



YOUthDIG Messages



Ethics and Internet Governance

1. Ethical data governance and leak prevention
To prevent data leaks, combat unauthorized surveillance, and ensure the safety of publicly owned data, we must establish clear data ownership and strict consistency in who and what manages this information. This requires a robust multi-stakeholder approach to enforce ethical internet governance standards and protect citizens' privacy from invasive surveillance practices.
2. Inequalities and access to a safe digital environment
To prevent data profiling such as in employment or education (scholarships), we must regulate how AI algorithms are trained with our data, to avoid bias. Particular attention should be paid to the targeting through harmful and illegal practices (based on status) of vulnerable groups such as women, LGBTQ+ community and minorities.
3. Multi-stakeholders: implementations & regulations
How can companies enforce regulations, how can users implement them and how should governments monitor them? All relevant stakeholders, from governments to big tech and everyday users of digital spaces/platforms, should work together so that policies don't just stay on paper but actually work in the real world.
4. Putting people first in the age of AI
We need to make it clear that real people and their jobs should be valued more than any AI tool or technology. To keep the workplace safe and fair, governments and companies must put in place strong regulations that protect workers from being easily replaced or left behind.

Digital Impact on Children

1. Children should learn about digital literacy and be empowered with agency and critical thinking skills, from a young age, before having access to Generative AI tools. Parents should also be empowered to support their child's cognitive development.
2. Governments should invest in school mental health programs and collaborate with NGOs to provide professional support for children, to combat social media addiction, anxiety, cyberbullying, and other negative effects of social media.
3. Existing regulations (such as GDPR) should be strengthened to limit the collection of children data and the tracking of children online. Existing data of children online should be removed to prevent the targeting of ads.
4. Social media platforms should be tailored to the evolving capacities of children; certain features should be restricted, and more parental controls should be included to create safe online spaces for children under 16 (for example, prohibiting addictive design and enhancing content moderation).

The Youth Dialogue on Internet Governance (YOUthDIG) is a yearly pre-event to the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) aimed to foster active youth participation. Young people (ages 18-30) from the pan-European region with a strong interest in Internet governance, digital policy and cooperation are working together to draft and advocate for the youth messages.

Every year the YOUthDIG Organising Team is compiled of former YOUthDIG participants who design the programme for the upcoming edition. This is a chance to reflect and improve the programme from last editions, build further connections with YOUthDIG alumni and the EuroDIG community and to provide an opportunity for young people throughout Europe to participate in the Internet Governance Ecosystem focusing on topics that are important to youth in the field.

Find out more at:
www.eurodig.org/youthdig

Disparities and Inclusion

1. Age disparities in accessibility to the digital services – right to offline services
Everyone should be included in online services or provided with suitable alternatives – older generations, marginalised groups based on their socioeconomic, migrant, and/or ethnic/Roma backgrounds. This would allow them equal access to online services, such as banking, e-commerce, and other digital government services. Strategies for equal access should be implemented through two routes:
 - Providing online services (with the above mentioned groups in mind) as well as intergenerational workshops, including intergenerational tech labs, with the goal of giving older generations the tools to use online services.
 - Providing offline alternatives to generally needed services including banking, commerce, healthcare, customer service,
2. Access to the internet and equal opportunities in rural areas
Everyone should have the right to access the internet regardless of social background, particularly when it comes to area of residence (accounting for appropriate age groups). In this sense it's necessary:
 - Ensuring that access to the internet becomes a human right, considering how this access has become an integral part of exercising other rights, including but not limited to freedom of expression, assembly and right to education.
 - Investing in internet infrastructure in rural areas to make sure that equal access to the internet is achieved, improving access to new opportunities (e.g. educational).
3. Gender disparities, violence perpetuated through AI and social media
 - Currently, generative AI and social media platforms are allowing gender-based violence and discrimination to be perpetrated. This affects minorities, women, people of color, LGBTQ communities and people with disabilities.
 - AI models' development should incorporate, across all stages, people from various communities and backgrounds.
4. Accessibility for people with disabilities
 - Ensuring that different internet platforms are designed to cater to the needs of people with disabilities. This means building in features that support people with visual, auditory, or cognitive impairments and taking them into account in initial dialogues on services development. Making sure these groups are included in formulation of AI models, to avoid biases and guarantee accessibility.
5. Data Centers and Sustainability
 - FLAP-D markets i.e., Frankfurt, London, Amsterdam, Paris, and Dublin are Europe's primary IT hubs, but data centres are not confined to these cities alone. They have expanded into wider regions across the continent, including the Nordics, and into rural parts of countries like Ireland and the Netherlands, well beyond their capital cities.
 - Data centres don't just appear anywhere. They are built in specific towns and regions where power is cheap, water is available and planning permission is easy to get. These places end up hosting the infrastructure that powers the global internet, yet the communities living there rarely had a say in it, and even more rarely benefit from it.



- When a hyperscale facility moves in, local electricity prices rise. Water tables shift. Grid capacity that once served homes is redirected. The people living there carry a real, material cost for infrastructure decisions made thousands of miles away, by companies they have no relationship with.
 - This is not just an environmental issue, but rather a disparity issue. Therefore, to counter it, we should design better policy that takes into account local communities and environmental impact, making sure that there's transparency behind the building processes of these centers.
6. Human Rights / protecting people
- Stronger measures must be taken to protect people in the AI labour force, including those who extract resources and those who moderate content, labour usually outsourced outside of Europe by European companies, often with little oversight or accountability.

Freedom of Expression and Disinformation

1. Increased state-led surveillance amplifies fear of self-expression. To ensure that states do not abuse their digital competencies, we put forward both immediate action and long-term solutions to combat online surveillance.

Considering the lack of international legislation regarding the ability of states to conduct surveillance, we believe that developing state-surveillance policies is critical to ensuring and maintaining citizens' safety and right to freedom of speech. We would encourage / ask international bodies such as the EU to develop regulations that could implement checks and balances on states' surveillance mechanisms. While establishing an agency responsible for such missions would be ideal, we acknowledge that the processes needed to create such an agency are extensive and require lengthy measures. This is why we advise for international legislation to be developed first, with the goal of creating and appointing an international independent body that could later take responsibility for supervising state surveillance issues.

The necessary steps for the establishment of such an independent (intergovernmental) institution should be rapidly taken. Such an agency would have the authority to regulate state-surveillance and tackle related citizens' privacy concerns.

2. More and more individuals request medical advice from Artificial Intelligence Chatbots. These proceed to giving advice on medical issues with reduced visibility on the sources that were utilised, particularly when the sources are anonymous comments from online communities.

To tackle this, we believe that AI chatbots should clearly specify the sources it used at the beginning of the response, to facilitate users' understanding of differences between professional advice and advice originating from platforms users' comments. Sources should also be written simultaneously per advice / idea expressed. While we acknowledge that there is a bibliography included in generative AI responses, we believe that health-related issues advice shall specifically mention whether the advice is coming from medical experts to avoid worsening of symptoms.

3. Social media platforms and online communities are still flooded with too much harmful / hate-speech content.

We support the idea of Implementing (AI?) algorithms that would detect harmful content (slurs, offensive words, death threats) / messages before being sent. These would notify the sender / person who is about to comment that what they are writing will be flagged as harmful, offensive etc. It would not censor the messages, allowing the users to proceed, however it would flag the comments once they are posted. After the comments are posted, they would be reported and verified against harmful content moderation and removed if found too offensive.

4. To combat decreased media literacy and intense spread of mis- and dis-information, we believe there should be more visibility on existing media literacy / disinformation detection campaigns and projects. There are a multitude of projects and initiatives supported by the EU which tackle the issue of media literacy and disinformation, and offer trainings and workshops. However, these do not reach the target audience. The EU could allocate financial support to increase the visibility of such projects and ensure that more people are aware of their existence. This can be done via more social-media publicity. In the long-term, we advise that such visibility campaigns could reach people who do not have access to the internet, but are still affected by disinformation. Such campaigns could involve media literacy educational materials sent via post.
5. It is increasingly difficult to distinguish AI generated images and videos from real ones. This can further increase the spread of disinformation or addictive behaviour. Therefore, we believe that labelling AI content (images and videos) on social media should be mandatory and clear to limit the spread of disinformation.

