness, and 2) whether it exists and why what we call the "algorithmic consciousness paradox". We define this paradox as the lack of connection between a) how aware people are of machine learning algorithms operating in their environment and to what extent they can influence sensitive aspects of life and b) how they relate to them and use them.

More concretely, our results show that the level of algorithmic awareness is low or inexistent among the general population, as held by Eslami *et al.* (2015) and Hargittai et al. (2020). They also show that it is related to attitudes towards digital technologies and the perceived influence of personalised algorithmic content, similarly to Yeomans et al., (2019), Gran et al. (2021) Swart (2021), Oeldorf-Hirsch and Neubaum (2021) and Ytre-Arne and Moe (2021). Likewise, that algorithmic awareness is linked to age and educational level, in accordance with Zarouali et al. (2021) and Espinoza-Rojas et al. (2022).

However, our results show no relationship of algorithmic awareness with the use of algorithmically mediated platforms, contradicting Eslami et al. (2015), De Vito et al. (2018), Siles et al. (2019), Cotter and Reisdorf (2020), Hargittai et al. (2020), Gruber et al. (2021) Cotter (2022) and Siles et al. (2022). Nor with gender, as argued by Zarouali et al. (2021) and Espinoza-Rojas et al. (2022).

This paper presents a critical analysis of these results, providing crucial information to developing public policies and other measures on the issue. It ends by setting out the main research question of a complementary qualitative study we are carrying out focused on explaining the potential existence of the algorithmic awareness paradox, of which we will present prelimilary results.

[*N=1.516. Methods: an online survey and a one-month tracking of smartphone activity, the most common device for accesing the internet and using algorithm-mediated platforms in Spain. Research team: Andrea Rosales, Sara Suárez-Gonzalo, Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol, Francisca Morey Cortès].

Key Words

Exploring the link between the UNCRC, General Comment 25 and the European Union's policy on children's rights and the digital environment: a tale of competences, coordination and child participation

Authors

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Abstract

The UN General Comment 25 (GC25) on the rights of the child in the digital environment has been ratified by all Member States of the European Union (EU), yet not by the EU itself. At the same time, though, many of the elements of the GC25 are relevant to policy decisions and legislative initiatives taken by the EU. While the GC25 requires 'States' to adopt a 'comprehensive strategy and policy', and to 'coordinate policies, guidelines and programmes', at the EU level current and proposed rules that may affect the realisation of children's rights in the digital environment are scattered and fragmented.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) mentions that children merit specific protection with respect to their personal data, and refers to children a few times, but the actual (extra) requirements for data controllers towards children remain vague and enforcement is currently still lacking. Other measures are laid down in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), which requires that video-sharing platforms (such as YouTube) ensure that children are protected from programmes, user-generated videos and audiovisual commercial communications which may impair their physical, mental or moral development. These same platforms will also be subject to the recently adopted Digital Services Act (DSA), which aims to regulate intermediary services. Additionally, a legislative initiative pending at the EU level that has the potential to significantly impact children's rights in the digital environment is the proposal for an Artificial Intelligence Act (AIA).

Whereas it is promising that both the DSA and the proposal for the AIA seem to agree with the approach in the GDPR and the AVMS that children merit specific protection, it still remains to be seen how they will be implemented. Moreover, it is unclear to what extent there is a real coordination between the existing and proposed legislative instruments (and their drafters). And although the European Commission has confirmed its commitment to the UNCRC in its recently published EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2021), there is a risk that an inconsistent approach throughout the different legislative instruments related to the digital environment weakens the protection of children, and, hence, the objective of the GC25.

This contribution explores the link between the GC25 and EU action, including the new European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+), the GDPR, the AVMSD, the DSA, and the proposed AIA.

It maps (1) GC25 demands on States, (2) the competence of the EU, and (3) the measures included in EU (proposed) legislation. Gaps, overlaps and the level of coordination are detected and assessed. Finally, recommendations on how a more coordinated approach could be shaped are formulated in order to ensure children's well-being in the digital age and to support their digital skills. Our proposal focuses, among other, on the extent and manner in which children's views are given due weight during the shaping and implementation of policies.

Key Words

children, children's rights, digital environment, digital skills, policy, EU, UN

Los límites neoclásicos en la regulación de plataformas: hacia una política global

Authors

Dr. Gustavo Buquet - Universidad de la República

Mr. Nicolas Thevenet - Universidad de la República

Abstract

La discusión sobre la regulación de la competencia de plataformas se ha centrado, tanto en la academia, como en organismos internacionales y agencias de la competencia de los diferentes países, en el modelo neoclásico de regulación: cuotas de mercado, barreras de mercado, prácticas predatorias, análisis de bienestar, entre otras. El objetivo de la ponencia es analizar la evolución de esta discusión, describir los principales cambios que esta ha sufrido en los últimos años, cómo han impactado en las diferentes propuestas legislativas y, establecer los límites que la perspectiva neoclásica le impone a la regulación de plataformas. Adicionalmente, se sugieren nuevos instrumentos de políticas públicas que puedan superar estas limitaciones regulatorias.

Este trabajo se inscribe en el contexto de una investigación sobre regulación de plataformas financiada por la Comisión Sectorial de Investigación Científica (CSIC) de la Universidad de la República de Uruguay. El marco teórico del trabajo se centra en la Economía Política de la Comunicación.

Nuestro enfoque se enmarca en una visión crítica sobre el modelo neoclásico de regulación de monopolios aplicado a las plataformas digitales. En esta parte de la investigación hacemos un recuento cronológico y una clasificación, desde distintas perspectivas, de la evolución que ha tenido la bibliografía académica, los documentos de los organismos internacionales, y las propuestas regulatorias elaboradas por las agencias de la competencia de los EE.UU. y Europa.

Este respaldo bibliográfico y documental, se utilizará para contrastar desde una perspectiva crítica, la teoría neoclásica con los reglamentos Digital Market Act (DMA) y Digital Service Act (DSA) aprobados por la Unión Europea en setiembre y octubre de 2022 respectivamente (COM, 2022a; COM, 2022b); así como con los proyectos de ley redactados por la Subcomisión Antimonopolio de la Comisión Judicial del Congreso de los EE.UU. en 2020 (Nadler y Cicelline, 2020).

Hoy existe un amplio consenso (en la academia, los organismos internacionales y las agencias reguladoras) respecto de que el poder monopólico de las grandes plataformas se basa en su capacidad para extraer datos a sus usuarios (Khan, 2017; Srnicek, 2018). Desde una perspectiva crítica, una de las posibles acciones para disminuir el poder de estas grandes plataformas es establecer los datos, actualmente privados, como un bien público (Drexl, 2016). Otra política imprescindible, en este sentido, es impulsar una gobernanza global y que la misma no quede supeditada a un país o región (Rioux & Verdugo Ulloa, 2017).

Más allá de los avances reflejados en las propuestas regulatorias de Europa y EE.UU., estos proyectos no dejan de tener los límites propios que impone el análisis neoclásico de la competencia para impedir prácticas anticompetitivas de las plataformas. Según estas normativas, las empresas ahora reguladas, seguirán siendo grandes monopolios globales, pero con algunas restricciones. Se trata de buscar nuevas alternativas de política pública global, que puedan reducir sustantivamente el poder monopólico de estas plataformas.

Brief summary in english

The discussion on the regulation of platform has focused, both in academia and in international organizations and competition agencies of different countries, on the neoclassical model of regulation: market shares, market barriers, predatory practices, welfare analysis, among others. The aim of the paper is to analyze the evolution of this discussion, describe the main changes it has undergone in recent years, how they have impacted on the different legislative proposals and establish the limits that the neoclassical perspective imposes on the regulation of platforms. Additionally, new public policy instruments are suggested to overcome these regulatory limitations.

This paper is part of a research on platform regulation funded by the Sectorial Commission for Scientific Research (CSIC) of the Universidad de la República (Uruguay). The theoretical framework of the paper focuses on the Political Economy of Communication.

Our approach is framed in a critical view of the neoclassical model of monopoly regulation applied to digital platforms. In this part of the research we make a chronological account and a classification, from different perspectives, of the evolution of the academic literature, the documents of international organizations, and the regulatory proposals developed by competition agencies in the U.S. and Europe.

Beyond the advances reflected in the regulatory proposals of Europe and the USA, these projects do not cease to have their own limits imposed by the neoclassical analysis of competition to prevent anti-competitive practices of the platforms. According to these regulations, the companies will continue to be large global monopolies, but with some restrictions. It is a matter of seeking new global public policy alternatives that can substantially reduce the monopoly power of these platforms.

Key Words
Regulación, plataformas de Internet, big data, políticas publicas, gobernanza

Weird – Whether Old or New: Problematizing the Racialized Discourse of Japan's Continued Fax Use

Authors

Dr. Inkyu Kang - The Pennsylvania State University

Abstract

This paper critically evaluates the intersection between technology and "Asianness" during the pandemic. The focus will be on the racialized discourse of the fax machine, which is still in active use in Japan. The continued use of this old-fashioned device in the "tech capital of the world" has fascinated the Western media for decades; such reporting has become even more noticeable since the coronavirus disaster and the technology war between the West and China. Based on the notion of techno-Orientalism, this study investigates the reprise of the xenophobic discourses of technology — digital and analog — contextualizing it in the "Japan Problem" discourse in the 1980s and early 1990s.

When Japan was emerging as an economic and technological superpower decades ago, it became the "common enemy" of North America and Europe. This sense of anxiety was expressed in the realm of popular culture, influencing the major themes of the cyberpunk genre: "high tech, low life." The discourse that regarded Japan as a direct threat to the West disappeared after the mid-1990s when Japan's bubble economy collapsed. However, techno-Orientalism has remained in subtle forms.

The coexistence of new and old technologies is found in any country. Nevertheless, the Western media have treated Japan's fax use like a bizarre case beyond their comprehension. As a matter of fact, the fax machine is still widely used in the healthcare, banking and public sectors around the world, including the United States, the UK and Germany. For example, it is estimated, as of 2021, that four out of 10 companies used fax machines in Germany, a country with a longstanding reputation for technological innovation. It was reported in 2021 that the federal government and parliament in Germany were using more than 8,000 fax machines."

When reporting on the old-fashioned technology in Japan, North American and European news media tend to emphasize the nation's identity and culture, which is rarely found in the reporting of the continued use of fax machines in Western countries. They often start a story with stereotypical high-tech images of Japan as a backdrop — "flashing neon signs," "bullet trains" and "robots" — giving the fax a weirdly contrasting picture. For example, BBC News asked in a 2015 report, "Why is hi-tech Japan using cassette tapes and faxes?" In seven years, at the height of the pandemic, BBC News gave a virtually identical report, "Japan is struggling to quit floppy disks and fax machines."

American media are no exception. In 2017, CNN introduced "The weird and wonderful world of Japanese robots," and the following year, USA Today published an article titled "All the useful, wacky and downright weird tech I saw on my recent trip to Japan." "A Japanese man threatened a 'bloodbath' at a vaccination site," The Washington Post's headline went in 2020, "He sent his

warning via fax." In the same year, The New York Times churned out another formulaic story: "While the world may see Japan as a futuristic land of humanoid robots and intelligent toilets, inside its offices, managers maintain a fierce devotion to paper files, fax machines, business card exchanges and face-to-face meetings."

This paper critically investigates the racialized narrative applied to the technological evolution in Japan, analyzing how the narrative works as an Othering mechanism, perpetuating the techno-Orientalist discourse of Japan and East Asia at large. How are the Japanese cases represented differently from their European or North American counterparts? How can the discrepancy be explained? In so doing, contributing factors for the longstanding use of the fax will also be discussed, exploring their social, cultural and historical contexts.

Key Words
race, fax, technology, Japan, Asia, pandemic, techno-Orientalism

Key considerations for addressing critical blindspots in European AI governance

Authors

Prof. Jo Pierson - Hasselt University

Abstract

Since 2018 several European policy efforts have aimed to incorporate ethics principles and European fundamental rights into the governance of artificial intelligence (AI). One of the major multi-stakeholder initiatives was the establishment of the High Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence (AI HLEG). This has led to the EU "Proposal for a regulation on a European approach for AI" (AI Act) in April 2021. However a closer analysis demonstrates that the dominant EU trustworthy and risk-based approach to governing AI entails five critical blindspots in relation to the sectoral specificities and the socio-technical consequences of AI in the media and communication (MC) sector. These refer to the lack of attention to infrastructures of surveillance capitalism, increasing power asymmetries in MC sector, ignoring the important cultural, social and democratic role of media, the lack of understanding how AI sorts and targets people in opaque ways, and the push by digital platform companies for self-governance with minimal oversight. In that way European AI policies largely neglect relevant issues that make AI worthy of citizen trust.

In this contribution we identify the main considerations for addressing these blindspots in European AI governance in the MC sector, based on a systematic analysis of the meaning and impact of AI on media and communication. We propose a multi-level framework based on desk research and multi-stakeholder expert discussions. We identify three areas where additional steps need to be taken for better governing AI: (1) addressing data power asymmetry, (2) empowerment by design for mitigating risks, and (3) cooperative responsibility through stakeholder engagement.

We generally find that much more research and regulatory efforts are needed on these three key areas in order to influence the development, deployment, use and governance of AI systems in the MC sector. These efforts need to involve a range of disciplines and be cognisant of the existing European policy context and sectoral specifics. The first related to the need to address data power asymmetries by rethinking informed consent in the context of machine learning powered AI, and in the deployment and use of predictive analytics by a complex ecosystem of companies. This will also require new systems of transparency and oversight for the use of automated decision making and the dominance of a small number of commercial companies in many of these technologies. The second relates to the need to develop systems that empower citizens and that operate in the public interest, from algorithmic registries to algorithmic auditing, and from skill development to the right to redress. Finally, we consider it necessary to move away from multi-stakeholder initiatives towards new systems of cooperative responsibility and accountability to protect citizen and worker rights. While the goal of a principles based and value-driven AI governance framework

across the EU is to be commended, too few voices and sectors currently dominate the policy agenda.

Key Words

Artificial Intelligence (AI), trustworthy AI, AI policy, critical blindspots, democracy

How Horizontal Privacy Regulation Influences Risky Online Political Expression: Evidence from Russia

Authors

Dr. Aysenur Dal - Bilkent University, Ankara

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between the privacy protection efforts of social media users living under authoritarian rule and their intention to engage in high-risk online political expression (OPE). Although the literature on digital repression mostly focuses on vertical risks coming from the government institutions, how individuals deal with risks posed by fellow citizens in online spaces, i.e., horizontal threats, deserve close attention as well. This is because many privacy settings available on social media platforms concern horizontal dynamics whereas vertical mechanisms remain much more ambiguous and often require more advanced skills.

Efforts to adjust privacy contexts matter in terms of bringing concerned individuals closer to their preferred level of privacy for self-disclosure. Likewise, there has been empirical evidence pointing to the link between active privacy management and greater engagement on social media including instances of OPE. From a contextually-situated perspective, one should consider the privacy-related dynamics pertaining to authoritarian governments portrayal of OPE as more trouble than it is worth to citizens. Namely, taking precautions for privacy risks may make digital repression even more salient for citizens, and result in a weaker intention to engage in political self-disclosure on social media.

Within this theoretical framework, the data used in the study come from a self-administered web survey which took place between April 16th and 21st, 2018 with adults in Russia recruited via Qualtrics. Russia serves as an appropriate setting given the political, legal, and technical risks of engaging in OPE have been gradually getting worse within the last decade with citizens potentially facing severe penalties like imprisonment based on what they share on social media.

Focusing on the Russian context, the analyses show that engaging in horizontal privacy behaviors is not a significant predictor of the intention to engage in OPE about governmental corruption; however, it significantly interacts with how much one cares about others' judgment about one's position on corruption. Namely, while engaging in horizontal privacy behaviors is not associated with intention for OPE for those with low to mean levels of impression-relevant involvement regarding expressing views about corruption, for those who have high involvement horizontal privacy behaviors are is negatively associated with intention for OPE.

Accordingly, in authoritarian settings, not only taking precautions may fail to directly encourage citizens to speak up about contentious issues, it may indeed be a sign of digital repression's deterrent effect for those who are concerned about how their digital activism would make them look like in the eyes of others. Considering digital repression does not always suffice to stop

citizens from engaging in risky OPE, privacy regulating behaviors thus become key to understand citizens' decision-making processes in settings where alternative resistance strategies truly matter.

Key Words

Future challenges and directions for AI governance

Authors

Prof. Stefania Milan - University of Amsterdam

Abstract

The rapid advancement of AI in society raises questions about its impact on democratic societies. For example, content manipulation ('deepfakes') is expected to affect elections, and up-and-coming AI chat boxes like ChatGPT and Perplexity. AI will change the way we learn, educate, and make sense of the world around us. 'Robot journalism' and automated content generation, as well as the algorithmic hyper-personalization of news, represent concrete hurdles for newsrooms and content producers. The media and communication sector broadly understood is calledling into question by these developments. But the current debate on the interplay between AI tools and the media sector tends to overlook how political agency and the very same notion of citizenship in liberal democracy are threatened due to the lack of transparency, poor democratic oversight, and potential overreach of AI technology. From the vantage point of critical data studies and scholarship on media policy and platform governance, this paper will reflect on the challenges and potential future direction for AI governance with respect to the media and communication sector. It will focus in particular on the European Union (EU)'s ongoing efforts to regulate AI as well as digital markets, taking the EU (and associated 'EU values') as a testbed for norm(ative) development in the technology sector.

AI and risk regulation: critical assessment of the approach in the UK and EU

Authors

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems have presented numerous challenges when it comes to regulation worldwide. Some of the most quoted ones are the following: lack of technical and organizational transparency, uncertainty, imbalance of expertise when it comes to the private sector and the government, fragmented industry landscape, and the issue of the timing of regulatory intervention. At the same time, AI presents opportunities, if used responsibly, and is a field of intense innovation. There have been many proposals when it comes to how to govern these technologies, and this paper looks at a particular solution: risk regulation. Risk regulation is an approach that has been widely established in other regulated industries, such as financial services and pharmaceuticals, and it can be broadly defined as regulation that aims to measure, mitigate, and largely accept risks, both known and unknown, as tradeoffs for economic and social benefits. Unavoidably, this approach carries with it both normative and empirical choices: framing the potential harms of AI systems as risks and the solutions as risk regulation are value-laden choices. This paper argues that regulators make several choices by promoting and utilizing risk regulation. To begin with, harms are constructed as risks, risk regulation is preferred over other precautionary choices, and finally there is the choice which model of risk regulation to use. This paper looks at how this approach has been used in the UK and in the EU. Two research methods are used: critical discourse analysis (CDA) and semi-structured interviews. CDA is used to analyses the discourse around this approach and looks at how it has been utilized in the EU and in the UK by focusing on the following: the Artificial Intelligence Act in the European Union, Data Protection and Digital Information Bill in the UK, and the UK proposal for regulation of AI as outlined in the paper "Establishing a pro-innovation approach to regulating AI". Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with practitioners involved. What this paper concludes is that a particular a model of risk regulation is used with democratic oversight, thus presenting the best possible option when it comes to risk regulation. However, it is argued that a more precautionary approach would have been more beneficial, a theme dominating the interviews.

Key Words

artificial intelligence, risk regulation, policy, EU, UK

Voice assistants and children's rights: the analysis of privacy policies of Amazon's Alexa, Apple's Siri and Google Assistant, and the application of the walkthrough method on the use of these services

Authors

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Abstract

More and more children face 'smart' voice assistants – such as Amazon's Alexa, Apple's Siri and Google Assistant1 – in their homes, at school and in other environments. A steady increase in the use of voice assistants by children2 affects their rights,3 provided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). While the use of these devices provides children with numerous opportunities to play, learn and communicate, it also entails exponential collection and processing of children's personal data from the earliest days of their lives.4 As extensive amounts of children's personal data are gradually and invisibly gathered through voice assistants, children are being profiled just like adults.5 This leads to both – numerous inferences about children's lives, interests, preferences, and also powerful influences on their identities and (future) life opportunities.6 Such processing and profiling particularly affects children's UNCRC rights to privacy, non-discrimination, development, education, freedom of expression, thought, opinion, association, pluralistic information and protection from economic exploitation, among others. The normative framework underpinning this research on the processing of children's voice data is the children's rights-based perspective rooted in the values and principles of the UNCRC.7

In this context, the paper aims to: **(1) conduct a compliance check exercise8** and analyse whether and how **the privacy and data policies** of the three most popular voice assistants available in Europe (Amazon Echo, Google Nest and Apple HomePod) comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements in terms of the processing of children's (voice) data; and **(2) apply the walkthrough method** when using the three devices and the apps accompanying them to investigate how child-friendly, understandable and clear the user experience is when operating these apps and devices. A walkthrough technique allows to systematically and forensically step through the various stages of the voice assistant app (registration and entry, use and discontinuation),9 particularly focusing on their use by children and the potential consequences of further engagement with the voice assistants on children's rights provided by the UNCRC. The walkthrough method is very appropriate in this regard as it not only presents an interpretative and step-by-step approach to investigate the technical features of a digital system (the voice assistance service), but also its broader digital ecosystem and its impact on children's rights.

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Key Words
children, UNCRC, privacy, voice assistants, Alexa, Siri, Google, GDPR, walkthrough

European AI governance and critical blindspots

Authors

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Abstract

AI policy making and governance began in earnest around 2016 in Europe. A range of policies, initiatives, and more recently draft regulations have ensued, prompted by public concerns about the use of AI by states and companies (Kerr et al. 2020). These concerns were bolstered by empirical research that has revealed potential and actual harms, biases and discrimination produced by AI systems (see, e.g., Hintz et al, 2019; Eubanks, 2018). We focus in this panel on the EU's ongoing commitment to establish a regulatory and societal framework for "trustworthy" and "human-centric" AI. We are concerned with the implications of current AI policies and initiatives for the media and communication (MC) sector, broadly defined, and media and communications practice more generally. The panel is based on two years of desk based research and document analysis.

This contribution starts with the AI High Level expert Group (HLEG) established by the European Commission in June 2018. Notably, no academics from media and communication studies, nor people from traditional public service media or new digitally native European media companies were represented. The final report of the AI HLEG does not mention media specifically, although it states that policy and regulation need to pay attention to "situations with asymmetries of power or information" (HLEG, 2019b: 13). There was also no discussion of AI-driven mis- or disinformation. The AI HLEG final report was influential in shaping a "European" approach to governing AI that foregrounds "ethical" and "trustworthy" AI (Hasselbalch, 2020), and was foundational for the Assessment List of Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (ALTAI) (HLEG, 2020) and the 2020 White Paper on Artificial Intelligence (EC, 2020). These documents have played an important role in framing the 'AI Act' 2022 (AIA) and subsequent debates.

Our analysis of AI policy making and documents has found several critical blindspots from a MC sector perspective. In general, the focus on algorithms, data and information in AI policy documents prioritises transmission and access issues rather than being concerned with the diversity, veracity or meaning of content. Key blindspots are the lack of attention to: 1) the infrastructures of surveillance capitalism and datafication which prioritise data gathering and engagement (Zuboff, 2019), 2) a trend towards increasing corporate and market concentration and power asymmetries in MC sectors (often by large companies based outside Europe), 3) a tendency to ignore the important cultural, social and democratic role of the media, including the importance in the diversity of content and representation (Napoli, 2019), 4) a lack of understanding of how AI is used to categorise people in new ways, and to target and adapt content and communications towards them in opaque ways, and finally, 5) a preference from social and digitally native media and technology companies for self-governance and minimal oversight. Without due consideration to these blindspots a commitment to trustworthy AI principles and a reliance on corporate self-

certification and ethics is insufficient. We suggest that AI policy would benefit from drawing upon media and communications expertise and being less siloed from other relevant media policy areas.

Key Words
Artificial Intelligence (AI), trustworthy AI, AI policy, critical blindspots, democracy

Regulating Communication in Sub Saharan Africa: A comparative analysis

Authors

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Abstract

The Ugandan Parliament in 2022 passed the Computer Misuse Act, an amendment of the law by the same name passed in 2011[1]. The law in 2011 was passed along two other laws to regulate the use of electronic transactions and signatures. The Computer Misuse Act 2011 has been implemented in ways that some have viewed by critics as political persecution of enemies of people in power. Uganda has in its regulation of communication, also gone as far as shutting down the internet, taxing social media use, and closing social media sites at certain times deemed sensitive, like during national elections. Much of government regulation is driven by fear of misuse of online spaces in the form of disinformation, fake news, hate speech, gossip and other misbehavior of social media users. Many countries in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), have responded to the technological disruption by seeking to regulate communication through laws that have vague provisions with dire consequences, whose implementation may target political activism, with huge implications for communication rights.

The purpose of this article is to identify and conduct a comparative analysis of communication regulation in terms of their objectives and reach, their implementation and implications. The outcome of this comparison is to enhance our understanding of regulatory actions taken by various governments and their consequences in order to draw lessons for communication policy. Its focus is Sub-Saharan Africa. The study adopts governance as a theoretical abstract. Used in a similar study on regulation of social media platforms (Rochefort, 2020[2]), it offers a broad view of regulation beyond legal. Given Uganda's history of using taxation as a measure of regulation of communication, this will be useful in identification of the various policy regimes of the selected countries. The study will use two methodologies, a systematic review and a policy analysis approach. As a purely qualitative study, the systematic review will enable the researcher to widely cover matters of communication regulation in selected countries while policy analysis will support comparison of tools of regulation deployed by the various countries. The findings will be useful in providing evidence for policy reform and public policy debate in countries studied.

[1] Computer Misuse Act (Amendment of 2011) 2022. Government of Uganda

[2] Rochefort, A. 2022. Regulating social media platforms: A comparative policy analysis

Key Words

Regulation, communication, technology, and Sub-Saharan Africa

Digital governance poaching – It's not about resisting but about living.

Authors

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Abstract

This paper conceptualizes the idea of personal digital governance through the analysis of individuals who engage in digital-governance poaching. These individuals do not have a formal position or the power to influence digital governance issues; however, through their daily decisions and activities that relate to issues like privacy, freedom of speech, and fair use they aim to govern their own digital environment. They differ from activists who try to change the system, and thus resemble De Certeau's (1984) textual poachers. To shed light on this form of poaching, I conducted in-depth interviews with six individuals from Brazil, the UK, Russia, and Israel. These individuals engage in exercising these practices as defined so far, and they were recruited through snowball sampling. Following De Certeau's (1984) theory, according to which "ways of operating [should] become the focus of research and analysis," the interviews focused on exploring the everyday practices of the interviewees in relation to their lives in the digital environment. The interviews were semi-structured and touched upon the interviewees' practices concerning three main clusters of digital rights – privacy, freedom of speech, and fair use. The interviews explored the following issues: web surf routines (browsers and search engines), social media and instant messaging practices, online practices with institutions (workplace, financial institutions, and health providers), managing personal relations online, favorite applications, and online popular culture consumption habits. The results will be shown according to three different themes: practices and motivations, working on digital governance poaching, and defining boundaries. I conclude the paper by addressing the contribution of the results to the notion of resistance and governance of the digital sphere.

Key Words

Cyber security and financial frauds in India's urban geographies: A study of communication strategies used by RBI for fraud mitigation and awareness campaigns.

Authors

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Abstract

India ranks second only to China, with more than 690 million active internet users which constitute almost 41% of the country's total population. On the back of this massive digital penetration, many financial services have flourished and this digital revolution is transforming banking services. The banking transition from branch-based delivery to multi-channel services has opened up a new arena for criminals to operate in especially in urban areas.

The number of financial online and offline frauds are increasing despite various communication strategies like customer awareness program and financial literacy campaign etc. This indicates the lack of understanding on part of the urban customer, different innovative methods of fraud used by fraudsters, and not-so-clear financial awareness campaign contents.

Although, RBI regularly runs campaigns to spread awareness on how to avoid fraud in electronic payment transactions and all these campaigns are also broadcast on Doordarshan and All India Radio, and through national and local dailies also annually organizes a Financial Literacy Week to propagate financial education messages on various themes among members of the public. But, according to the RBI data, banks reported 9,102 frauds totaling 60,389 crores in the financial year 2022, compared to 7,358 frauds worth Rs. 1.37 lakh crore in financial year 21. According to the report, customers reported 3.04 lakh complaints with the RBI Ombudsman office in FY22. As reported by the National Crime Records Bureau, 6,229, 10,395, and 14,007 cases of 'fraud for cybercrime' were filed in 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively.

Last year, RBI (Office of the Banking Ombudsman in India) advised all banks to conduct Town Hall events /Branch Customer Meet/ Display of Banners in public places as a communication strategy by all Banks under the supervision of nominated Torchbearer Bank in the local language during the period September 2022 to December 2022.

The present study aims to analyze the various communication awareness initiatives taken by RBI and PSU Banks (SBI, PNB & Canara Bank) in Delhi and their impact assessment in terms of the number of financial fraud cases reported during the campaign period and afterward.

Through the mixed method approach, it also examines whether there has been an increase in the various nature of financial frauds as well as the emergence of new types of frauds reported during the campaign period and afterward by the victims as a case study. The study also explores the effectiveness of the wide publicity content by RBI, the regulator that has been running the

campaign for more than a year not only in English and Hindi but in various regional languages for maximum reach to urban as well as rural communities.

Based on the number and types of fraud cases reported during the study period, the resultant course of action and security checks executed by banks/RBI, and the findings of a survey of people, we can understand the communication gap and how to communicate more effectively to promote awareness among urban communities.

Key Words
Financial fraud, Communication, cyber security

Citizens' participation in government-driven data initiatives: lessons from two case studies in Canada

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Abstract

In an increasingly datafied society, socio-technical projects consisting of the production, collection, processing, and circulation of data through digital infrastructures tend to proliferate. From digital platforms to smart cities and a variety of smaller scale projects (at the organization/institution level), these "data initiatives" are surrounded by discourses which are either optimistic or pessimistic. While a pervasive neoliberal discourse called "dataism" praises the datafication of society as a source of economic growth, technological innovation and scientific breakthroughs, critical data studies rather see the trend as an inherent component of surveillance capitalism (van Dijck, 2014; Zuboff, 2019) and a new form of colonialism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). Other authors have noted that data can also be empowering to the weak, providing sousveillance affordances (Goëta, 2016) and enabling new forms of activism (Milan, 2017). Ultimately, data tends to empower social actors who have the resources to make use of it in ways that are useful and meaningful to them (Lycett, 2013; Powell, 2014). A more citizen-centered approach to datafication could thus offer a democratic alternative to the current dominant model of industry-driven datafication.

Stemming from a broader research project on the imagined and actual publics of data initiatives (data publics) in various contexts, the study questions how citizens are involved in data initiatives pushed by the public sector. What forms of citizen participation do they encourage? To what extent are citizens listened to and actually empowered regarding the data produced for/about them? The paper draws on two case studies which provide contrasting examples of the ways citizens are mobilized in such government-driven projects. Following an ethnography-inspired approach, we used document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and observation to conduct the case studies as in-depth studies of situations, organizations, and events. Case #1 is the Open Data Portal of a Canadian major city, which aims at making city data available for various publics including ordinary citizens. Case #2 is a digital platform for health research established by a consortium of academic, health-care, and state actors in another major urban area of the same Canadian province. One of the purposes of the platform is to supply a "data bank in sustainable health" by aggregating data collected by the research projects hosted on the platform.

Both data initiatives share their promoters' explicit intention to have citizens participate at some levels in the project. That said, the two initiatives have adopted very distinct strategies in how they attempted to enroll citizens. In the case of the Open Data Portal, the City government expected that making data available would suffice to attract citizens and empower them. In the case of the health research platform, the sensitivity and confidentiality of personal data excluded such open access. Instead, citizens were planned to be involved in the design process and possibly the governance of the platform by being represented within a "citizen committee". It was also planned to provide a "dashboard" to citizen members of the platforms of their own data. The study showed that both initiatives faced difficulties meeting their objective of citizen participation. The reasons for these shortcomings as well as the institutional responses to them will be discussed in the paper. Together, the cases provide insights into the challenges that governments and public institutions must address in making democratic data policies.

Key Words
open data, datafication, data policy, publics, citizen participation, case studies

Algorithmic vulnerability and the limits of AI policy discourse

Authors

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Abstract

The rapid growth and application of artificial intelligence technologies in everyday communications is impacting on people and society in myriad ways. However, academic researchers have long established how machine learning and algorithmic processes result in specific harms against people and groups, with the more vulnerable in society disproportionately at risk (Birhane, 2021). Recent AI policy and strategy documents have increasingly started to draw attention to those who are 'vulnerable' with regard to AI, as individuals or groups (e.g. ICO 2022, EU AI Act 2022, US Gov by Algorithm, 2020, Ireland AI Strategy 2022). But it is not clear what 'vulnerability' means in the context of AI policy, how it is identified or to what extent it is created or exacerbated by algorithmic power. For example, in its 'key guidance' for the development, deployment and use of AI systems, the EU Ethical Principles for Trustworthy AI list individuals and groups regarded as specifically vulnerable, such as *"workers, women, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, children, consumers or others at risk of exclusion"* (HLEG 2019). Overall, the guidelines suggest a universal life cycle of vulnerability to AI, which reflects research on vulnerability as a concept more broadly but may pose challenges for effective policy design and implementation. Vulnerability has been studied in a wide range of fields from medical, engineering and environmental sciences to psychology, sociology and development studies. It is a complex concept, frequently assessed in quantitative studies to measure the potential exposure of people and communities to risk, hazard and disaster (Hufschmidt 2011). Qualitative analyses have also explored the causes of vulnerability and the potential for resistance and resilience, in seeking to understand the role of vulnerability as an enduring and universal, if differently experienced, condition (ibid). However, few studies approach vulnerability within the information and data science field or specifically address *human* vulnerability in relation to our interaction with communication systems.

This paper explores the concept of 'algorithmic vulnerability', as presented in AI policy and strategy discourses, through analysis of a sample of the 214 policy documents and initiatives currently active in the EU, US, UK, Canada and Ireland (OECD AI, 2021). It traces references to vulnerability and vulnerable people along with available definitions, contexts, regulatory conditions and limitations. As a constant and universal feature of human existence, vulnerability is regarded as a well recognised justification for state action (Engster, 2019), making it both important and relevant for analysis of AI policy. The conceptualisation of vulnerability also draws on the work of Judith Butler in recognising that vulnerability is socially produced. We may all be vulnerable in some ways, but some are more vulnerable than others and to greater degrees at certain places and times due to social institutions and cultural norms (Butler, 2016: 21). The analysis will assess if AI policy discourses form part of the traditional response to vulnerability, which offers paternalistic forms of

protection, often mobilised by powerful national and international actors, in order to 'fix' certain 'populations' who are considered to be in a permanent position of vulnerability and 'weakness' (ibid). But the study is also a response to Fineman's (2008) call for 'centering' the vulnerable subject, which argues that understanding the significance, universality, and constancy of vulnerability is essential, for politics, ethics, and law and for a comprehensive vision of the human experience to meet the needs of real-life subjects.

Key Words

USING LIVE STREAMING PLATFORM TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCY TO REDUCE RACISM AGAINST THE JEW MINORITY

Authors

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Dr. YOWEI KANG - NATIONAL CHUNG HSING UNIVERSITY

Abstract

INTRODUCTION

Live streaming apps have emerged as an important application in the streaming media ecosystem where real-time audio and video are broadcast via the Internet, social media (Burroughs, 2015), mobile (Garcia-Pineda et al., 2018), and digital games (Johnson & Woodcock, 2019; Ruberg et al., 2019) technologies. Many communication scholars have also examined live video streaming "as a form of media production and consumption" (Johnson & Woodcock, 2019, p.670). Despite their commercial success, the use of live streaming apps in sharing intangible cultural heritage (i.e., ICH) has recently attracted the attention of academic communities (Lu, 2020). For example, Jewish communities have increasingly noted the great potential of live-streaming platforms to share cultural knowledge among themselves and outside communities.

The lack of understanding of the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities and indigenous communities may lead to heightened racism incidents worldwide. According to the latest Pew Research (2021, May 21), 60% of Jews in America have reported they experienced direct, and personal anti-Semitism acts in the past 12 months, ranging from "seeing anti-Semitic graffiti or vandalism, experiencing online harassment, or hearing someone repeat an anti-Semitic trope" (n.p.).

Therefore, learning about the cultural heritage of another ethnic group is vital to foster cross-cultural competence and enhancing tolerance and acceptance of minorities, particularly among young generations. Additionally, past research has confirmed that exposure to cultural heritage is critical to its preservation (Isa et al., 2019). Additionally, young people of ethnic minorities and indigenous communities may also lose a sense of belonging and identity of their races to contribute meaningfully to society (UNESCO, n.d.).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Cross-Cultural Competency and Cultural Heritage

Our study examines whether live streaming platforms can function as a viable communication tool that could significantly impact This questionnaire study is situated within the influence marketing, uses and gratifications, and live streaming platform literature that has shown the employment of live streaming celebrities in changing users' communication behaviors in various contexts (Lee, 2018; Olenski, 2017). We examined their current use of live streaming platforms and celebrities to

acquire knowledge about the cultural heritage of ethnic minority and indigenous communities (RQ1), their motivations to use technologies to learn about the cultural heritage contents of ethnic minority and indigenous communities (RQ2), the relationship between their awareness of the cultural heritage contents of ethnic minority and indigenous communities and their responses to anti-Semistism (RQ3), and the effects of demographics on the above questions (RQ4).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses an online quantitative questionnaire to survey a national sample of American respondents via the popular Amazon M-Turk recruitment platform. Seventeen participants were removed from the screening question. In the end, 561 participants were included as a valid sample.

Sample Characteristics

Among them, 225 participants are female (40.1%), while 303 are male (54.0%). 85.4% of the participants are White (N=479), while 3.9% are Black, 0.9% are Asians, and 4.6% are Jewish.

In terms of their frequency of using live streaming technology weekly, the majority (53.5%) have used it three to five times a week, while 31.9% used it daily. 54.9% of them have used live streaming technology to learn about cultural heritage, while 39.2% point out that being a fan of the influencer also affects their usage. Additionally, 52.7% of the respondents have indicated that they are aware of Jewish live-streaming influencers.

Instrument Development

In terms of the instrument development, participants' cultural knowledge will be measured by *The Intercultural Attitudes Skills and Knowledge Short Scale* (A.S.K.S) to assess "the degree to which individuals internalize attitudes, skills, and knowledge associated with effective and appropriate intercultural communication". The 12-item six-point scales have a Cronbach's alpha of .90.

Users' motivations will be adapted from *User Motivation Inventory* (16-item, Cronbach's alpha=.90), and awareness of and attitude toward anti-Semitism will be adapted from the *Survey of American Attitudes toward Jews* (29-item, Cronbach's alpha=.944).

FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Discussions and implications were provided. The hierarchical regression models have confirmed the use of live streaming platforms can contribute to their cross-cultural competency (F=162.57, p<0.001), and the combined effects of live streaming platform usage and cross-cultural competency contributes to the lowered anti-Seimitism attitudes (F=86.03, p<0.001). In terms of users' demographics, while their marital status does not predict the above relationships, but female participants are more likely to be influenced by he combined effects of live streaming platform usage and cross-cultural competency.

Key Words
Anti-Semitism, Cross-Cultural Competency, Influencers, Livestreaming Platforms, Survey