

Advancing Democratic Values in a Digital

At the Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT), we strive to put democracy and individual rights at the center of the digital revolution. We champion policies, laws, and technical designs that empower people to use technology for good while protecting against invasive, discriminatory, and exploitative uses.

CDT is a champion of global online civil liberties and human rights.

CDT is a public interest group based in Brussels and headquartered in Washington, D.C. Our collaborative approach and expert staff of advocates, lawyers, and technologists draw key stakeholders together to find practical solutions to policy challenges.

+ Internet and Technology Policy Advocates in the EU

The European Union plays a major role in shaping the policies of the global internet, exerting influence far beyond its own borders. CDT works actively with European Union institutions and Member States to forge outcomes that respect legal, political, and cultural differences while promoting the core values of an open and inclusive internet. CDT is engaged in European and international policy debates, and engages globally in diverse coalitions.

EU Policy Areas of Focus



+ Free Expression & Intermediary Liability

Limited liability for intermediaries has been a fundamental reason for the success of the internet as a platform for free expression and innovation. Where online speech is hosted by web servers, news portals, social media platforms, search engines, and ISPs, the threat of liability would create strong incentives for content to be removed and access to their services limited. The EU has adopted and is preparing further legislation that challenges the limited liability principle, such as the [DSM Copyright Directive](#) and the [Terrorist Content Online Regulation](#). CDT is working with policymakers to ensure that legislation protects core liability limitations enabling freedom of expression, while addressing concerns related to hate speech, terrorist content, and online disinformation.

+ Artificial Intelligence

The European Union is seeking to emerge as a leader on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and CDT is applying its expertise to the full spectrum of issues these technologies raise. In its 2018 Communication, [‘Artificial Intelligence for Europe’](#), the European Commission sets out a broad set of policies and initiatives for the EU to undertake. These include increasing public and private investments, coordinating research, and ensuring the availability of data. As these efforts move forward, CDT will work to ensure that AI brings benefits in a wide range of areas, such as healthcare, energy, transport, and environment, while respecting fundamental rights. CDT conducts research on [responsible uses](#) of AI technologies, and on the use of [automation in content moderation](#). We will continue to support policies that enable the safe and responsible use of AI technologies, and [solutions that mitigate](#) the risks they entail.

+ Government Surveillance and Access to Personal Data

Government surveillance programmes and policies should be targeted, proportionate, and respectful of human rights worldwide. European institutions are considering legislation on cross-border access to electronic evidence, the [E-Evidence proposals](#). CDT advocates for integrating stronger privacy and procedural safeguards in these proposals. A proper balance must be struck between the legitimate interests of law enforcement authorities, users and citizens, and international communications providers. Similar discussions are taking place at the Council of Europe on the [Convention on Cybercrime](#). CDT is working to ensure that the outcome of this process brings legal certainty for service providers while meeting international human rights standards.

+ Data Protection and Privacy

The EU set global data protection standards when it adopted the General Data Protection Regulation. CDT actively advocates for strong privacy protections for citizens worldwide. In the United States, we are advancing comprehensive privacy legislation that would go even further than GDPR, by establishing clear uses of data that are always off-limits and moving beyond unworkable models of “notice & choice.” European institutions are currently working on the proposed [ePrivacy Regulation](#), which particularises and complements the GDPR for electronic communications services. We are calling for a Regulation that is focused on safeguarding effective communications confidentiality and security, counters invasive tracking and data collection, and enables deployment of encryption in communications services.

+ Net Neutrality

The European Union has harmonised its rules on net neutrality. The [Regulation laying down measures](#) concerning open internet access, which CDT supported, set out the principle of non-discriminatory treatment of traffic and banned blocking, throttling, and paid prioritisation of specific applications or traffic. It is essential that these rules are respected as next-generation 5G network technology and services are developed and rolled out. We will actively monitor progress and work to ensure that EU Member States maintain these principles.

Visit us at
www.cdt.org/eu

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