Note for curators: Please post your updates on DW *and* on this googledoc. If your update affects more than one Issue, please make a note on the other Issues so that other curators are aware.

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- **IG developments in 2019:** December 2018 | January 2019 | February 2019 | March 2019 | April 2019 | May 2019 | June 2019 | July and August 2019 | September 2019 | October 2019 | November 2019 | December 2019
- Guidelines:DW 3.0: List of issues, processes, trends, and the team | Guidelines for content curation | Style guide rev.12
- **Issues:** Access, ADR, AI, Blockchain, Capacity dev, Child safety online, Children's rights, Cloud computing, Consumer protection, Content policy, Convergence and OTT, Critical infra, Critical Internet resources, Cryptocurrency, Cultural diversity, Cyberconflict, Cybercrime, Data governance, Digital business models, Digital identities, Digital legacies, Digital standards, E-commerce and trade, Emerging tech, Encryption, E-waste, FoE, FoP, Future of work, Gender, Human rights principles, Inclusive finance, IoT, IPR, Jurisdiction, Liability of intermediaries, Multilingualism, Network security, NN and 0 rating, Online education, Privacy, Rights of people with disabilities, RTBF, Sustainable development, Taxation, Telecoms infra, Trust, ethics, and interdisciplinary approaches, Violent extremism
- **PROCESSES**
- **TRENDS: COVID-19**

ISSUES
Technology and Infrastructure Basket
(Coordinator: Sorina)

Telecommunications infrastructure (Andre - andree@diplomacy.edu)

- ITU launches Connect2Recover to reinforce digital infrastructure in countries affected by COVID-19

  Sept 9th ITU launches Connect2Recover to strengthen digital infrastructure in COVID-19 affected countries

  The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has launched Connect2Recover with the governments of Japan and Saudi Arabia to help countries affected by COVID-19 recover through the increase in access to affordable and reliable internet services. The initial focus of this initiative will be particular countries in Africa as 21 of the 25 least connected countries in the world are in Africa. COVID-19 has made plain the requirement for digital infrastructure and widespread broadband access for all to fully participate in the society and economy by facilitating limited interruptions to virtual work, education and social interactions. The ITU is seeking to transition its efforts from providing aid to countries responding to COVID-19 and focusing on ensuring seamless adjustment to the 'new normal.'

  Connect2Recover will consist of three key elements:
  1) Gap analysis of the use of technology and digital networks at a country level
  2) Development of strategies to ensure alignment between the digital infrastructure and recovery efforts and establishment of the 'new normal'
  3) Design and implementation of pilot projects that further national strategies and policies along with research into digital policy areas prioritised by the countries

  Connect2Recover is expected to reinforce the ITU's efforts at digital transformation in Africa.

- Burkina deploys new IXPs and VLPs

- **Sept 8th - New IXPs and VLPs deployed in Burkina Faso**

  The Burkina Faso's government has invested in the establishment of an Internet exchange point (IXP) and a virtual landing point (VLP) in the city of Bobo-Dioulasso which will be located in the Sarfalo Transmitting Center. The enablement of local connectivity between telecom and Internet Service Providers will provide reduced network latency and improve the overall traffic transmission speeds. This investment is part of a World Bank-financed West Africa Regional Communications Infrastructure Program Project where an additional 15 gigabits per second of international bandwidth brings the total capacity available to the country to 60 gigabits.

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- Angola partners with Huawei to improve ICT training and technical infrastructure in higher education institutions

  Sept 10th - Angola partners with Huawei to enhance ICT training and infrastructure in education

  Huawei Technologies is partnering with Angola's government to enhance ICT skills and strengthen infrastructure available to higher education institutions. Teachers and staff of the Ministry of Higher Education will receive telecommunications and information technology training. Additionally this collaboration seeks to improve the teaching and learning process in Angola's higher education institutions along with the understanding of how to repair the infrastructure currently available at the facilities.

- Paratus Group completes Maputo-Johannesburg optical fiber link through Eswatini

- **Sept 7th - Maputo-Johannesburg optical fiber link through Eswatini completed**

  The Paratus Group, a high-speed connectivity provider has announced the completion of the Maputo-Johannesburg fiber link through Eswatini which will provide further redundancy to its existing pan-African fiber network. This is the second east-west cable route by Paratus with the first that links Namibia and Tanzania completed in 2019. Paratus has invested in the utilisation of the latest technology operating at wavelengths up to 100 GB in spite of the prevailing economic conditions as it contributes to the development of capacity within Africa.

  Sept 24th OneWeb to restart launches, ahead of commercial service in 2021

  OneWeb is being delivered from bankruptcy by Indian telecom Barti Global and the UK government and plans to resume satellite launches in December with the majority of the fleet active by the end of 2022. OneWeb intends to begin commercial service by the end of 2021 with a portion of the fleet in regions including the UK, Alaska, northern Europe, Greenland, Iceland, the Arctic seas and Canada.

  OneWeb entered bankruptcy with 74 satellites in orbit which will expand to 110 with the December launch OneWeb's launch partner Arianespace will leverage a Russian-developed Soyuz rocket at the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia for the December 2020 launch.Further launches will be from Kazakhstan and French Guiana. The contract for the launch relies on the bankruptcy rescue receiving approval.

Digital standards (Arvin - arvink@diplomacy.edu)
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Critical Internet resources (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)
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Net neutrality and zero rating (Nathalia SP - nathaliasp@diplomacy.edu)
- ECJ: The Court interprets, for the first time, the EU regulation enshrining 'internet neutrality'
- India: TRAI releases Recommendations on Traffic Management Practices (TMPs) and Multi-Stakeholder Body for Net Neutrality
-

Cloud computing (Nathalia SP - nathaliasp@diplomacy.edu)

- India: TRAI releases Recommendations on Cloud Services
- State of the Union: Commission sets out new ambitious mission to lead on supercomputing
-

Internet of Things (Efrat - efratd@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited SH 1 September - ETSI expands IoT interoperability specifications to new sectors**. The European Telecommunications Standards Institute's (ETSI) Smart Machine-to-Machine Communications (SmartM2M) technical committee extended its Internet of things (IoT) ontology to four new sectors: automotive, eHealth, wearables, and water domains. The smart applications reference ontology (SAREF) aims to facilitate interoperability between solutions from different providers and within various IoT sectors. These sectors join the six extensions already released for energy, environment, building, smart cities, industry and manufacturing, and smart agriculture and food chain.

- **Edited SH 3 September - The Australian Cyber Security Centre publishes manufacturer IoT guide**. The Australian Cyber Security Centre issued an Internet of things (IoT) guide for manufacturers titled Code of Practice: Securing the Internet of Things for Consumers. The guide aims to help manufacturers offer secure IoT devices for consumers. It includes 13 principles and provides examples of how to implement them. The principles address: creating strong passwords; vulnerability disclosure policies; software security updates; storing credentials; protecting personal data, minimising exposed attack surfaces, ensuring communication security, ensuring software integrity, making systems resilient to outages, monitoring system telemetry data, enabling consumers to delete personal data, installing and maintaining devices, and validating input data.

- **Edited SH 8 September - US NCCoE initiates public consultation regarding IoT devices onboarding.** The US National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (NCCoE) issued a draft report titled Trusted Internet of Things (IoT) Device Network-Layer Onboarding and Lifecycle Management for public consultation. The paper defines network-layer onboarding of an Internet of things (IoT) device as the provisioning of device network credentials during the device's deployment on a network. The onboarding indicates that the device is provided with unique and trusted network credentials and establishes an encrypted channel without user knowledge of the credentials, thereby diminishing unauthorised credential disclosure. Using a trusted network-layer onboarding mechanism can prevent unauthorised devices from connecting to the network and protect devices from being taken over by unauthorised networks. The paper also describes a generic trusted onboarding process; defines onboarding functional roles; discusses onboarding-related aspects of IoT lifecycle management; presents onboarding use cases; and proposes recommended security capabilities for onboarding. The deadline for public comments is 8 October 2020.

- **Edited SH** **10 September - US National Science Foundation awards US$1.5 million for designing IoT public infrastructure.** The US National Science Foundation (NSF) granted US$1.5 million to a team of researchers from Cornell University to design the Internet of things (IoT) public infrastructure for the state of New York to improve connectivity in the rural areas of the state. The team will collaborate with community partners in the different counties of New York to set up networks based on low-power wide-area network (LPWAN) technology.

- **Edited SH** **14 September - US House of Representatives passes IoT Cybersecurity Improvement Act**. The US House of Representatives passed unanimously, the Internet of Things (IoT) Cybersecurity Improvement Act. According to the act, all connected devices purchased by the federal government will have to comply with minimum security recommendations as issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The act was introduced in March 2019 simultaneously in the US Senate and the House of Representatives and currently heads to the US Senate for consideration.

- **Edited SH** **14 September- US General Accountability Office publishes report about federal agencyIoT use** The US General Accountability Office published a report about federal agencies' use of Internet of things (IoT) devices and technologies. According to the survey, 56 out of 90 agencies reported using IoT technologies for the following purposes: (a) controlling or monitoring equipment or systems, (b) controlling access to devices or facilities, (c) tracking physical assets such as fleet vehicles or agency property. The agencies also use IoT devices to perform tasks such as monitoring water quality, watching borders, and controlling ships in waterway locks. In the future, many agencies plan to begin or expand the use of IoTs, while 13 agencies announce they do not plan to use IoTs at all. The agencies reported that the main benefits of using IoTs are the ability to collect data to improve operational efficiency and the main challenges in adopting IoT are cybersecurity and interoperability.

- **Edited SH** **16 September – NIST publishes final public draft on securing small business and home IoTs using MUD.** The US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and its National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (NCCoE) published the final public draft of the NIST Cybersecurity Practice Guide Special Publication 1800-15, Securing Small-Business and Home Internet of Things (IoT) Devices: Mitigating Network-Based Attacks Using Manufacturer Usage Description (MUD) for public comments. The guide demonstrates how to use MUD to reduce IoT devices' vulnerability and the potential for harm from exploited IoT devices. The deadline for commenting is 16 October 2020.

- **Edited SH** **22 September – US FDA establishes Digital Health Center of Excellence.** The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) launched the Digital Health Center of Excellence within the Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH). The centre will focus on promoting and creating digital health technology, including mobile health devices, software as a medical device (SaMD), wearable medical devices, and technologies used to study medical products. The centre aims to assist stakeholders in providing digital health technologies to patients, co-ordinating and supporting work being done across the FDA in the topic, promoting best practices in the field, and possibly revising digital health devices regulation.

- **Edited SH** **September 23 – TRAI publishes white paper on smart cities.** The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released a white paper on smart cities in India, a framework for ICT infrastructure. The paper describes the role of digital technologies for smart cities, discusses the key smart solutions, considers the need for global standardisation and connectivity related aspects specific to smart cities, and aims to identify the ICT infrastructure framework needed for creating smart cities. The paper concludes with a series of conclusions: creating a unified, secure, resilient, and scalable digital infrastructure; standardisation; interoperability; developing compliance testing to infrastructure and

ecosystem; securing cyberspace assurance; establishing a national trust centre with a national charter of trust; creating unique secure device identities and unique device addresses; developing an agile cloud strategy; improving data sharing; developing reference architecture and harmonising standards, regulations, and policies.

- **Edited SH** **September 28 - NIST publishes security guidelines for first responders mobile and wearable devices for public consultation.** The US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) published a draft report titled [NISTIR 8235, Security Guidance for First Responder Mobile and Wearable Devices](#) for public consultation. According to the paper, public safety officials will soon have access to smartphones, tablets, and wearables as part of their work. These devices offer new ways for first responders to do their work, but they also pose new security vulnerabilities. This paper provides an overview of the current public safety capabilities of mobile and wearable devices, and guidance for creating secure mobile and wearable devices specifically for public safety. This document includes the following: (a) a list of tests developed to analyse public safety mobile and wearable devices, (b) a collection of best practices and guidance for public safety mobile and wearable devices. The goal is to guide jurisdictions on how to select and purchase secure devices and to assist the industry in creating secure devices for first responders. The deadline for public comments is 30 November 2020.

- **September 29 – US House of Representatives passes the COMPETE Act.** US House of Representatives passes the [COMPETE](#) *Act. The act* is a package of eight bills that were introduced last year and aim to develop strategies for enhancing US competitiveness and ensuring the security of U.S. supply chains. The act includes, among others, the following sections: a study to advance AI, a study to advance IoT in manufacturing, a study to advance quantum computing, a study to advance blockchain technology, a study to advance IoT, and a study to advance IoT (also known as the [SMART IoT Act](#)). The act now heads to the Senate.

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Artificial Intelligence (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)
- European Parliament issued list of use cases for artificial intelligence.
- ~~Portland City Council Votes to Ban Facial Recognition~~
- ITI Submits Comments to the Inception Impact Assessment on Artificial Intelligence
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- **Edited SH** **9 September. US Department of Energy allocates funds for AI research**. The US Department of Energy has announced it will allocate US$ 16 million for advanced research in machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) for scientific investigation and the management of complex systems. Projects to be funded will focus on the development of ML and AI for predictive modelling and simulation for research across physical sciences, as well as on basic ML and AI research for decision support in managing complex processes.

- **9 September. Portland city (USA) introduces restrictions on facial recognition technology.** City authorities in Portland (Oregon, USA) have adopted two ordinances restricting the use of facial recognition technology (FRT). The [first ordinance](#) prohibits the acquisition and use of FRT by city bureaus, except for the following purposes: verification purposes for staff to access their electronic devices, in automatic face detection services in social media applications, and in detecting faces for the sole purpose of redacting a recording for release of disclosure outside the city to protect the privacy of a subject. The [second ordinance](#) prohibits private entities from using the technology in 'places of public accommodation' in the city. The two documents note that the use of FRT raises concerns around privacy, intrusiveness, gender and racial bias, and lack of transparency and accountability, which 'particularly in the context of false positives in law enforcement can create devastating impacts on individuals and families'.
- See sustainable development 14 September: Reimagining global health through artificial intelligence: The roadmap to AI maturity

- Bringing the European Parliament closer to citizens through AI
- USA: Reps introduce Resolution to Create National Artificial Intelligence Strategy
- See Liability of Intermediaries - **15 September – Uber's self-driving operator charged over fatal autonomous car crash**
- European Parliament creates AI committee
- The European Commission has published a report by an independent group of experts on Ethics of Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAVs).
- See IoT - September 23 – TRAI publishes a white paper on smart cities.

Blockchain (Arvin - arvink@diplomacy.edu)
- Blockchain: legal and regulatory guidance report

Emerging technologies (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)

- **2 September. UK launches National Quantum Computing Centre.** The UK Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation has announced the launch of the UK's National Quantum Computing Centre, benefiting from a £93 million investment. The centre will bring together academics, businesses. and the government to work on addressing some of the main challenges of quantum computing, such as scalability.

- 3 September. **International commission issues report on heritable genome editing.** The International Commission on the Clinical Use of Human Germline Genome Editing has issued a set of recommendations on heritable human genome editing (HHGE), noting that the technique raises scientific and medical concerns, as well as ethical, moral, and societal issues. The commission is calling on scientists not to 'attempt to establish a pregnancy with a human embryo that has undergone genome editing unless and until it has been clearly established that it is possible to efficiently and reliably make precise genomic changes without undesired changes in human embryos'. It also notes that an extensive societal dialogue should be held before a country decides on whether to permit clinical use of HHGE. Should a country permit such technique, initial uses should be limited to diseases that cause severe morbidity or premature death. Moreover, the country should have mechanisms and competent regulatory bodies in place to ensure that relevant conditions are met for the clinical use of HHGE. The commission also recommends the establishment of an International Scientific Advisory Panel to, among other tasks, assess whether preclinical requirements have been met for any circumstances in which HHGE may be considered for clinical use.
- European Commission: Study on the use of innovative technologies in the justice field: Final Report
- See Future of Work: **22 September: Facebook previews future of work in virtual reality**

Cybersecurity Basket
(Coordinator: Andrijana)

Cybercrime (Andrijana - andrijanag@diplomacy.edu)
- Norwegian parliament hit by cyber attacks
- Scale Of New Zealand Cyber Attacks Unprecedented: Minister
- European ISPs report mysterious wave of DDoS attacks
- New Zealand Stock Exchange Shut Down by DDoS Cyber Attack
- DDoS Attacks on Virtual Education Rise 350%
- cyber authorities from France, Japan, and New Zealand have warned that email-borne Emotet campaigns are hitting targets in their countries
- Chile : Banco Estado shut down its nationwide operations due to a Ransomware attack
- Two Iranian Nationals Charged in Cyber Theft Campaign Targeting Computer Systems in United States, Europe, and the Middle East

● OFAC sanctions Russian cybercriminals for $16.8 million crypto scam ●

Critical infrastructure (Andrijana - andrijanag@diplomacy.edu)

- USA: Federal agencies deny seeing attacks on voting infrastructure
- The US Space Policy Directive established cybersecurity principles for satellites.
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Cyberconflict and warfare (Vlada - vladar@diplomacy.edu)

- 8 September 2020: **China proposes Global Initiative on Data Security:** Speaking at the international conference 'Seizing Digital Opportunities for Cooperation and Development', Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi announced the Global Initiative on Data Security. In the context of a 'new development of international division of labor', the initiative emphasises the importance of maintaining the supply-chain security of ICT products and services as well as the responsibility and right of states to ensure data security when it comes to their own national, public, economic, and social security and stability.   The initiative invites states and other actors to maintain the global ICT supply chain, handle national data security in an evidence-based manner, and stand against stealing and misusing important data from the critical infrastructure of other states. It also calls for them to oppose mass surveillance against other states, not to request domestic companies to store others' data in their own territory, respect the sovereignty of data of other states,not to obtain data located overseas through their own companies, and utilise judicial assistance mechanisms to obtain data from third countries (even when there is a bilateral data-access agreement between other two countries) for the sake of combating cybercrime. The initiative states that ICT product and service providers should restrain from implementing backdoors, taking advantage of users' dependence on certain ICT products, or forcing users to upgrade their systems, and should commit to the timely notification of partners and customers of critical vulnerabilities in their systems in addition to offering remedies for such vulnerabilities. Stakeholders, namely international organisations, ICT companies, technology communities, civil society organisations, and individuals, are invited to support these efforts.   Reporting on the initiative, the China Global Television Network (CGTN) noted that it comes a month after the USA announced the Clean Network programme, which includes 'purging "untrusted" Chinese apps' in the context of the US decisions against Huawei, TikTok, and Tencent. CGTN also quoted Minister Wang blaming 'some individual countries' of aggressively pursuing unilateralism and 'conducting global hunts on leading companies of other countries under the pretext of security', which should be opposed and rejected. The Diplomat observed that, with this global initiative, China reflects its own concerns on being cut off from accessing Western technology and supply chains, its concerns on their own data security due to foreign surveillance programmes, and its attempts to address Western concerns about Chinese technology.
- Edited DN 22 September 2020: **Stakeholders ask UN General Assembly to focus on digital security and trust:** The World Wide Web Foundation has initiated a letter that calls on the president of the UN GA to place digital trust and security at the forefront of the presidency and the agenda of this UN GA session, and to ensure the inclusion of other stakeholders in this debate, and calls on member states to issue a global statement on digital trust and security, in a follow up of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Co-operation. Dozens of public figures, companies, and organisations have endorsed the letter thus far.
- Edited DN 25 September 2020: **Russian President invited USA to restore co-operation on international information security:** In his official statement, Russian President Vladimir Putin invited the USA to agree on a comprehensive program of measures to restore Russian-US co-operation on international information security (IIS).

The measures include resuming regular bilateral high-level dialogue; maintaining communication through Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers, Computer Emergency Readiness Teams, and high-level officials; brokering a bilateral agreement on preventing incidents in the information space, which could look like the Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas between the USSR and USA; and mutually guaranteeing non-intervention into the internal affairs of one another, including electoral processes. President Putin also invited the USA to continue bilateral expert dialogue 'without making it a hostage' to the political disagreements between the two countries. He also called for a global agreement on a political commitment of states on 'no-first-strike with the use of ICTs against each other'.

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● Microsoft warned that Russian military intelligence is back with more stealthy hacks against both party committees.
● Microsoft's Citizens on Cyberattacks Report shows increasing public concern about nation sponsored cyberattacks.
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● India: "Government Blocks 118 Mobile Apps Which are Prejudicial to Sovereignty and Integrity of India, Defence of India, Security of State and Public Order"
● App ban harms 'investment environment': Chinese Embassy on India banning 118 apps
● The European Cyber Conflict Research Initiative (ECCRI) provides a European venue for academic and policy dialogue on cyber conflict
● The European Union is seeking to give itself new powers to penalise big tech firms, EU commissioner Thierry Breton has told the *Financial Times*.
● North Macedonia strengthens its cyber defences
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●

Violent extremism (Andrijana - andrijanag@diplomacy.edu)
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Child safety online (Amrita - amritac@diplomacy.edu)

● German police conduct nationwide child pornography raids

● 1 Sept: German police raid 50 homes in nationwide online child pornography crackdown

In an attempt to crackdown heavily on distribution of child sexual images online, special police units of German police conducted nationwide raids across 12 states and 50 homes. Authorities shared that during the raid the several mobile devices and computer hard drives were seized and those are being analysed. Authorities believe as many as 30,000 people may be involved in this network.

● **Edited SH** 2 Sept: UK: Children's Code comes into effect

The UK's Age Appropriate Design Code or Children's Code came into effect from 2 September 2020. This code will be applicable to organisations providing online services and products for children up to age 18. Organisations will have a year's time to make the necessary changes to ensure privacy of children are protected. The code sets out 15 standards that the organisations will have to comply with providing children with automatic built-in baseline of data protection whenever they download a new app, game or visit a website.

● INTERPOL report highlights impact of COVID-19 on child sexual abuse

- Research indicates Australia is the third largest consumer of live, online child sexual abuse
- California Legislature Passes Bill Requiring Social Media Companies to Obtain Parental Consent for California-based Children Under 13
- "Perth man, 29, accused of accessing child abuse material online"
- European commission: Interim Regulation on the processing of personal and other data for the purpose of combatting child sexual abuse
- Online child sexual exploitation reports in Australia have surged under coronavirus lockdown, AFP say
- Judge Dismisses New Mexico Lawsuit Against Google Over Children's Data Privacy
- 26 Albertans charged with online child sexual exploitation
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- 7 September: INTERPOL report: Impact of COVID-19 on child sexual abuse online

  According to the International Criminal Police Organization's (INTERPOL) assessment report 'Threats and Trends Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, COVID-19 impact' some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic include an increase in child sexual material online, including discussions on child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) forums on the darknet and under reporting of child sexual abuse.

  The report suggests recommendations for law enforcement to address additional threats presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

  Speaking on the report, INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock said 'What the report shows is that we are seeing just the tip of a growing iceberg in terms of online child exploitation material'.

- **Edited SH** 9 September: Australian Police indicate increase in online abuse of children during lockdown

  Members of the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) report an increase of child exploitation by 122% during the COVID-19 lockdown through April to June. The ACCCE has received 21 000 reports related to child exploitation in the last 12 months ending in July 2020 ,as compared to 14 000 cases that were reported in the same time during the previous period.

  Australian Federal Police (AFP) in New South Wales Co-ordinator Nathan Green, attributed this rise in crime to more people spending time online resulting in offenders getting to spend more time with potential victims. He added that AFP investigators are dealing with up to 30 to 40 investigations simultaneously.

- **Edited SH** 10 September: Parent's Accountability and Child Protection Act passed by California legislature

  The Parent's Accountability and Child Protection Act AB 1138, has been enrolled and presented to the California Governor for his signature. The bill, if approved, will mandate social media platforms and applications to obtain verifiable parental consent for children below 13 years and prohibit businesses from using any data for which consent has been obtained for other purposes from 1 July 2021.

  Initially introduced in February 2019, the bill failed to pass the assembly floor. However, it was granted reconsideration in August 2020.

- **Edited SH** 10 September: European Commission passes interim regulation related to processing of personal and other data to combat child sexual abuse

The European Commission has passed an [interim regulation on the temporary derogation of certain provisions of Directive 2002/58/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the EU Council with regards the use of technologies by 'number-independent interpersonal communications service providers for the processing of personal and other data for the purpose of combating child sexual abuse online'.

- **10 September: Australian-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (ANZCHAM) signs MoU with UNICEF to protect children online**

  [ANZCHAM, on behalf of the SaferKidsPH Consortium, has signed a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF](#) to work together to address issues related to online sexual abuse and the exploitation of children in the Philippines. SaferKidsPH is an Australian government Initiative that is implemented in partnership with Save the Children Philippines, The Asia Foundation, and UNICEF Philippines.

- **Edited MB 17 Sept: Brazilian arrested for creating child sexual abuse material**

  Based on a tip-off from the International Criminal Police Organisation's (INTERPOL) Crime Against Children unit, the [Brazilian Federal Police's Child Exploitation Unit (NURCOP) has arrested a fifty-year-old Brazilian](#) for producing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and managing a Portugese-language forum on the darknet. The offender had posted abusive pictures of minors in several darknet forums which had hundreds of thousands of registered users, and one of those forums is believed to be the largest Portuguese-language child sexual abuse forum on the darknet.

- 22 Sept: TikTok appoints Safety Advisory Council for Asia Pacific

  TikTok has appointed a [seven member 'Safety Advisory Council' in the Asia-Pacific](#) that comprises academics, advocates, and activists who will advise the platform on issues related to online safety, child safety, digital literacy, mental health, and human rights. This advisory council is expected to convene quarterly to discuss issues and submit formal recommendations to TikTok.

- 29 September: Brazil: UNESCO, ITU, and Childhood Brasil to organize webinar to discuss online child safety

  UNESCO in Brazil, Childhood Brasil and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is organising a [webinar "Online Safety of Children and Adolescents: dangers and opportunities"](#) on 30 September. The event is supported by Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (Abert) and the National Association of Newspapers (ANJ).

  The webinar is expected to discuss strategies for national broadband plans by 2021 that prioritize the safety of younger users. The event will release the Portuguese version of the UNESCO-ITU Broadband Commission Report for Sustainable Development. Apart from information on technology, internet, and access for children and adolescents, the report seeks to raise awareness about prioritizing online security, presenting strategies for society, private companies, and governments to work together to combat digital violence and dangers.

- 30 September: Alberta, Canada: 26 people charged for sexual exploitation of children online

The [Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT)' ICE unit (internet child exploitation) have arrested 26 suspects](#) across the sate and charged them with 63 offences related to sexual abuse of children online. Officials speculate this rise due to COVID-19 isolation measures.

This probe was aided by the investigative referrals from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) National Child Exploitation Crime Centre that works with Internet and social media companies to track child sexual exploitation online.

30 September: Scottish Police report growth in online child abuse during COVID-19

Scottish Police Authority's "[The Policing Performance Report Q1 2020](#)" indicates that the there has been an increase in online child abuse and internet grooming during the COVID-19 lockdown. This was attributed to children spending more time online and due to social isolation. To protect children online during the lockdown, in April 2020, Police Scotland launched the #GetHelporGetCaught campaign which is targeted at sexual predators who abuse and groom children online.

Encryption (Vlada - vladar@diplomacy.edu)
- +++16 September 2020: **EU to establish its secure data cloud and e-identity**: [State of the Union Address](#) by the President of the European Commission von der Leyen underlined cybersecurity to be one of the core principles of Europe's Digital Decade, along with the right to privacy and connectivity, freedom of speech, and free flow of data. In particular, the EU is working on establishing the European data cloud, based on the highest standards of data sovereignty and security, to better use and share vast amounts of industrial data in a trusted environment. European Commission will also propose a secure European e-identity, allowing citizens to use it for anything from paying taxes to 'renting a bicycle', yet with a high level of control over how personal data is used. Not least, the EU intends to invest heavily in its secure digital infrastructure, in particular through 5G, 6G and fiber, in order to extend connectivity to rural areas.
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Network security (Ilona - ilonas@diplomacy.edu)
- 17 September 2020: **A patient died after transportation from a German hospital under cyber-attack** ([link](#))
- US DHS cyber agency issues order boosting cybersecurity vulnerability reporting
- Australia: ACSC Annual Cyber Threat Report July 2019 to June 2020
- France: ANSSI publishes guide on ransomware attacks
- NSA Releases Cybersecurity Technical Report on UEFI Secure Boot Customization
- Canada: OSFI launches consultation on technology risks in the financial sector
- UK : Cyber security alert issued following rising attacks on UK academia
- Nigeria: Communications Commission has alerted Nigerians on the increasing incidents of fraud across various internet platforms, especially on social media networks.
- Vietnam: The Ministry of Information and Communications has launched the "Review and remove malware nationwide in 2020" campaign to enhance the country's network security
- US DOJ, through the Joint Criminal Opioid and Darknet Enforcement (JCODE) team joined Europol to announce the results of Operation DisrupTor, a coordinated international effort to disrupt opioid trafficking on the Darknet.
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Human Rights Basket
(Coordinator: Ginger)

Freedom of expression (Ginger - virginiap@diplomacy.edu)
- 3 Sept See Liability of Intermediaries 3 **September – Platform companies request FCC to reject Trump new social media regulations**
- **3 Sept See Liability of Intermediaries - 3 September – Facebook responds three hours of questioning related to political bias by Indian National Congress**
- 16 Sept See Liability of Intermediaries - **16 September – Twitter expands policies against election-related information**
- **18 September: US Department of Commerce bans WeChat and TikTok**
- See: Gender Rights Online, 18 September **Media freedom and female journalists safety online in SEE region** (also tagged: Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Expression)
- **+++27 September Many US news sites unavailable due to GDPR non-compliance** The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) took effect in June after two years of preparation. Yet more than two months later, hundreds of US news websites are still unavailable in Europe because the sites do not comply with regulations, preferring to block EU access rather than adapt. Sarah Toporoff of the Global Editors Network in Paris, said US newsrooms 'are a benchmark for digital innovation – and it's important that their content be available in Europe'. She stated that 'It is naive and wholly irresponsible to think that US news holds no relevance beyond US borders... US brands should be better at knowledge sharing with their European counterparts and learn how to serve audiences within the GDPR's parameters. Not to do so is quite undemocratic'.
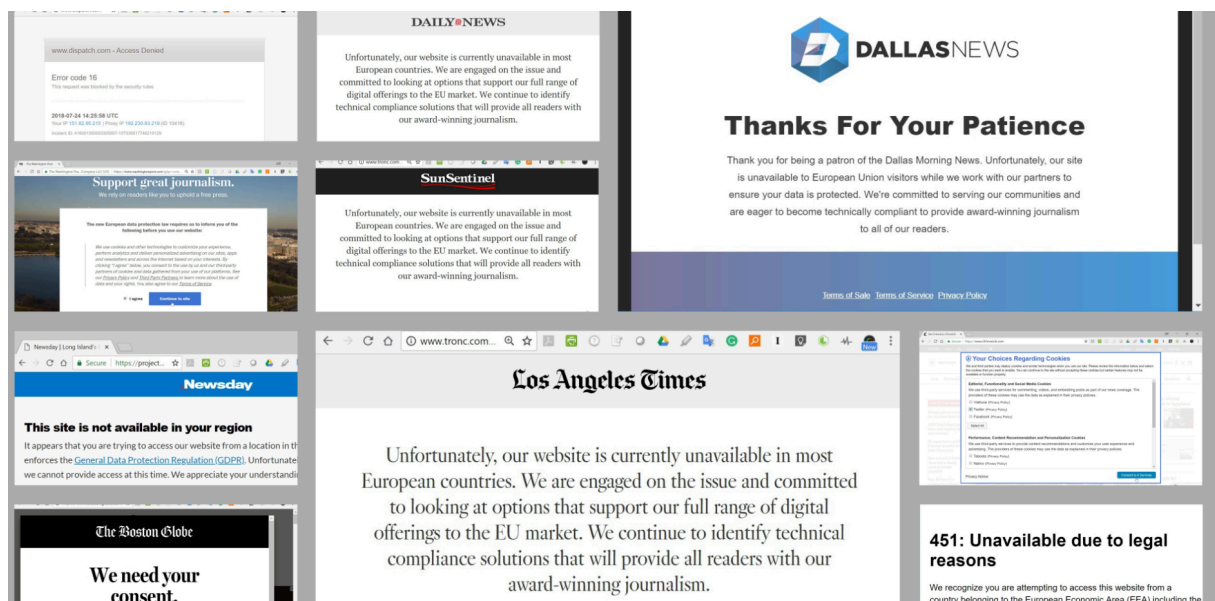
28 Sept See Court temporarily blocks US ban on TikTok downloads

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Privacy and data protection (Clement - clementp@diplomacy.edu)
- The International Committee of the Rec Cross (the ICRC) launched the second Edition of this landmark Handbook on data protection in Humanitarian action.
- New Zealand: Statement on reported data breach involving NSW driver licences
- Belgium: DPA publishes report on the knowledge and understanding of GDPR within SMEs
- European Data Protection Board - Thirty-seventh Plenary session: Guidelines controller-processor, Guidelines targeting social media users, taskforce complaints CJEU Schrems II judgement, taskforce supplementary measures

- India: NITI Aayog launches public consultation on draft Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture
- Texas: Privacy Protection Advisory Council Report - September 2020
- The European Data Protection Board welcomes comments on the Guidelines 8/2020 on the targeting of social media users.
- Switzerland:FDPIC considers CH-US Privacy Shield does not provide adequate level of data protection
- Government DPOs challenged by volume of GDPR work
- Canada: OPC Commissioner urges legal framework with privacy as fundamental right
- Moffitt Cancer Center : Notice to Patients Regarding a Stolen Briefcase
- "Officials Warn Privacy Shield Replacement May Be a Long Way Off / European politicians say changes to U.S. surveillance laws may be required before any substitute agreement is reached"
- "Japan has made changes to its 2005 Protection of Personal Information (APPI) Act, bringing the bill closer in line with the EU's GDPR."
- Washington: Senator seeks public comment on draft bill for Washington Privacy Act
- UK free trade agreement with Japan enables free flow of data
- Singapore: PDPC fines Civil Service Club SGD 20,000 for failures to implement safety arrangements to protect personal data
- Public Health Wales statement on Data breach
- Cloud Industry Unites to Create Global Standard for Transfer of Personal Data following 'Schrems II' ruling
- Canada: "The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC) launched new resources to help businesses manage breaches and follow mandatory reporting and other requirements related to the safe storage of personal information"
- India: Data Security Council publishes report on data transfers between India-US under data protection bill, explores mechanisms for accountable transfers
- Hong Kong: The Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data published its revised guidance on the collection and use of biometric data.
- France: CNIL and Mediator of Companies partner on GDPR compliance and dispute resolution
- Australia: consultation on the Data Availability and Transparency Bill 2020
- UK: Data protection guidance for collecting customer information
- NZ: Privacy Commissioner recommends Ministry of Health and Police review their use and disclosure of Covid-19 patient information
- US: GAO published recommendations to Department of Housing and Urban Development on its data collection and sharing practices.
- Cyprus ratifies Convention 108+
- Facebook Says it Will Stop Operating in Europe If Regulators Don't Back Down
- Patient Breach Victims File Lawsuits Against Assured Imaging, BJC Health
- India: Parliament Committee seeks extension for report on Personal Data Protection Bill
- European Medicines Agency: Guideline on registry-based studies - launch of public consultation
- The California Governor approved Assembly Bill 1281 which extends until 1 January 2022 the exemptions for employee information and business-to-business transactions under the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018.
- France: CNIL and Order of Chartered Accountants partner on GDPR compliance
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2 Sep – EDPB adopts guidelines on the concepts of GDPR controllers and processors

The European Data Protection Board (EDPB) has released its guidelines on the concept of data controllers and processors under the GDPR. The guidelines clarify the concepts of controller, joint controller and processor, as well as their relationships. In doing so, they determine who shall be responsible for compliance with different data protection rules.

Under legal baskets: 8 Sep - Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield no longer considered adequate for Swiss DPA

According to the National Law Review, the Swiss Data Protection Authority (FDPIC) announced that it no longer considers the Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield adequate for the purposes of transfers of personal data from Switzerland to the USA. Following his annual assessment of the Swiss-US Privacy Shield regime and recent rulings on data protection by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) the FDPIC concludes in its position paper, that the Swiss-US. Privacy Shield does not provide an adequate level of protection for data transfer from Switzerland to the US pursuant to the Federal Act on Data Protection (FADP).

7 Sep – CoE calls for greater oversight on intelligence services' international data transfers

According to Euractiv, following the recent decision of the CJEU to invalidate the EU-US Privacy Shield agreement, the Council of Europe (CoE) has stated that this ruling crystallised the importance of charting a binding international agreement for the protection of privacy and personal data. In a statement, the CoE argued that 'this decision has implications beyond EU-US data transfers and raises broader questions relating to international data transfers, providing yet another opportunity to strengthen the universal data protection framework and to address the need for a global legal instrument on intelligence services'.

 See also update to AI: **9 September. Portland city (USA) introduces restrictions on facial recognition technology**.

Edited SH 10 Sep – New study assesses progresses in data privacy practices in Spain

A new report titled '*Who Defends Your Data?'* published by the ETICAS Foundation evaluates the privacy policies of 13 Spanish Internet companies. The findings indicate that a number of actors appear to comply with their obligations under the general data protection regulation (GDPR), though the largest Internet providers in Spain are lagging in terms of transparency around government demands for user data.

10 Sep - Oracle to stop third party data sharing in Europe

According to AdWeek, the company Oracle has announced it would stop offering third-party data targeting services across the EU, Switzerland, the UK. This announcement comes after the launch of a multi-billion US dollar class action against the company for alleged violations of the EU's GDPR.

11 Sep – Facebook appeals Irish DPC order to stop data transfers from Europe to USA

According to the Wall Street Journal, Facebook has appealed the recent Irish Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) order to suspend its data transfers from Europe to the USA. In a statement to

Irish media outlet RTE, a Facebook representative explained that the company is 'to adopt a pragmatic and proportionate approach until a sustainable long-term solution can be reached'.

11 Sep – Transparency International expresses deep concern over Zimbabwe's adoption of new Cyber Security and Data Protection Bills In a joint statement, Transparency International and Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Z) have expressed deep concerns over attempts by theZimbabwean government to fast-track the Cyber Cecurity and Data Protection Bill. According to the civil society groups, although the bill appears to be progressive in strengthening data protection, it contains provisions that undermine the freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Clause 164C of the bill is of major concern, as it would criminalise the spread of what the government classifies as false information online, punishable with a jail term of up to five years, a fine, or both.

See digital health - 4 September: Judge dismisses health data privacy suit against Google and University of Chicago

14 Sep - IBM asks USA to limit facial recognition exports

According to ZDNet, IBM has asked the US Department of Commerce (DoC) to limit the export of facial recognition systems, particularly to countries that could potentially use it for human rights violations. In a letter, IBM call in particular for (a) the updating of the crime control country groups to reflect a country's human rights record; (b) imposing new export controls on '1-to-many' facial recognition software; (c) making any export controls multilateral through the Wassenaar Arrangement or other mechanisms. The letter also indicates that IBM no longer offers general purpose IBM facial recognition or analysis software.

14 Sep - **Irish High Court grants Facebook right to file judicial review against Irish DPC**

According to the European civil society group **noyb**, the Irish High Court has allowed Facebook to file a judicial review against the Irish Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) and a new 'ex officio' procedure by the DPC into EU-USA data flows. In doing so, Facebook has succeeded in stopping the DPC's investigation into EU-USA data flows that are not legal under an instrument called 'standard contractual clauses' (SCCs). Max Schrems, the complainant in the original case, stated: 'It does not come as a surprise that the DPC has again failed to run a proper procedure and was stopped by the Irish courts for now'.

14 Sep – Australian Information Commissioner welcomes ruling on Facebook's Cambridge Analytica case

The Australian Federal Court has rejected Facebook Inc's application to set aside the court's earlier ruling granting the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) leave to serve legal documents on the US based company in a Cambridge Analytica investigation. In the ruling, Justice Thawley was satisfied that the OAIC had established a prima facie case that Facebook was conducting business, and collecting and holding personal information in Australia at the relevant time. According to the Guardian, the OAIC alleged the data of 311 127 Australians was exposed by Cambridge Analytica in total.

Edited SH **14 Sep - Public Health Wales publishes 18 000 COVID-19 test results by mistake**

According to the BBC, the details of more than 18 000 people who tested positive for the Coronavirus were published online by mistake by Public Health Wales in the UK. The incident was the result of 'individual human error' after the results were uploaded to a public server. Public Health Wales stated that the data of 18 105 Welsh residents was viewable online for 20 hours on 30 August.

14 Sep – Personal data of 46 000 US veterans exposed in data breach

According to CNN, the US Department of Veterans Affairs said that 46 000 veterans had their personal information exposed in a data breach. Unauthorized users' gained access to an online application

used for making healthcare payments, and compromised the data of US veterans, including their social security numbers. This attack was designed to divert payments to community healthcare providers for the medical treatment of veterans.

15 Sep – Zhenua Data database with personal information of 2.4 million people leaked

According to Vice, the personal information of more than 2.4 million individuals from several countries (including the USA, Australia, and India) have been leaked from a secret database owned by Chinese company Zhenhua Data. The database compiled information of individuals (as well as their relatives), such as birth dates, addresses, marital statuses, political associations, and social media identifications from social media accounts. The intended use of the database is still unclear, but the company provides 'services for military, security and foreign propaganda'.

15 Sep – CPJ calls to revise Nigeria's draft data protection legislation

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has joined a coalition of 100 global civil society groups to submit comments on Nigeria's draft data protection bill, which is undergoing a public consultation process. The submission said that the bill should 'protect those fulfilling their duty as journalists' from censorship under the law, and 'define data in such a way that ensures journalistic reporting, including on individuals, is explicitly protected'. In a statement, the CPJ argued that the draft bill would allow authorities to 'ignore the law based on 'national security' interests', expressing concern 'given the prevalence of such rationale to restrict critical reporting and retaliate against journalists and media organizations'.

18 Sep – CNIL signs agreement with business mediator to support businesses GDPR compliance during pandemic

The French data protection agency, CNIL, has launched a partnership with the French business mediator (*médiateur des entreprises*), to support GDPR compliance by businesses. This collaboration will help provide assistance to economic actors facing difficulties in applying the GDPR in their contractual relations, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Edited MB 17 Sep: US senators release new federal consumer privacy bill

Senate Republicans have introduced a draft bill 'to establish data privacy and data security protections for consumers in the United States'. According to Bloomberg, Senator Chairman Roger Wicker released the consumer privacy bill with senators John Thune (R-S.D.), Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), and Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) as co-sponsors. The bill proposes to establish individual consumer data rights and a requirement that businesses allow consumers to access, correct, delete, or port their data.

Edited MB 21 Sep: Irish civil society documents new adtech data breach

According to TechCrunch, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) has published a new body of evidence to support its two-years legal complaint against the unlawful exploitation of personal data via the programmatic advertising real-time bidding (RTB) process. In a submission directed to the Irish data protection commission (DPC), ICCL argued that the RTB process is the 'most massive data breach yet recorded, involving millions of websites and apps, and hundreds of billions of individual data leaks per day'. It highlights, for instance, that a data broker company using RTB data to profile people, influenced the 2019 Polish parliamentary elections by targeting LGBTQ+ people.

Edited MB 21 Sep: Canadian privacy commissioner to hear First Nations' complaints about COVID-19

According to CBC, British Columbia's information and privacy commissioner will investigate a complaint by a coalition of First Nations over a lack of information from the British Columbia province

about the spread of COVID-19. Indigenous leaders allege the Health Ministry violated the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act by failing to quickly disclose locations of COVID-19 cases, and whether an infected person had travelled to a particular Nation's territory within the previous 14 days.

<mark>Edited MB</mark> 22 Sep: Indian digital health plan raises privacy concerns

According to the [Thomson Reuters Foundation](#), the Indian government is pushing its plan to digitalise health records despite concerns about privacy and increased surveillance. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced the launch of the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) under which unique Health IDs will be created to hold digital health records of individuals. For Raman Jit Singh Chima, Asia policy director at Access Now, 'it will possibly be the largest centralised health ID and data storage system in the world, and it is being done in the absence of a data protection law and data protection authority'.

<mark>Edited MB</mark> 22 Sep: <mark>MEPs concerned over plan to establish police facial-recognition database</mark>

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who are on the EP's Civil Liberties Committee, have discussed EU plans to establish a common facial-recognition database for police authorities. According to [Euractiv](#), as part of a planned extension of the EU's 2008 Prum Decision, EU member states have proposed that police authorities be given powers that permit them to share facial images. As the European Parliament only plays a consultative role in reviewing the agreement, MEP Sergey Lagodinsky (Greens) suggested that a deeper fact-based assessment of the potential ramifications of the new system should take place.

22 Sep – Civil society group releases updates regarding its 101 complaints on EU-US data transfers

In August, *noyb*, a European civil society group, filed 101 complaints against several companies based in Europe for failing to comply with the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) judgement of 16 July 2020. This judgement deems data transfers to Google and Facebook in the US under the Privacy Shield illegal because Google and Facebook are subject to US surveillance laws. As of 22 September, only two companies and one university have [contacted](#) *noyb* – all of them based in Liechtenstein. They were able to prove that they had removed code elements for Google Analytics and Facebook Connect from their websites. *noyb* subsequently withdrew the complaints against these entities before the Liechtenstein data protection authority. At the EU level, the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) has set up a [special task force](#) to deal with the 101 complaints.

23 Sep - Brazilian agency launches first lawsuit for LGPD violations

According to the [International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP)](#), Brazil's Public Ministry of the Federal District and Territories launched the first [lawsuit](#) for violations of the country's General Data Protection Law (LGPD). The lawsuit was filed against a Brazilian IT company that allegedly sold the personal data of half a million individuals.

23 Sep – CNIL releases guidance on collection of employee data in the context of COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the French data protection authority, CNIL, has released [guidance](#) on the measures to be implemented to limit the spread of the virus, as well as the conditions under which personal data - particularly health data - may be used. The CNIL recalls certain principles regarding security obligations, workplace practices, and temperature checks.

23 Sep – European Commission expresses concerns over future of UK data protection regime

According to Euractiv, the European Commission has expressed concerns over the future of certain aspects of the UK's data protection regime, which could negatively impact the safety of EU personal data in the context of cross-border data sharing. The EU is currently conducting an assessment of the UK's data protection legislation to make a determination of 'adequacy', in order to determine if EU data can safely be transferred to the UK after Brexit.

27 September See FoE **Many US news sites unavailable due to GDPR restrictions compliance**

See Jurisdiction 30 September: **Israeli Privacy Protection Authority declares Privacy Shield inadequate**

25 Sep – Airbnb discloses new data breach

According to ZDNet, Airbnb has confirmed that a "technical issue" allowed Airbnb hosts to access inboxes that did not belong to them. The data breach gave inadvertent access to some users, though Airbnb says they were not able to modify any of the leaked data. Several screenshots appear to reveal information including host names and profile pictures, booking earnings, the number of bookings over a 30-day period, and property views.

28 Sep – Students express privacy concerns over remote exam monitoring software

According to ZDNet, students all over the world are rising up against the forced use of proctoring software. In the University of Texas at Dallas, students are asking for the removal of the software Honorlock, claiming it is a "blatant violation of our privacy as students and infeasible for many." The Electronic Frontiers Foundation (EFF) has documented a global pushback from students against remote exam monitoring software through dozens of petitions. For instance, a petition by the students at Washington State University, which has over 1,700 signatures, raises concerns that ProctorU, another software, is not secure, pointing to a July 2020 data breach in which the information of 440,000 users was leaked.

29 Sep – US officials call for clarity in EU-US data transfers after Schrems II ruling

The U.S. government has released a white paper on privacy safeguards relevant to standard contractual clauses (SCCs) and other EU legal bases for EU-U.S. data transfers after Schrems II. In a statement, two high ranking US officials argued that 'the need for constructive and good faith engagement between the EU and the United States on cross-border data issues has never been more urgent', as 'the operative rules remain decidedly unclear'. They also claimed that 'Schrems II does not implicate only commercial data transfers in the tech and digital sectors. To the contrary, the decision has potential implications on transatlantic information-sharing in areas like the health sector, including in ongoing medical research and clinical trials regarding treatments and vaccines for COVID-19; in law enforcement and intelligence cooperation, as the EU and U.S. face ever-dangerous threats to public safety and national security; and in EU financial institutions' participation in U.S. financial markets, as both societies collectively confront unprecedented economic challenges'.

29 Sep – Brazil's courts under pressure in the absence of a data protection authority

According to the [International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP)](#), Brazilian courts may face a backlog of privacy cases in the absence of a functioning data protection authority. As the imposition of administrative sanctions based on the new Brazilian general data protection regulation (LGPD) has been delayed until August 2021, immediate civil litigation remains however possible. Brazil's Public Ministry of the Federal District and Territories has already [filed the first lawsuit](#) for LGPD violations over the alleged sale of 500,000 citizens' personal information. Despite the fact that the LGPD was accompanied by an executive order that a data protection authority should be established, the authority is not yet functioning.

29 Sep – CNIL launches partnership to support GDPR compliance by SMEs

The French data protection authority (CNIL) has [launched](#) a partnership with the Supreme Council of the order of Chartered Accountants (le Conseil supérieur de l'ordre des experts-comptables) to support small and medium enterprises in complying with the rules of the General data protection regulation (GDPR). The purpose of this agreement is to disseminate a culture of "protection of personal data" among accountants, both for the compliance of their own structure but also in their role of proximity to companies, especially the smallest; and enable all professionals to protect themselves against abusive practices in the sector.

Right to be forgotten (Clement - clementp@diplomacy.edu)
●

Rights of people with disabilities (Ginger - virginiap@diplomacy.edu)
● 4 Sep 2020 - 12:00 GSMA Innovation Fund for Assistive Tech is now open - see sustainable development

● **Edited MB 18 Sept: AI and other tech must assist disability groups**

Artificial intelligence [(AI) powered chatbots](#) are joining other inclusive technologies to support accessibility for persons with disabilities, as important for current spikes in service requests about COVID-19. Hearing impaired assistance is advancing, and AI chatbots also, 'in particular, people who have physical or mental disabilities are among the groups often not considered when discussing inclusion plans. If we are going to live in a world where everyone is equal, then people of all types need the same access to information'. This approach was highlighted by ypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology policy to create a virtual chatbot accessible via the [Tamkeen](#) website or via a mobile app called WASEL, currently available on Android devices and soon Apple devices (in Arabic).

Gender rights online (Aida - aidam@diplomacy.edu)

● ITU and EIF join forces to reduce the digital gender divide in Burundi, Ethiopia and Haiti (updated below)

7 September **Reducing digital gender divide in Burundi, Ethiopia, and Haiti**

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) [have launched](#) a joint project aimed at enhancing the digital ecosystem and binding digital skills for women in the least developed countries (LDCs). The project addresses the current gender digital divide, which according to the ITU, has widened in LDCs and developing countries since 2013. Women in Africa use the Internet 12% less compared to men. In African LDCs, the disparity goes up to 31%. This project will focus on women in Burundi, Ethiopia, and Haiti. The project will also work on capacity building at

the policy level with the aim to increase governments' abilities to mainstream gender and information and communication technologies (ICTs). Three specific project focuses are:

- Working with governments and other decision makers to ensure that digital economy policies are gender responsive.
- Working with organisational partners of the local ecosystem to prepare working age women to navigate the digital world.
- Working with the private sector to create economic opportunities for working age women in the digital world.

'Finding innovative ways to close the gender digital divide is critical. We need to empower women in local communities to properly use ICTs and to maximize impact at the economic and social level. This project focuses on the right sectors, the right communities, and the right entrepreneurs to do just that,' said Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau. This project is a contribution to the **EQUALS Global Partnership** and part of EIF's **Empower Women, Power Trade** initiative.

- **Edited MB** **18 Sept: Media freedom and safety of female journalists in SEE** (also tagged: Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Expression) +

The seventh South East Europe Media Conference (SEEMC) titled 'The New Frontline: Working together to Foster Media Freedom' took place online. It was organised by the office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media (FRoM) and the OSCE Mission to Serbia, in co-operation with other OSCE field operations in Southeastern Europe (SEE).

Journalists, media experts, civil society organisations, law enforcement representatives, and the judiciary discussed the online aspects of the safety of journalists, the fight against impunity for attacks on journalists, and safeguarding freedom of expression. Director of OSCE RFoM Jürgen Heissel reminded that 57 OSCE participating states have pledged to the OSCE's Ministerial Council Decision 'Safety of Journalists', adopted in 2018.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the media faced public demand for information, as well as challenges with reliable data retained by public authorities, and an increased spread of fake news in relation to COVID-19. Participants exchanged personal experiences and good practices for establishing effective national mechanisms for co-ordinated responses to threats and violence against journalists and other media professionals. Heissel underlined the crucial role of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary in protecting and ensuring a safe and conducive media environment, both online and offline.

Cases of violence against female journalists have been presented in a form of storytelling. Women journalists also shared their challenges with being present online while in doing their job, the online threats of sexual violence, intimidation, and gender discrimination. OSCE RFoM developed a new Safety of Female Journalists Online Resource Guide which underlines important actions for each of the stakeholders towards strengthening the safety of female journalists online.

Freedom of the Press (Mili - milis@diplomacy.edu)
- See: Gender Rights Online, 18 September **Media freedom and female journalists safety online in SEE region** (also tagged: Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Expression)
- +++Sept 11: **Pakistan's Prime Minister denies threats to press freedom**
  Prime Minister Imran Khan said in a media report that there is no crackdown on the press in the country. "I don't mind criticism but there is blatant propaganda against the government. Unfortunately, it is the government who feels unprotected, not the media," Khan told Al Jazeera.

  The arrests of editors and threats of violence against journalists however tell a different story.

Mir Shakilur Rehman, editor-in-chief of the Jang group, the largest media organisation in Pakistan, and who has been in pretrial detention since March 12, 2020, would likely disagree.

Rehman had been arrested in Lahore by the government's National Accountability Bureau (NAB), an anti-corruption agency, on charges relating to a 34-year-old property transaction. Rehman, 63, had requested bail on grounds of ill-health, but on July 8, the Lahore High Court denied his request.

According to a [Human Rights Watch report](), reporters, editors, and producers at the Jang Group have received more than a dozen threatening letters for its critical reporting of the NAB since 2018.

GEO TV, a private television channel that is part of Jang Group, was temporarily forced off the air and audience access was restricted as punishment for editorials criticizing the government.

- +++Sept 22: **Singapore government is investigating media outlet New Naratif**

Singapore police briefly detained PJ Thum, the founder and director of New Naratif. Rights groups say it is the latest incident in a series of attacks on free media in the Southeast Asian city-state, [as per a DW report](). The security officials searched Thum's residence and seized his laptop.

Launched in 2017, New Naratif, has already had several issues with the government. This time it was accused of publishing unauthorized paid advertisements on Facebook during the July election campaign, which, according to the country's Elections Department, constitutes "illegal conduct."

Thum told DW, that they reported facts about Singapore and did not engage in electoral activities.

Authorities in the city-state have refused to register the company, accusing it in April 2018 of receiving "foreign funding." New Naratif denies the charge.

- +++Sept 24: **Hong Kong issues new guidelines for journalists**
  Hong Kong police decided to limit access to restricted areas and press briefings to outlets registered with the government or internationally recognised media.

  As per the new rules, police will no longer recognise press accreditations issued by local media groups or journalist associations, unless the reporters are working for outlets registered with the government's Information Services Department or reputable news organisations.

  Local media [SCMP reported](), that press associations and Hong Kong journalism schools blasted the new restrictions, warning of a threat to the city's press freedom, with one union so far threatening legal action.

Children's rights (Amrita - amritac@diplomacy.edu)

- YouTube faces £2.5BILLION landmark legal battle for allegedly breaching the privacy of millions of British children
- **UNICEF guidelines on AI and children's rights**

24 September: UNICEF seeking comments on draft guidance on AI and children's rights

As a part of the Artificial Intelligence for Children Policy project, UNICEF is seeking public comments up to 16 October on its draft guidance to promote children's rights in government and private sector AI policies and practices and to raise awareness of how AI systems can uphold or undermine the rights of children. Drawing upon the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the guidance presents three foundations for AI policy that upholds the rights of children: AI policies and systems should aim to protect children, ensure equity for children's needs and rights and empower children to contribute to the development and use of AI.

Human rights principles (Jacob - jacobo@diplomacy.edu)

- **1 September: Experts warn: High-tech tools to fight COVID-19 pose their own risks**
  According to a news article, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the development and deployment of a range of technologies meant to combat its spread. These technologies that come in the form of tracking apps to infrared cameras, however, pose a real threat to individual digital rights and privacy, a research has found. The research by Germany's AlgorithmWatch monitored the technology in use across 16 European countries to combat COVID-19. The research reached the conclusion that despite the urgency to bring the pandemic under control, there is a need to ensure proper oversight so that the technologies will not undermine human rights, but rather be compatible with democratic checks and balances and protect citizens' rights.

Legal and Regulatory Basket
(Coordinator: Pavlina)

Jurisdiction (Pavlina - pavlinai@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited SH** **1 September: New Chinese export rules complicate TikTok sale**

  China has updated its export control rules to include several sensitive technologies. One of the technologies added as needing an export control license sounded much like TikTok's personalised recommendation engine, New York Times reported. The new rule would mean that the Chinese ByteDance would need a license to sell its TikTok technology to a US company.

- **Edited SH** **3 September: Court rules NSA's bulk collection of phone records illegal**

  The US Court of Appeals for the ninth circuit has decided that the National Security Agency (NSA) metadata program collecting billions of phone records was illegal since it violated the US Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The NSA metadata program began without authorisation of the court after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks to connect targets of interest. Similar programmes were approved in 2006 and renewed several times. Details of the NSA metadata programme were exposed by Edward Snowden in 2013.

- **Edited SH** **7 September: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights weighs in on EU Digital Services Act**

  The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, has sent a letter to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, regarding the draft Digital

Services Act. In the letter, the high commissioner stressed the importance of the EU Digital Services Act in strengthening human rights online, specifically by:
- Establishing rules and processes for inclusive participation,
- Requiring transparency on functioning of platforms,
- Limiting takedown requirements for content which is strictly illegal,
- Enhancing the redress mechanisms for unjustified decisions by digital services.

- **Edited SH** **8 September: Swiss DPA statement: Privacy Shield does not provide adequate data protection**

  In a statement, the Swiss Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner has declared that it no longer considers that the EU-US Privacy Shield provides adequate personal data protection in the USA for Swiss citizens. The announcement is based on the review of the privacy shield agreement by the Swiss DPA following the decision of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) in the Schrems II case.

- **Edited SH** **9 September: Facebook to stop transferring personal data to USA**

  Facebook has received a preliminary order from the Irish Data Protection Commissioner (DPA) to suspend transfers of personal data of EU citizens to the USA, the Wall Street Journal reported. This is the first enforcement effort of the Schrems II decision of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) from 16 July 2020. In a statement, Facebook has called for clear, global rules for data transfers underpinned by the rule of law; and stated that it will continue to transfer data in compliance with the recent CJEU ruling and until they receive further guidance.

- **Edited SH** **11 September: Japanese Trade Commission accepts Amazon's improvement plan**

  The Japan Trade Commission (JTC) has accepted Amazon.com Inc. Japan's improvement plan as part of the investigation of Amazon's potential antitrust violations. Amazon Japan has been investigated by JTC for misusing its dominant position after online retailers had to partly cover costs of discounts applied on goods by Amazon, and Amazon requested that suppliers pay system usage fees and marketing costs up to 10% of the delivery prices.

  In the approved improvement plan, Amazon Japan has committed to return roughly ¥2 billion (US$18.8 million) to about 1400 suppliers. This way the investigation by the JTC is closed and JTC will not issue a decision on whether Amazon violated antitrust law.

- **Under privacy data and protection: 14 September: Preliminary order to stop data transfers from Ireland to USA under court review**

  The preliminary order by the Irish Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) to suspend personal data transfers by Facebook from Ireland to the USA is now under judicial review of the Irish High Court. The preliminary order, which is part of an investigation on how Facebook transfers personal data of users to the USA after the Schrems II judgement, is now on hold awaiting decision of the court.

- **Edited SH** **14 September: ByteDance to partner with Oracle in US TikTok**

  ByteDance, the Chinese owner of TikTok has partnered with Oracle to comply with US President Trump's executive order to sell or divest US TikTok operations. The partnership between ByteDance and Oracle was part of a proposal submitted by ByteDance to the U.S. Treasury Department, in which Oracle would serve as TikTok's 'trusted technology provider'. The deal needs to be approved by the US government.

- **Edited SH** **18 September: US Department of Commerce bans WeChat and TikTok**

As of 20 September 2020, the [US Department of Commerce (DoC) has prohibited any provision of service to distribute or maintain the WeChat or TikTok mobile applications](), constituent code, or application updates through an online mobile application store in the USA. Further, the DoC has prohibited any provision of services through the WeChat mobile application for the purpose of transferring funds or processing payments within the USA. In addition, as of 20 September 2020, for WeChat and as of 12 November 2020 for TikTok, the DoC prohibits any provision of Internet hosting services, content delivery network services, Internet transit or peering services, and the utilisation of constituent code, functions or services enabling the functioning or optimisation of WeChat and TikTok in the USA.

The reason for this ban according to the DoC is that 'Each [WeChat, TikTok] is an active participant in China's civil-military fusion and is subject to mandatory cooperation with the intelligence services of the CCP. This combination results in the use of WeChat and TikTok creating unacceptable risks to our national security'.

- **Edited DN 23 September: Thailand takes action against Facebook and Twitter to comply with takedown orders**

In a first, the [Thai Ministry of Digital Economy and Society has filed legal action]() - a complaint with cybercrime police - against Facebook and Twitter for not complying with takedown orders. The ministry did not disclose details of the content in question or indicate what laws it had violated. The complaints were filed against the US parent companies and not their Thai subsidiaries. Facebook and Twitter are facing either fines or criminal charges for not complying with the takedown orders.

- **Edited SH 19 September 2020: China Unveils 'Unreliable Entity List' of overseas organisations**

China's Ministry of Commerce released [details about its 'Unreliable Entity List', an anticipated list of foreign organisations with trade restrictions]() - prohibiting or limiting imports, exports, and investments from companies taking 'discriminatory' measures against a Chinese organisation or person, or deemed a danger to China's national security.

- **Edited DN 25 September: TikTok to disclose algorithms to Australian government**

With [concerns over the national security implications]() of TIkTok, Australian TikTok executives were questioned by the [Australian Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media](). The TikTok representatives had to address questions about the app's ties to China, where the data of Australian users is stored, where the content moderators are located, and whether there is content moderation specifically targeted to exclude the topic of Uighur Muslims. [According to Reuters](), in their written submission: 'TikTok said qualified government personnel could review its algorithm and test its source code at a transparency and accountability centre in Los Angeles in the United States and another to be built in Washington, or through virtual tours of the centres'.

- **Edited DN 25 September: European Commission to appeal judgement on Apple state aid case**

The Executive Vice President of the European Commission, Margrethe Vestager, [issued a statement]() announcing that the European Commission (EC) will [appeal the decision of the General Court of the EU]() from July 2020. This judgement annulled the EC decision from August 2016 that Apple owed Ireland €13 billion in unpaid taxes because of an alleged tax arrangement that had amounted to illegal state aid.

As reasons for the appeal, Vestager stated: 'The General Court judgment raises important legal issues that are of relevance to the Commission in its application of State aid rules to tax

planning cases. The Commission also respectfully considers that in its judgment the General Court has made a number of errors of law'.

Other parties to the case - Ireland and Apple - have already appealed the judgement. The appeals will be decided by the European Court of Justice.

- **Edited DN 27 September: Court temporarily blocks US ban on TikTok downloads**

  In an emergency hearing, the [US District Court for the District of Columbia has issued preliminary injunction](#) against the executive order of President Donald Trump blocking app stores from allowing any new downloads of or updates to TikTok. The second part of the executive order scheduled to go into effect 12 November blocking US services from supporting TikTok (no optimization, no CDNs, no peering) and from using TikTok's API was not subject to the injunction.

  According to the [Washington Post](#), the judge said that 'this was a largely a unilateral decision with very little opportunity for plaintiffs to be heard'.

  A TikTok spokesperson [issued a statement that TikTok is pleased](#) with the court decision. The [US Department of Commerce published a statement](#) saying that 'the [US] Government will comply with the injunction and has taken immediate steps to do so, but intends to vigorously defend the Executive Order and the Secretary's implementation efforts from legal challenges'.

- **Edited DN 28 September: European Parliament committee votes on DSA package**

  In a vote in the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee of the European Parliament, MEPs mapped out how digital services - including online platforms and marketplaces - should be regulated by the Digital Services Act (DSA) package. The vote comes after the 8 September closure of public consultations for the DSA.

  The [committee recommendations](#) include issues of obligations related to transparency and information for online marketplaces, product safety online, effective enforcement and supervision measures (including fines), the spread of illegal content online, artificial intelligence (AI), and *ex-ante* regulation to prevent (instead of merely remedy) market failures caused by big platforms.

  The Digital Services Act package is due to be presented by the end of 2020.

- **30 September: Israeli Privacy Protection Authority declares Privacy Shield inadequate**

  The Isreali Privacy Protection Authority [issued a position paper](#) on implications of the Schrems II decision on transfers of personal data from Israel to the USA.

  While Israel is not party to the Privacy Shield arrangement, the [Israeli law allows for the transfer of personal data from Israel](#) to target jurisdictions that receive personal data from EU member states under the same terms of those EU member states. The Israeli Privacy Protection Authority now declared that the Privacy Shield is not an adequate mechanism for transfer of personal data from Israel to the USA and that other mechanisms under the Israeli law shall be used.

  Japan anti-trust regulator accepts Amazon Japan improvement plan - see above 11 Sept update

See digital health - 4 September: Judge dismisses health data privacy suit against Google and University of Chicago

Prosecutors open homicide case after hacker attack on German hospital

See DP and Privacy - **23 Sep - Brazilian agency launches first lawsuit for LGPD violations**

See digital health - 23 September: EU regulators extend deadline for decision on Google-Fitbit merger

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Alternative dispute resolution (Pavlina - pavlinai@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited SH** **12 September: Singapore Convention on Mediation enters into force**

  The UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation (Singapore Convention) has entered into force as of 12 September 2020. Currently signed and ratified by 53 countries, the Singapore Convention aims for businesses to rely on mediation as a dispute resolution option for their cross-border transactions, with greater certainty and assurance that their mediated outcomes are enforceable.

- **Edited SH** **14 September: Beijing opens up to foreign arbitration**

  The State Council of China published a policy paper on opening up the services sector in Beijing announcing that foreign arbitral institutions will be allowed to set up 'business organisations in designated area(s) in Beijing'. The aim of these business organisations is to provide arbitration services in relation to civil and commercial disputes in international commerce and investments, as well as application and enforcement of measures related to arbitration proceedings. As stated by Herbert Smith Freehills, the policy paper 'signals further liberalisation and opening up of commercial arbitration practice in Mainland China'.

- **Edited SH** **24 September: Facebook oversight board to launch mid-October**

  According to Reuters, Facebook's oversight board is planned to start its work right before the US elections. The 20 member board will initially review only individual appeals over posts that Facebook has taken down.

Intellectual Property Rights (Pavlina - pavlinai@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited SH** **1 September: Facebook to stop news sharing in Australia if new rules apply**

  In a statement on services in Australia, Facebook has declared that it will stop news sharing, if the Australian News Bargaining Code is adopted. The draft of the Australian News Bargaining Code aims at balancing the power between large tech companies (specifically Facebook and Google) and the Australian media publishers in negotiations over compensation. Facebook claims that they '... are left with a choice of either removing news entirely or accepting a system that lets publishers charge us for as much content as they want at a price with no clear limits'. According to the Wall Street Journal, the Australian media companies have supported the proposed regulation, saying it will prevent social media giants from walking away from negotiations over payment.

- **Edited SH** **10 September: AG Szpunar opinion: Embedding works in web page via automatic links requires rightsholder authorisation**

The Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) Advocate General Maciej Szpunar issued an opinion in Case C-392/19 VG Bild-Kunst v Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz stating that embedding works from other web pages with clickable links using the framing technique does not require copyright holder's authorisation. However, the embedding of such works by means of automatic links, used to embed graphics and audiovisual files, requires the authorisation of the work's rightsholder.

- **Edited SH** **14 September: China leads in blockchain and AI patents**

  The support of the Chinese government and updated guidelines on patent examination has confirmed China's leadership status in the blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI) patents. China has accounted for three times as many blockchain patent applications and is leading the way with 4636 AI patent applications, almost 4 times as many as the USA.

- **Edited SH** **24 September: WIPO launches database of judgments on intellectual property**

  The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has launched the WIPO Lex-Judgments, a free database of leading judicial decisions related to intellectual property (IP) law from around the world. The database aims to contribute to the understanding of how courts deal with IP issues in different jurisdictions. The WIPO Lex-Judgments currently contains approximately 53 000 documents from 10 countries.

Liability of intermediaries (Ana Maria - anamariac@diplomacy.edu)

3 September – Tech platforms request FCC to reject President Trump's new social media regulations

Major online platforms including Facebook, Amazon, and Google urged the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reject the federal administration's request to restrict online platform's ability to remove objectionable content. US President Donald Trump filed a petition before the FCC in August seeking more rules to prevent platforms from removing third party content. Businesses highlighted that the new rules could result in a lack of legal protection for removing 'fraudulent schemes, scams, dangerous content promoting suicide or eating disorders to teens, ad a wide range of other types of objectionable content'. The FCC also received support from the Democrats to reject the federal administration request. So far, Twitter has warned President Trump's followers to fact check his tweets. In the USA, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act protects online platforms from liability for third party content, but also allows them to remove objectionable posts.

3 September – Facebook to notify third parties about vulnerabilities in their codes

Facebook has made a policy change that it will allow the company to notify third party developers when it finds a security vulnerability in their code. Developers have 21 days to acknowledge the notifications with a report and 90 days to fix the vulnerabilities. In case third party developers do not fix it, Facebook will make the bug details available to the public. This new 'vulnerability disclosure policy' was implemented to safeguard a fair treatment for all third party developers. Facebook manages hundreds of third party apps and millions of lines of code that provide services to Facebook users around the world. The platform finds security bugs through in-house analysis tools, such as Pysa and Zoncolan. The policy is made to help avoid bugs in third party apps to affect general Facebook users. In the past decade, Facebook has found vulnerabilities in many third party apps, but not all of them were fixed in a timely manner.

6 September – Facebook launches webpage to warn WhatsApp users about security concerns

Facebook has created a dedicated webpage to warn all vulnerabilities and security issues related to WhatsApp.This page includes all past and present security bugs on WhatsApp. The page has a brief description and common vulnerability and exposure (CVE) identifiers of bugs. The page also warns users to keep their app up-to-date to prevent future attacks. The company has highlighted that this webpage represents its commitment to transparency.

10 September –CJEU Advocate General issues opinion to support taxi app is an information service provider

The Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) Advocate General Szpunar holds that a virtual service that puts taxi passengers with taxi drivers in touch is an information society service (ISS). The app is used by the company S.C. Star Taxi App SRL, established in Bucharest, Romania. The app makes it possible for passengers to run a search which displays a list of taxi drivers available for a trip. The app does not forward bookings to taxi drivers and does not decide the price of the trips, which is paid directly to the driver at the end of the journey. The Bucharest Municipal authority had set the obligation (Decision 626/2017) for the App to apply for a public authorisation for 'dispatching'. Star Taxi appealed the decision, alleging that it breached the European Directive on Electronic Commerce. The directive forbids EU member states from requiring any special authorisation for ISSs to operate in their countries. The Advocate General reasoned that because the app does not directly select the drivers and does not decide their fares, it shall not be considered part of the transportation company, but instead only an information service provider. Alternatively, in December 2017, the CJEU had ruled that the Uber app was not only an information service provider, but also a transportation company. The difference between Uber and Star Taxi is that Uber books drivers via algorithms and decides the fares. It is worth mentioning that the opinion of the CJEU Advocate General is not binding but has proved to influence final rulings of the CJEU over the years.

1 September – Amazon supports bill that holds online retail platforms liable for third party wrongdoings

A California consumer protection bill proposal called AB 3262, which seeks to hold electronic retail marketplaces liable for third party wrongdoings, has Amazon's public support. E-commerce platforms heavily count on third party vendors. Half of Amazon's profit was due to third party transactions in 2019. Recently, Amazon was held liable by a court of appeals in California for injuries caused to a woman who had bought a laptop battery from a third party seller through Amazon's intermediation. After the case, the AB 3262 proposal was introduced. Traditionally, in the USA courts have ruled that online retailers of third party products are immune to any tort liability by positioning them as Internet service providers (ISPs). Section 230 (c) of the Communications Decency Act exempts ISPs from third party liability. Supporters of AB 3262 stand that virtual retailers shall have the same liability standards as physical stores. Amazon backed the bill if all stores, including online intermediaries, are held to the same liability standards. Amazon's support has faced criticism from smaller platforms that claimed that they would not be able to absorb third party damages.

3 September – Facebook responds to three hour questioning by Indian National Congress related to political bias

Facebook was accused of interfering in India's democratic elections and of being negligent on applying its hate speech policy in India. The parliamentary panel on IT posed more than 100 questions about the functioning of Facebook in India and required answers in writing. The ruling party and the opposition alleged the platform is biased. The parliament requested explanations from Facebook after the media had reported that the platform's moderators are forced to go easy on ruling party members, which violates the hate speech norms of the company. Facebook responded by stating it is committed to a non-partisan approach and opposition to hate and bigotry in all forms. The Indian National Congress acknowledged Facebook's response, but said that it awaits further concrete action and

specific corrective measures in India. It reiterated that the media report on Facebook bias in the country is heavily documented and incontrovertible.

15 September – Uber's self-driving operator charged over fatal autonomous car crash

The back up driver of an Uber autonomous car that killed a pedestrian in Arizona, USA, in 2018, has been charged with negligent homicide, after lengthy investigations by the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). Investigators found that the car's safety driver was streaming a television show episode at the precise time of the accident. The autonomous car's safety driver should have acted to prevent the accident. The accident is believed to be the first pedestrian casualty of self-driving technology. It has raised questions about whether Uber or the driver should be held responsible for the death. A state prosecutor's officer stated Uber would not face criminal liability for the accident. Investigators attributed the accident mostly to human mistake.

16 September – Twitter expands election related information policy

Twitter has expanded its policies on election related misinformation, by either adding fact-checking labels or hiding tweets that have 'false or misleading information that causes confusion' about elections; ' officials and institutions executing' elections; tweets with unverified information about 'election rigging, ballot tampering, vote tallying, or certification of election results'; and 'misleading claims about the results' of elections which 'calls for or could lead to interference with the implementation of the results of the process', including 'claiming victory before election results have been certified, inciting unlawful conduct to prevent a peaceful transfer of power or orderly succession'. The platform says it will label or remove posts that break the rules, but it did not provide details of which processes will be used to determine whether a tweet shall be removed or just labeled. In the past, Twitter hid US President Donald Trump's tweet that encouraged supporters to vote twice, which is illegal under US law.

16 September – EU Commission assesses effectiveness of Code of Practice on Disinformation

The European Commission has released the assessment of the outcomes of the Code of Practice on Disinformation in its first year of implementation. The commission considers that the code has been a valuable instrument to fight against disinformation by providing a framework for a structured dialogue between relevant stakeholders to safeguard the transparency of platform policies on the issue within the EU. However, the assessment revealed several shortcomings: (a) the absence of relevant key performance indicators to indicate the effectiveness of platform policies to fight against misinformation; (b) the lack of transparent procedures, commonly shared definitions of misinformation and more reliable commitments; (c) the absence of data allowing independent evaluation of emerging trends and threats posed by disinformation; (d) the lack of co-operation between platforms and the research community; (e) the necessity to involve the advertising sector.

Edited SH 16 September – EU Commission releases reports on platform actions taken to fight COVID disinformation

The European Commission has published the first baseline reports on the actions taken by signatory platforms of the Code of Practice on Disinformation. Some of the reports highlight the initiatives taken by Google to give prominence to articles published by EU fact-checking organisations, which created more than 155 million impressions on Google Search. LinkedIn sent a curated news summary 'European Daily Rundown' to more than 10 million users. Facebook and Instagram directed news from health authorities, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), to more than 2 billion users. Twitter challenged more than 3.4 million suspicious accounts targeting COVID-19 discussions. All signatory platforms have facilitated COVID-related ads from public health authorities and limited third party advertising linked to COVID-19 disinformation to prevent advertisers from capitalising on them. The reports contain information related to Google, Mozilla, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, and Microsoft.

<mark>Edited SH</mark> 23 September: Twitter expresses regret for racist algorithm

Twitter users consistently noticed when a photo with a black face and white face appears in the same post, Twitter often only shows the white face on mobile phones. The platform announced it had tested its algorithms for bias before implementing them and it did not find evidence of racial or gender bias in their testing. Images have been cropped automatically to prevent them taking up too much space on the main feed. Twitter uses several algorithmic mechanisms to focus on parts of the pictures considered more important. This is an attempt to ensure that faces and text remain visible to users using the platform through their mobile phones. Recently, a white researcher posted an image of himself close to his black colleague. Twitter's algorithm erased the part of the image with the black person. Another experiment showed that the algorithm consistently cropped the former president Barack Obama when he was in an image side-by-side with a white person. Twitter has apologised for the racist algorithm and committed to work to fix its racial bias.

23 September: US Justice Department unveiled a legislative proposal to reform online platforms' immunity

The legislative proposal seeks to reform Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which provides liability immunity for online platforms' over third-party content. The core of the proposal consists of holding online platforms liable for distributing illegal material or content when it does it in bad faith. Furthermore, it suggests several reforms to ensure platforms are transparent on their decisions when removing third-party content and liable for speech they modify. In a meeting with a group of state attorneys general aimed at discussing the reform proposal, President Donald Trump admitted his administration is watching the performance of online platforms with regards to the presidential election. He claimed that a few companies have tightened their grip over commerce and communications in America, and added that "countless American are banned, blacklisted and silenced through arbitrary or malicious enforcement of ever-shifting rules".

24 September: Facebook removed hundreds of coordinated attacks from fake accounts against foreign and domestic politics

Facebook announced it has removed two separate networks based in China and the Philippines for violating the policy against coordinated inauthentic behaviour (CIB). The network of accounts coordinately acted to mislead users about foreign and domestic politics. In total, the platform removed 155 accounts, 11 pages, 9 groups and 6 Instagram accounts originated in China, and 57 accounts, 31 pages and 20 Instagram accounts, from the Philippines for violating its policy against foreign government interference. The activity focused primarily on the Philippines, Southeast Asia more generally and the USA. In Southeast Asia, where the network focused most of their activity, they posted in Chinese, Filipino and English about sensitive subjects such as Beijing's interests in the South China Sea, more specifically Hong Kong. In the USA, the network posted content in support of and against presidential candidates Pete Buttigieg, Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

See Jurisdiction: 28 September: European Parliament Committee votes on DSA package

India: TRAI releases Recommendations on Regulatory Framework for Over-The-Top (OTT) Communication Services

Twitter expands rules against election-related misinformation, setting up showdown with Trump

Facebook to warn third-party developers of vulnerable code

Facebook Launches New Website to Inform Users About WhatsApp Bugs

South Africa: UCT deep dive into xenophobia on Twitter

La justice européenne valide la loi française qui régule les locations Airbnb

A service that puts taxi passengers directly in touch, via an electronic application, with taxi drivers constitutes an Information Society service - CJEU AG Opinion

India addresses social media platform regulation and government access

Facebook removed two separate networks originated in China and Philippines.
for violating its policy against coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB)

Sept. 23 U.S. Justice Department proposes changes to internet platforms' immunity

Sept. 28 Uber can continue operating in London

Convergence and OTT (Ana Maria - anamariac@diplomacy.edu)

14 September – **India's regulatory authority releases recommendation on OTT framework**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released recommendations for a regulatory framework for over-the-top (OTT) communications services in India. The authority has recommended that the market forces to be allowed to respond to user demands without any regulatory intervention from the state. However, developments might be monitored and intervention shall occur as felt necessary in an appropriate time. Furthermore, no regulatory interventions are currently necessary in respect of issues related to the privacy and security of OTT services. Finally, TRAIhas advised that it is not an opportune moment to implement a comprehensive regulatory framework for OTT services.

16 September – Uber commits to become a zero-emission platform by 2040

Uber announced that it will use only electric cars in the USA, Canada, and Europe by 2030 and by 2040 in the rest of the world. To meet these goals, Uber has committed to implementing measures in four key areas. (1) Rewarding drivers for switching to electric vehicles (EVs), (2) investing in multi-modal transport, (3) being transparent on climate impact, (4) collaborating with policymakers. The platform has promised US$ 800 million to support drivers transition to EVs by 2025. This amount will be partly funded by the Uber Green Programme, which allows riders to request a ride in an EV or hybrid vehicle for an extra US$ 1. This programme will be implemented in more than 65 cities by the end of 2020. Uber is also collaborating with carmakers to extend attractive offers on EVs to drivers. Uber is partnering with GM in the USA and Canada; and with Renault-Nissan in Europe. The platform is also joining forces with innovative companies, such as Ample, which offers a robotic alternative to EV battery charging. Uber has also committed to strengthen its collaboration with government stakeholders. In London, the company launched the London Clean Air Plan and aims to achieve the transition to all-electric by 2025. In France, Uber is also launching a Clean Air Plan, which allocates money to help French drivers to buy EVs. To enhance the use of EVs in Europe, Uber released a white paper that outlines the road map for partnerships with public and private leaders in EU cities to achieve 100% all-electric vehicles. To comply with its transparency commitment, Uber released its first Climate Assessment and Performance Report. The report analyses data from 4 billion rides intermediated by the platform in the USA and Canada between 2017-2019. Uber had the support from several institutions, including the World Resources Institute, the California Energy Commission, the European Federation for Transport and Environment, and the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Edited MB 17 Sept: Airbnb responds to EU consultation on forthcoming Digital Services Act

Airbnb submitted its response to the European Commission's proposed Digital Services Act and detailed the sort of general framework it supports. Public consultations on the Act, which will regulate

digital services, are now closed. Airbnb welcomed the legislative initiative, considering it is an opportunity to 'update the EU's rules to make Europe's platform economy stronger, more trusted and more competitive'. Airbnb explicitly supported key areas of the Act involving the aspects of: (a) safety and trust; (b) a clear and updated European digital framework for platforms providing digital services; and (c) more data transparency. The platform highlighted that its main values rely on safety and trust to protect its users. So far, Airbnb has limited booking for those younger than 25, has banned events, and has created a detailed cleaning protocol. Furthermore, regarding data transparency, Airbnb requested additional clarity on what the data-sharing clauses of the act may imply. Currently, the platform has signed several data-sharing agreements with EU national governments.

==Edited MB== 22 Sep: **CJEU upheld French law that regulates short rentals such as provided by Airbnb**

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) has validated the French law intended to regulate the rental of apartments for short periods of time, in a case between the city of Paris and two owners using the Airbnb platform. This decision was eagerly awaited because many European cities, including Paris, are facing housing shortages, and have tried to legislate the fight against the phenomenon of tourist rentals on Airbnb. The CJEU has decided that national regulation subjecting users to have public authorisation to rent their properties through the platform is in conformity with EU law.

Data governance (Pedro - pedrov@diplomacy.edu)
- UK launches National Data Strategy
- China : Global Initiative on Data Security
- Quebec: Minister requires bar owners to keep customer registers
-

Digital legacies (Nagisa - nagisam@diplomacy.edu)

- ==Edited SH== **3 September: Saskatchewan, CA introduces Fiduciaries Access to Digital Information Act**
  Saskatchewan government in Canada enacted the Fiduciaries Access to Digital Information Act, becoming one of the first Canadian provinces to enact a legislation protecting fiduciary's access to the digital assets of a deceased person. The legislation defines digital assets as: (a) any information stored on a computer and other digital devices; (b) content uploaded into websites, ranging from photos and documents; (c) rights in digital property, such as domain names or digital entitlements associated with online games and material created online. The act grants a fiduciary the right to access the digital assets of the individual which they are in the fiduciary relationship with, unless a will of the deceased prohibits it.

- ==Edited SH== **8 September: New York legislators pass bill to protect post-mortem rights**
  The New York State Legislature in the USA passed a bill that extends the protection of one's right of publicity after death. The bill, once signed by the Governor of New York, would create a new right of publicity of the deceased, whose publicity rights (e.g. name, likeness, photograph, voice, and signature) have commercial value at the time of their death or because of their death. The bill would also create liability for the use of deep fakes and the deceptive use of digital replicas of a deceased 'performer' if such use would likely deceive the public into thinking the use was approved by the deceased person or its estate. The bill defines a performer as an individual who lived in New York at the time of death and who regularly engaged in singing, acting , dancing, or playing a musical instrument. The bill would ensure post-mortem rights for 40 years after the individual's death.

  https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/germany-federal-court-of-justice-clarifies-scope-of-postmortem-access-to-social-media-accounts/

- **15 September: German federal court clarifies scope of postmortem access to social media accounts**
  The Federal Court of Justice of Germany (BGH) clarified the scope of access to the Facebook account of a deceased individual in a decision. In July 2018, the BGH made a decision that stated that user agreements for social media accounts are inheritable, thus parents of the deceased user must be given the same access rights as the original user. In response to this decision, Facebook provided a USB flash drive with a PDF document that contains the unstructured account data of the deceased user to the plaintiffs, the parents of a 15-year-old girl who was killed by an incoming train. The parties disputed whether this action by Facebook fulfilled its obligation to the defendant.

  The BGH ruled that 'providing access' to the user account of a deceased must allow the plaintiffs to access the account and its content in the same way as the deceased, with the exception of actively inputting content. The court clarified that 'accessing' does not mean merely transferring the content of the account to the plaintiffs. Therefore, access to the account is inadequate; Facebook must enable the plaintiffs to access the account itself.

Economic Basket

(Coordinator: Arvin)

E-commerce and trade (Pedro - pedrov@diplomacy.edu)
- Germany: Bundeskartellamt issues 2019 annual report in Digital Economy
- **22 September**: Negotiations on e-commerce taking place under the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) will be fast tracked against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing importance of digital trade. E-commerce was expected to be part of AfCFTA's 'phase 3' negotiations, but the topic has been shifted to 'phase 2', which also includes negotiations on competition policy, intellectual property rights, and investment. AfCFTA members are also speeding up negotiations on the taxation of e-commerce platforms. Discussions under phase 2 are expected to begin early 2021.
- **22 September**: G20 Trade and Investment Ministers issued a statement following their virtual meeting in September. They highlighted 'the critical role that the digital economy and electronic commerce have played in helping sustain economic activity through the COVID-19 pandemic and in ensuring the continued operation of supply chains and delivery of essential goods and services'. In parallel, they also noted that the pandemic has underscored the challenge of the lack of access to the digital economy for many vulnerable citizens and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Among the non-binding policy guidelines suggested by the ministers to boost MSMEs competitiveness were measures to enhance the transparency of terms and conditions of cross-border sales on digital platforms and the deployment of digital connectivity infrastructure. The ministers also discussed the urgency of implementing the G20 Action Plan on Trade and Investment to support businesses and workers on the economic recovery from COVID-19.
- **17 September**: **Facebook announces new e-commerce tool for small businesses**
  Facebook announced its new platform for small businesses willing to engage in e-commerce. Called the 'Facebook Business Suite', the interface allows users to post to Facebook and Instagram at the same time, and to manage and receive messages, notifications, and alerts in a single place. They can also analyse post results from both Facebook and Instagram faster and more effectively.
- **16 September** (also digital business models): The UN Economist Network launched the report 'Shaping the trends of our time'. The publication identifies five mega trends which are some of the most important factors driving fundamental societal change. The mega trends were listed as: climate change; demographic shifts, particularly population ageing; urbanisation; the emergence of digital technologies; and inequalities. These trends are deeply interlinked and will have a decisive impact on achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). With

regards to digital technologies, the report underscores the interplay between digital and other divides. It suggests that international and national policies should enable the building of domestic capabilities to create and capture value in the digital economy. Countries should make use of policies on innovation, finance, entrepreneurship, and digital connectivity. These policies should include, for example, nimble and adaptable ICT regulation, data policies – which could involve the development of national data strategies -, and addressing the growing market concentration in the data economy. The report develops an in-depth analysis in four areas: advanced robotics, computer-aided manufacturing, additive manufacturing, and machine learning. These areas present extreme concentration, with ten countries leading the world on production and trade: the USA, Japan, Germany; China, Taiwan, Province of China, France, Switzerland, the UK, the Republic of Korea, and the Netherlands. Large parts of the world remain excluded and present very low or no activity in these areas, including when it comes to imports, suggesting the gap is not being bridged.

Digital business models (Ana Maria - anamariac@diplomacy.edu)

16 September – Uber launches contactless payment tool for US restaurants

Uber has launched the tool Uber Eats Contactless Order Feature, which enables customers to pay their restaurant bills via the app in the USA. The aim is to prevent exchanges of heavily touched items, including credit cards, pens, and credit card machines. Clients can both scan a QR code at the restaurant they are having the meal or find the restaurant on the Uber Eats app for takeout. Indianapolis, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Vermont, Atlanta, New York City, and Washington D.C. are the first to get the dine-in payment option.

16 September: see e-commerce and trade

14 September – Uber included voter registration to its apps in the USA

As part of Uber's 2020 'Get Out the Vote' policies, users can register to vote or request a vote-by-mail ballot in the Uber and Uber Eats apps in the USA. The platform is partnering with TurboVote to assist its riders, eaters, drivers, and delivery contractors to vote in the next presidential elections in November. In addition, on election day, the platform will help users find their polling location within the Uber app and provide rides to and from the polls with discounts. The director of national registration day Lauren Kunis noted that with the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of voter registrations have not been made. The platform affirms to be proud to use their technology to assist eligible US citizens get safely to the polls on election day.

Coming up on 01 October: CJEU judgement on online distribution of medicines

Consumer protection (Jacob - jacobo@diplomacy.edu)

- Vietnam: MIC clarifies fines for spam and illegal advertising through OTT apps under new decree
- Australia: Digital platform services inquiry 2020-2025
- UK: ICO fines company £130,000 for unauthorised pensions cold calls
- USA - Promoting Caller ID Authentication to Combat Illegal Robocalls
- USA: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Releases Outline of Proposals Under Consideration to Implement Small Business Lending Data Collection Requirements
- NY: Attorney General James Gets Dunkin' to Fill Holes in Security, Reimburse Hacked Customers

- Ireland: "A [dossier of evidence](#) detailing how the online ad targeting industry profiles Internet users' intimate characteristics without their knowledge or consent has been published"
- Globex Telecom and Associates [Will Pay $2.1 Million](#), Settling FTC's First Consumer Protection Case Against a VoIP Service Provider
- US: The Federal Communications Commission [adopted of new rules](#) to promote the implementation of the STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication framework to protect consumers against malicious caller ID spoofing.

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- See Convergence and OTT. **17 September: Airbnb responds to EU consultation on forthcoming Digital Services Act**

Taxation (Mamadou - mamadoul@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited MB 10 Sept: Spain to tax instant messaging providers based on revenue**

Spain is planning [to impose a tax](#) for all companies that operate telecommunications services. Under a new draft law published for consultation, levies would be imposed on instant-messaging providers in the same way as on telecoms operators. The tax will thus apply to operators which provide telecommunication services without having to provide phone numbers. These companies would have to register as telecommunications operators and would be taxed based on revenue. Currently, only phone operators that can provide phone numbers need to sign up as telecom operators.

- **Edited MB 16 Sept: EU to go alone in digital tax reform by the end of 2020**

The EU [is planning to propose its own digital tax](#) on Internet giants if no agreement is reached on a global level for updating taxation rules in the digital era, said EU President Ursula von der Leyen in her speech on the State of the Union at the European Parliament Plenary. She also stated that Europe will push for an agreement in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the G20, but failure in negotiations will see the EU going for its own proposal on digital tax on tech companies at the end of the year.

So far, the OECD has been working on a proposed international agreement to address the tax challenges of the digitalised economy. 140 countries have been discussing a rewrite of global tax rules to bring them in line with the digital age.

- **See Jurisdiction 25 September: EU Commission to appeal judgement on Apple state aid case**
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Future of work (Ana Maria - anamariac@diplomacy.edu)

Edited MB 15 Sept: Youth Summit deepen the dialogue around the opportunities and challenges of the future of work in Canada

Around [120 youth leaders](#) from Canada gathered online to debate about the post-COVID-19 future of work. During the #ffwd2020 summit, they identified the most urgent issues related to the future of work, including universal basic income, financial literacy, the gig economy, community mobilisation, and inequality. Young leaders who participated in the summit are developing concrete projects to address the challenges related to the future work. These projects will be eligible for post-summit funding by the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) Foundation . The foundation is also contributing with CAD$200 000 to help young participants to work on their projects for six months after the event.

Edited MB 22 Sept: Facebook announces smart glasses for 2021

Facebook will launch smart glasses in 2021 that will enable virtual reality (VR) meetings for work. The platform is partnering with EssilorLuxotica for developing the glasses. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has announced that the smart glasses will pave the way for Facebook's eventual development of augmented reality (AR) glasses. So far, Facebook's experience is focused on the future of work. It has launched a new edition of VR headset Oculus Quest 2 and new headsets for businesses resources. Zuckerberg himself has admitted he had already held his first management team meeting entirely in VR. The experience is considered better than the current online collaboration tools, because individuals have a shared sense of space and a specially designed audio system. Facebook admitted that it is 'going to be the most social platform ever'.

Cryptocurrency (Arvin - arvink@diplomacy.edu)
- **Big European states call for cryptocurrency curbs to protect consumers** **The European** EU Parliament released report on the development of digital finance and the risks associated with cryptoassets
- Ant Group launches blockchain based-platform to help SMEs with cross-border trade
- EU proposes first bloc-wide 'passport' for crypto-assets
- EU to set up a new college of supervisors, including national and European authorities, to oversee "significant" digital currencies

Development Basket

(Coordinator: Tereza)

Sustainable development (Noha - nohaf@diplomacy.edu and Natasa - natasap@diplomacy.edu)

Edited SH NP 2 September: **UN Secretary-General highlights digital connectivity at virtual High-Level Meeting on Generation Unlimited**

Speaking at the virtual High-Level Meeting on Generation Unlimited, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres underscored that online education and digital technologies are the principal foundations for achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that digital connectivity, in particular, for educational institutions, is detrimental and has been portrayed as such in the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.

The event saw several world leaders including presidents of Kenya and Rwanda who shared their experience in engaging the youth through tech projects such as Digi School and GIGA. The president of the World Bank, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and private sector representatives also participated in the meeting. The participants reiterated their support to connect every school and community to the Internet by 2030.

The Generation Unlimited initiative was launched in 2018 in order to help youth benefit from education, employment, and entrepreneurial benefits.

NF 2 October: **'Digitober' launched by Greater Manchester to fight digital exclusion**

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) launched 'Digitober' initiative to combat digital exclusion through announcing October as a month focused on bringing together businesses from across the region to help close the digital divide. To this aim, GMCA is organising a number of events with a specific focus on Greater Manchester's commitment to digital and addressing digital exclusion as well as inequalities across the region. This includes a Digital Leaders Week (panel discussions by

[Barclays Digital Eagles](#), [Diverse and Equal](#), and [Stockport DigiKnow Alliance](#)), Switch to Digital Week (webinars and panel discussions for people exploring a career change to find out more about working in the sector), and Get Online Week (held by the [Good Things Foundation](#) to help people gain and improve their digital skills).

NF 3 Sept: **Singapore progresses digital inclusion project for seniors**

Through the [Seniors Go Digital programme](#), Singapore's [Infocomm Media Development Authority](#) (IMDA) and the [SG Digital Office](#) (SDO) are [working](#) to enhance the digital skills of 100 000 seniors by March 2021. The IMDA and SDO will further launch e-Payment Learning Journeys via live demonstrations and hands-on experiences to develop skills on how to use e-payments. To complement this initiative, the IMDA rolled out the Mobile Access for Seniors scheme for low-income seniors which provided more than 800 low income seniors with smartphones and data plans. Additionally, the IMDA provides seniors with smartphones alongside a four-week programme to help them acquire the necessary digital skills to use their smartphones meaningfully.

NF 4 September: **GSMA Innovation Fund for Assistive Tech is now open**

With the support of the UK's [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#) (FCO), the GSMA [launched](#) the Innovation Fund for Assistive Tech which addresses barriers to digital inclusion of people with disabilities with special focus on access; affordability; relevance; knowledge and skills; and safety and security. The target groups are start-ups, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and social enterprises in Africa and Asia. Successful projects will receive an equity-free grant between £100 000 and £250 000 to scale their innovation over a 15-18 month period. Applications are open until 16 October 2020.

NF 6 Sept: **Leveraging innovation and partnership for food security in Asia and the Pacific**

The [Thirty-fifth Session](#) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC 35) was [convened](#) virtually between 1-4 September 2020 where governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector underscored the importance of innovation, solidarity, coherence, and partnerships among and within countries. During the event, participants acknowledged how agricultural innovation can reduce back-breaking drudgery, while regional food chains can benefit from innovations such as drones, satellite imagery, big data, and blockchain technologies. To this aim, the significance of big data, digital economy, and mobile technology in helping producers achieve such transformations was emphasised. 'Leveraging data, innovation, and technology has shown that, here in Asia and the Pacific, we have brilliant minds, scientists and an entrepreneurial spirit that will lead us through the challenges presented by COVID-19 and help us conquer malnutrition and poverty,' noted FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu.

NF 7 Sept: **ITU and EIF join forces to reduce the digital gender divide in Burundi, Ethiopia and Haiti**

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the [Enhanced Integrated Framework](#) (EIF) [announced](#) a joint project to promote the digital ecosystem and improve digital skills for women in least developed countries (LDCs). The project aims to address the ongoing digital gender divide by matching job market supply and demand while facilitating the entrepreneurial activities of women through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). To this aim, the project will focus on nationwide fieldwork by: (a) working with governments and other decision makers to ensure that digital economy policies are gender responsive, (b) working with organisational partners and other members of the local ecosystem to prepare working-age women to navigate in the digital world, (c) working with the private sector to create economic opportunities for working-age women in the digital world.

Edited SH NF 7 Sept: **Egypt to establish financial services and digital transformation investment fund**

The Egyptian government approved a decree to establish an investment fund to help boost the non-banking financial services sector and promote digital transformation. The sub-fund, which will be affiliated to The Sovereign Fund of Egypt (TSFE), will support the Egypt 2030 vision for sustainable development. The Minister of Planning and Economic Development Hala El-Said highlighted that the fund will cover non-banking financial services, digital transformation, financial inclusion, insurance services and brokerage, real estate finance, commercial factoring, micro-finance, portfolio management, and financial investments. According to the decree, the fund's capital stands at EGP30 million and its issued capital is EGP500 million.

NF 7 Sept: **ITU and WHO launch ad hoc group on digital health technologies to combat COVID-19**

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Health Organization (WHO) launched an Ad-hoc Group on Digital Technologies for COVID Health Emergency affiliated with the ITU-WHO Focus Group on Artificial Intelligence for Health commissioned to establish best practices in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) at each life cycle of a public health emergency. The ad hoc group, which is open for all interested parties to participate, will review AI and other digital technologies' performance in combatting COVID-19 to build clarity around effective technology approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic and future health emergencies. 'Digital interventions have been used throughout the COVID-19 response to strengthen the health system, implement public health measures, and engage society. These solutions will also play a role in the transition to living with COVID-19, in ongoing risk assessment, and in helping health services cope with the challenges of pulsed containment,' said co-Chair of the ad hoc group and China Academy of Information and Communications Technology Shan Xu. The ad- hoc group meets online every Monday).

NF 8 Sept: **Mastercard and Asian Development Bank build multistakeholder alliance to digitalise supply chains for wholesalers and retailers**

With the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a new alliance between Mastercard, N-Frnds, SGeBIZ, and Finastra was formed to create technology solutions to drive greater digital efficiency across the retail supply chain in Asia and increase wholesaler access to credit. The alliance aims to cater a technology solution that provides two key benefits. First, wholesaler access to credit where Mastercard will leverage supply chain data from N-Frnds, SGeBIZ's digital procure-2-pay platform and other sources to partner with Finastra and its Trade Bank customers to automate access to working capital finance. Second, fully digitalised marketing campaigns through integrating digital payments and supply chain data with promotions, FMCG trade spend can be allocated more efficiently with better visibility and inclusion of small and medium enterprise (SME) retailers. The program will start in Indonesia with 500 retailers and aims to build to 5000 retailers by the end of Q1 2021.

NF 8 Sept: **Abu Dhabi launches open data platform to boost economy**

'Abu Dhabi Open Data' is a new open data platform launched by the Department of Government Support in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) aiming at creating a digital ecosystem that provides quick and safe access to reliable data sources. The platform is also meant to enable public and private sectors to exchange and share open data with users, start-ups, and academic institutions to promote public services, enhance decisionmaking, and reinforce the economy. To this aim, it covers 10 key sectors: agriculture, environment, health, transportation, society, economy, tourism, education, energy, and technology. During the first phase of the platform, 23 government entities are taking part in the open data sharing process in order to contribute to Abu Dhabi's digital transformation strategy.

NF 8 Sept: **The future looks smart, ISO report says**

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published a new series of standards that map the information technology needs of smart cities under the title: Information technology – Smart City ICT reference framework – Part 3: Smart city engineering framework. The document describes a framework, structured in layers of information and communication technologies (ICTs), key for smart city operations. The framework also maps ICT techniques for various system entities in order to

support the smart city's business, knowledge management, and operational systems from both the horizontal and vertical engineering layers and systems.

Edited MB NF 8 Sept: A4AI and UNESCAP partner to advance affordable Internet access in Asia and the Pacific

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) announced a new partnership to promote affordable Internet access and meaningful connectivity in the Asia and Pacific region through policy and regulatory reform. The partnership will work mainly towards developing training curriculums, delivering capacity building, and sharing workshops for policymakers from the region, as well as conducting a joint study on assessing effective policy options for meaningful broadband connectivity in Asia and the Pacific. Through this collaboration, the two entities will further support the harmonisation of the regional policy processes to ensure that both parties are working together to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDG).

NP 9 Sept: **SDSN and Esri launch 2020 ArcGIS StoryMaps Competition for SDGs**

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and Esri, a geographic information system (GIS) software company have launched the 2020 ArcGIS StoryMaps Competition for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The objective of the initiative is to combine maps, data, and other multimedia content with text in order to advance public understanding and raise awareness on SDGs.

Edited SH NP 10 Sept: Defra releases 'Greening government: ICT and digital services strategy 2020-2025'

The UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has released a strategy entitled 'Greening government: ICT and digital services strategy 2020-2025' that assesses how the UK government can ensure responsible and resilient digital services that align with the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs), Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan, and the government's Net Zero commitment by 2050. The strategy highlights that despite the fact that digital technologies can help address global climate change challenges, they are also part of the problem and contribute to pollution. Among other things, the document sets out targets such as the improvement of management of resources and waste and the procurement of sustainable technology and digital services.

Edited SH NP 10 Sept: Humanitarian Data and Trust Initiative launched

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Government of Switzerland, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Centre for Humanitarian Data have established the Humanitarian Data and Trust Initiative (HDTI) that aims to promote the protection and responsible use of humanitarian data. The initiative was announced at the launch of the second edition of the Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action.

Edited SH NF 10 September: Mastercard and HSBC launch partnership to promote sustainable and inclusive communities

HSBC and Mastercard revealed a new partnership to support sustainable urban development. Through this partnership, both partners will bring their collective resources, expertise, and integrated urban development frameworks to the City Possible network with special focus on:

- How cities and their suppliers are adjusting to COVID-19 and addressing the imperative for resilience, sustainability, and inclusion.
- The expansion of the network to include more of the locations where HSBC is active and more of the business clients that provide city systems and urban services.
- Greater interaction between business clients and government entities to drive innovation and spur demand for green financing.

The partnership hinges on an approach to green financing around sustainable infrastructure projects in net zero cities across the globe.

Edited MB **NF 10 Sept: African ICT students compete to represent sub-Saharan Africa in Huawei's Global ICT Competition**

Under the theme of 'Connection, Glory, Future', Huawei launched the sub-Saharan Africa finals of the Huawei Global ICT Competition via an online opening ceremony. The competition covers 14 countries and attracts over 50 000 students. The opening ceremony was attended by information and telecommunication technology (ICT) companies and students, alongside the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). During the event, Huawei Southern Africa VP Liao Yong said that 'the digital divide is actually widening under the new normal caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As people migrate more work and study online, the digitally disadvantaged people are hit harder.' Huawei launched this competition in the region five years ago, and since then, it was developed into one of the largest ICT skills competitions in Africa.

NF 10 September: **Further education faces problems in remote learning in the UK, Jisc reports**

Jisc published a report arguing that shaping the digital future of further education (FE) and skills in the UK requires investment, insight, and collaboration. In co-operation with the Association of Colleges (AoC), the report was developed through a participatory approach that hinged on data collected through a series of roundtables and research webinars where hundreds of practitioners from across the FE sector participated. The report examines the best ways for campuses to reopen and offers recommendations to the government, sector bodies, and colleges in order to realise the potential of technology to benefit the FE and skills sector. In this vein, it accentuates the need to address significant problems in the move to more remote learning; particularly calling for the UK government to provide access to funding for digital devices and connectivity in order to support disadvantaged learners in overcoming digital exclusion. 'There are other challenges, too. For example, there is a lack of affordable and accessible digital resources and assessment tools, which means that courses such as engineering, construction, or hospitality and catering are impossible to deliver entirely online' noted Jisc's managing director of further education and skills Robin Ghurbhurun.

NF 10 September: **Angola partners with Huawei to improve ICT training and technical infrastructure in higher education institutions**

Huawei Technologies and the Angolan Ministry of Higher Education signed an agreement of co-operation to develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills and improve technological infrastructure in higher education institutions in Angola. This co-operation is meant to improve the teaching and learning processes in the country's higher education system. To this end, the two partners plan to better equip ICT training institutions and repair the existing infrastructure in such facilities.

+++NF 11 September: **UK government boots up sustainable ICT strategy with new net zero obligation for suppliers**

The UK published a policy paper titled Greening government: ICT and digital services strategy 2020-2025, which outlines the endeavours of the government to achieve the UN sustainable development goals (SGDs) and its national climate targets. The strategy focuses on how the government is planning to reduce the environmental impact of its digital activities over the next five years while ensuring that all its information and communication technology (ICT) suppliers have credible net zero emissions strategies in place, with a special focus on reduced carbon and costs, as well as increased resilience, responsibility, transparency, and accountability. 'ICT and digital services are increasingly held up as a key component of any solution to the global climate crisis and associated targets and goals. These include the UK government's commitment to net zero carbon by 2050, the Greening Government Commitments 2020-2025, The UN sustainable development goals and the 25

Year Environment Plan', noted [Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs](url) (DEFRA) Chief Digital Information Officer Chris Howes.

NF 13 September: **Connecting Scotland receives GB£23 million funding**

Scottish government programme [Connecting Scotland](url) was launched in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. It will provide iPads, Chromebooks, and develop digital skills for people who are digitally excluded and on low incomes. The first phase of the programme, April-July 2020, which focused on those who were at risk of isolation due to the Coronavirus, was supported by the government with GB£5 million to target 9 000 households. The second phase was launched on 18 August 2020 with an additional GB£15 million to target households with children and caretakers up to the age of 26. In September 2020, the [Programme for Government](url) (PfG) [announced](url) further cash support of GB£23 million to organisations that work with digitally excluded families and young people in care. 'Over the next 15 months, the Connecting Scotland programme will make a significant contribution towards closing that digital divide by helping many more households to benefit from technology through issuing devices along with offers of support and data,' [noted](url) Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell. The closing date for current open applications is on 5 October 2020.

==Edited MB== NF 14 Sept: ==UN report on reimagining global health through AI==

The UN [Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development](url) [released](url) a new report entitled 'Reimagining Global Health through Artificial Intelligence: The Roadmap to AI Maturity.' The report argues that while low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) may have the most to gain from the radical potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to transform health systems, they may also have the most to lose because of systemic health issues with new advanced capabilities, including the shortage of health workers, emerging threats, a dual burden of disease, underserved populations, rapid urbanisation, and misinformation and disinformation. Therefore, the report stresses the importance of integrating AI-enabled tools into the way healthcare is delivered, and expanding access for all in order to address the ongoing growing health challenges. To this aim, the report pinpoints six areas for AI maturity in health: people and workforce, data and technology, governance and regulatory, design and processes, partnerships and stakeholders, and business models. It further provides detailed specific action points and recommendations for each stakeholder group to navigate challenges, pursue best practices, and strengthen AI-enablers.

==Edited MB== NF 14 Sept: **Spark and Vodafone pledge support for digital inclusion action plan**

The [Spark Foundation](url) and the [Vodafone New Zealand Foundation](url) [announced](url) their commitment to support InternetNZ's [action plan for digital inclusion](url). The five-point plan identifies the priority areas where the government of New Zealand should direct its efforts and investments including: affordable connectivity; getting devices to people who can't afford them, and addressing accessibility barriers; wrap-around support for the newly connected; digital skills for displaced workers and our small businesses; and longer-term Internet resilience. While the plan outlines the government agencies that could be responsible for leading each action point, it underscores the need for cross-agency engagement and co-ordination. 'Digital inclusion is about making sure everyone can fully participate online. In our national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than it has ever been. This is not just about cost or infrastructure. Kiwis also need to have the skills, motivation, and trust to be online,' noted InternetNZ Chief Executive Jordan Carter. More than 50 organisations have now signed the plan which was shared with the government and the public in May 2020.

NF 15 September: **BP and Microsoft form strategic partnership to drive digital energy innovation and advance net zero goals**

BP and Microsoft [signed](url) a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to accelerate progress towards their sustainability goals and help the world decarbonise. The partnership aims to espouse digital transformation in energy systems and advance the net zero carbon goals of both companies. To this aim, it will focus on four areas that combine Microsoft's digital expertise with BP's expertise on energy markets including smart and clean cities, clean energy parks, consumer energy, and industrial Internet

of things (IIoT) solutions. While Microsoft will help BP accelerate its digital transformation with Azure cloud services, BP will provide Microsoft with renewable energy to help meet the company's 2025 renewable energy goals.

Edited MB **NF 15 Sep: Indonesia's digital economy potential reaches USD$133 billion**

In a virtual meeting, the Indonesian Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto revealed that 'Indonesia's digital economy potential is valued at US$133 billion, while in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), it reached US$300 billion. Hence, we must continue to encourage the Industrial Revolution 4.0.' He asserted that the digital transformation would support economic development, and enable Indonesia to emerge from the middle-income trap, with the required growth of 5.7–6%. The minister unveiled the government's future plan to prepare 5G services and to operate a multifunction satellite, dubbed the Satellite of the Republic of Indonesia (SATRIA), in 2023, to connect 150 000 public facilities that comprise schools, local government offices, health facilities, and ministries/institutions.

NF 15 September: **UAE's adoption of drones in agriculture makes it one of the first in the world, FEDS' statement**

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of Dubai, revealed that the UAE is among the first to prioritise environmental protection and climate change as part of its food sustainability programme on a national scale. The drones, which replaced the traditional farming methods, will allow UAE to plant 250,000 Ghaf seeds and 6 million Samar seeds aross 150 square kilometers of land in a few days rather than decades. The agricultural drones market is estimated to reach AED30 billion by 2026. 'The new drone law mirrors the UAE's tenacious drive to thrust science and technology, reaching greater heights that will bring in vast opportunities across various sectors — most especially agriculture. There is no doubt that the government's interest in drones will bring about tremendous advancement in its food security initiatives', highlighted Falcon Eye Drones Services (FEDS) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Rabih Bou Rashid.

Edited MB **NP 16 Sep: FAO and Google launch big data tool 'Earth Map'**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and tech giant Google have launched a big data platform called 'Earth Map' that allows users to explore climate, environmental and agricultural data. The tool builds on FAO's Hand-in-Hand geospatial platform and is meant to provide member states, their collaborators and donors with information necessary to identify and execute rural development initiatives.

NF 16 September: **New partnership promotes connectivity at 43 colleges in Ghana**

As a part of the Mastercard Foundation and UK aid's efforts to roll out connectivity solutions and the extension of wi-fi services to boost virtual teaching and learning, 27 public colleges in Ghana will benefit from e-learning opportunities. The support will enable the colleges to improve connectivity on their campuses through the installation of broadband services and the upgrading of technology assisted teaching and learning solutions to aid virtual lessons for teacher trainees across the country. Such support was granted to applicants that proved a genuine need for investment in improved connectivity to enhance teaching and learning, demonstrable understanding of the technical and financial requirements, and the sustainability of the solutions proposed.

Edited MB **NP 17 Sep: India launches WhatsApp chatbot to bridge the digital gap**

India's Common Services Centers, responsible for the delivery of e-government services to citizens, has launched a WhatsApp chatbot for citizens. The chatbot is meant to help bridge the digital divide by providing a wide range of digital literacy services and resources to rural entrepreneurs. Through the

chatbot, citizens can access digital literacy programmes in English, Hindi and seven other regional languages.

NF 17 September: <mark>**New ITU study estimates US$ 428 billion needed to connect remaining 3 billion people to the Internet by 2030**</mark>

[Connecting Humanity - Assessing investment needs of connecting humanity to the Internet by 2030](#) is a new report [released](#) by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) that investigates the necessary global and regional investments to achieve universal, affordable broadband connectivity for people aged 10 and above by the end of this decade. The study argues that to connect humanity to broadband Internet by 2030 around US$428 billion is required. Yet, this is an ambitious goal since it requires major infrastructure investment. 'Meeting the investment necessary to bring every person online by the end of this decade will require an unprecedented and concerted effort from the public and private sectors. The new Connecting Humanity study led by ITU is the much-needed roadmap that will guide decision makers on the journey towards accessible, affordable, reliable, and safe digital technologies and services for all,' noted ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao.

NF 17 September: **New WEF report: Harnessing Technology for the Global Goals**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) [published](#) a new report under the title '[Harnessing Technology for the Global Goals: A Framework for Corporate Action](#)' which identifies how corporate leadership can drive and harness the uptake of advanced technologies to accelerate action on the sustainable development goals (SDGs), i.e., Global Goals. The report presents a framework to help corporate leadership to deploy technological advancement effectively to deliver meaningful social and environmental change. The framework can guide critical conversations of businesses through key strands including: commitment; strategy and operating model integration; accountability and governance; products and services; research and innovation; talent and skills; policy engagement; d partnerships, exchange, and community.

NF 18 September: <mark>**Broadband Commission calls on world leaders to prioritise universal connectivity for sustainable development and global recovery**</mark>

The [Broadband Commission for Digital Development](#) [released](#) '[The State of Broadband 2020: Tackling Digital Inequalities, A Decade for Action](#)' which called upon world leaders and heads of industry to place universal broadband connectivity at the very forefront of global recovery and sustainable development efforts. The report, which cautions against acute inequalities caused by COVID-19, underscores the realities of 2020 related to the global pandemic that disrupted global and local economies, healthcare systems, education; accentuating the significance of broadband in connecting the world and keeping societies strong and healthy. 'Leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline, now more than ever before. Increasing and coordinating ICT infrastructure investments will be instrumental, not only in connecting the 3.6 billion people still offline, but also in driving the development of new technologies central to the digital economy,' highlighted International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary-General Houlin Zhao.

NF 19 September: **GSMA releases public policy position paper to drive digital revolution with improved mobile coverage**

The GSMA [published](#) a public policy position paper that pinpoints the steps required to roll out mobile infrastructure and enhance demand. According to the GSMA, to make network operations sustainable, innovative partnerships between government and operators are needed. Some of the policy solutions that provide sustainable impact include reducing policy and regulatory barriers, creating pro-investment environments, and examining new sources of financing and shared deployment models. In that sense, the paper showcases initiatives from countries across the world where this approach has resulted in improved coverage and access. It further outlines some recommendations to improve mobile coverage and speed up roll out: (a) innovative technologies and deployment models helping to expand mobile coverage; (b) policy measures to support increased network investment and

rapid, wide-area roll outs, (c) policy measures to stimulate mobile Internet demand, and (d) policy measures focused specifically on rural and remote mobile coverage.

Edited DNNF 19 September: **GSMA published The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity 2020**

The GSMA Connected Society programme released the third edition of its annual flagship publication The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity 2020 which delivers a comprehensive overview of the trends in global connectivity to inform international progress towards closing coverage and usage gaps and addressing key challenges. The report found that while the coverage gap – those living outside of areas covered by mobile broadband networks – continues to narrow, there is still a considerable usage gap which is now six times larger than the coverage gap. This could be attributed to the lack of literacy and digital skills, which persists as the main barrier to use. Yet, while awareness of mobile internet is increasing, it is far from universal. 'This report shows that the usage gap is a global challenge, but those significant regional disparities persist. If we don't take action now, we run the risk of reinforcing existing inequalities in the digital world and further marginalising vulnerable people', highlighted Chief Executive Officer of Orange and Chairman of the GSMA Stéphane Richard.

NF 21 September: **Digital transformation to create one million Saudi jobs**

In a virtual meeting held by the Saudi B20 and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), experts unveiled how the promotion of digital transformation in several industries and sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to allow the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to create an estimated one million jobs over the next five years. 'We need to ensure that young women receive training and guidance when they enter the job market or start their own businesses, and the Kingdom has adopted many initiatives and investments to qualify young men and women through education. In 2019, the Kingdom allocated SR1 billion (US$266 million) to support universities in preparing students for the job market', noted the chief executive of the STC Group and the head of the Digital Transformation Working Group of the Saudi B20 business group Nasser bin Suleiman Al-Nasser.

Edited DN NF 21 September: **Bahrain launched polytechnic AI academy to support SDGs in the scientific field**

In collaboration with Tamkeen and Microsoft, Bahrain's government launched Bahrain Polytechnic and accepted its first batch of 38 participants (out of 126 who applied) ranging from school and university students to job-seekers and professionals. The academy aims to provide an integrated specialised program that buttresses innovation and creativity capabilities in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). '[Participants] will acquire international professional certifications from Microsoft that qualify them to innovate and serve the community using the latest available tools and technologies, and to meet the needs of the labor market in line with the Kingdom of Bahrain Vision 2030. They will be able to contribute to the implementation of sustainable development goals of the United Nations, which will provide the graduates the opportunity to be employed in global companies, and open new horizons for companies or startups', explained Bahrain Polytechnic's Deputy CEO of Resources and Information Affairs and Chair of the Artificial Intelligence Academy Committee Sh. Ali bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa.

NF 22 September: **Huawei Brunei kicks off the annual program to develop local ICT talents**

Huawei Technologies in Brunei launched its Seeds for the Future 2020 to help develop local information and communications technology (ICT) talents. Through this programme, which aims to contribute to the progress of the global ICT industry, participants can accumulate ICT expertise and skills. The programme is in line with Brunei's holistic approach to build a comprehensive ecosystem for digital learning. 'As such, programmes like the 'Seeds for the Future' are crucial not only to triggering interest in students, but also to ensuring a sustainable ICT talent pool for our nation. With the travel restrictions still in place in many countries and in line with the 'new normal', I'm pleased to learn that Huawei Technologies is bringing the 'Seeds for the Future' programme fully online', said Brunei's Deputy Minister of Education Hjh Romaizah.

+++NF 23 September: **Guterres advocates for digital world that 'strengthens human rights, advances peace'**

During a high-level meeting on digital cooperation, UN Secretary-General António Guterres underscored the role of digital technologies in serving everyone, as they represent an opportunity 'to be an enabler, an equalizer, and to accelerate the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs)'. He called for collective global action, including listening to youth in order to better safeguard the digital future for future generations, as well as to help ensure technologies are utilised for the good of all. Guterres further referred to the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation as a path forward to a secure online world and called to ensure affordable, inclusive, and meaningful connectivity for all; to ensure that human rights apply both online and offline; and to protect against cyberattacks and disinformation, as well as ensure online safety for all.

+++NF 25 September: **Mobile industry continues to close digital divide and accelerate global impact across all SDGs, GSMA report**

GSMA published the fifth edition of its Mobile Industry Impact Report, which examines the increased impact the mobile industry has had on achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) over the last year and what could be accomplished over the next ten years. The report also has a special focus on the role of the mobile industry during the COVID-19 crisis. The report argues that operators managed to achieve positive global impacts due to their collaboration with governments and other partners. Additionally, it pinpoints specific calls for action for each SDG that vary between enhancing digital literacy skills for women and girls to reducing gender inequality to licensing sufficient and affordable spectrums in order to spur the building of resilient infrastructure. The report provides some statistics to demonstrate the contribution of the mobile industry to economic and social development. For example, between 2015 and 2019, the mobile industry has increased its impact on each of the 17 SDGs annually, increasing from 33% to 48%. Moreover, since 2015, mobile connectivity has contributed to $360 billion in global GDP growth, or 4% of overall GDP growth. In the same timeframe, the industry has increased global employment by approximately 5 million; by 2019, it supported roughly 30 million jobs. The use of mobile technology has also powered a global reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that is 10 times greater than the global carbon footprint of the mobile industry itself.

+++NF 26 September: **Estonian foreign minister at the UN: Heal the digital divide**

During a Franco-German-initiated Alliance for Multilateralism meeting convened during the 75th annual UN General Assembly, Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu highlighted that the digital divide must be eliminated as quickly as possible if overall resilience of societies is to be boosted worldwide. To this aim, Reinsalu called on states to join the global digital declaration initiated by Estonia and Singapore, which nearly 70 states have signed up to so far. To promote this declaration, Estonia and the United Arab Emirates will hold a global business forum in December 2020 that will provide a platform for the private and public sector to showcase novel digital solutions.

+++NF 26 September: **Kenyan ICT Ministry Seeks to Recognize 'Gig' Economy in Draft Digital Strategy**

Following the adoption of the Digital Economy Blueprint for Africa in 2019, the Kenyan Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Innovation, and Youth Affairs developed the first draft of the digital economy strategy. The strategy, developed through a participatory approach through which the public and private sector contributed, will also be collaboratively implemented. It hinges on six key pillars including: digital government, digital business, infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship, digital skills and values, and digital inclusion. It further focuses on a variety of issues including: integrated ecosystems, data, emerging trends, green ICT, security, and policy and regulatory frameworks.

Release of the Global Innovation Index 2020

See Convergence and OTT - **16 September – Uber commits to become a zero-emission platform by 2040**

Access (Jacob - jacobo@diplomacy.edu)

- **13 September: Social media restricted and Internet cut during Algeria school exams**
  According to a news report by the internet observatory firm Netblocks, Algeria cut off Internet connectivity after an initial disruption which saw limitations on social media websites. The result is that all social media and messaging services including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp remain offline. Real-time data collected by Netblocks showed significant impacts to Algeria Telecom which is the state-run operator. Whereas the real reasons for the shutdown remains unclear, it is widely speculated that it was implemented to curb student cheating in the Baccalauréat school examinations that took place from 13-17 September, 2020. This is consistent with government actions taken during previous examination periods.

- **21 September: Internet restriction during exam in Algeria cost nearly US$388 million**
  According to a news report an Internet shutdown by Algerian authorities from 13-17 September 2020 that is believed to have been implemented to curb exam malpractices has cost the economy close to US$388 million. This estimated cost was communicated by Mr Younes Grar who is Chief Executive Officer of Gecos. Almost all social media and messaging services such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp were down across the country with real-time network data showing severe impacts to Algeria Telecom. According to the report, citizens are urging the government to resort to other means of curbing cheating in examinations rather than resorting to Internet shutdowns since it comes with several dire consequences.

- **17 September: US and other countries issue a joint statement on Internet shutdowns in Belarus**
  The US government together with 28 other countries have issued a joint statement to the government of Belarus regarding the persisting Internet shutdowns instituted by authorities in Belarus. The signatories to the statement spelt out their worries and unreservedly condemned the continuous use of partial and complete Internet shutdowns by the government of Belarus following the country's disputed presidential elections in August.The statement further echoed the fact that restricting the use of the Internet affects the fundamental rights of assembly and expression by citizens, and called on the government to be committed to safeguarding human rights both online and offline. The signatories concluded by calling on the government of Belarus 'to respect civic space, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law'. They also called for an independent, transparent and impartial investigation into all alleged human rights violations that occurred during the protests following the elections.

- **Edited DN29 September: Global Microsoft outage brings down Teams, Office 365, and Outlook**
  According to a news report, Microsoft has been hit with an outage of global proportions, affecting its cloud-based services including Teams, Office 365, and Outlook. Microsoft reported issues regarding the authentication of its cloud-based services around 21:25 UTC on 28 September 2020, and signalled that a number of users worldwide would be affected by the outage. Providing updates on Twitter, Microsoft said they were investigating the cause of the outage, but attributed a recent update to its cloud service infrastructure as a possible cause.

The company further stated that they were working around the clock to mitigate and solve the issue.

- 27 September See FoE **Many US news sites unavailable due to GDPR restrictions compliance**

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- USA: OCR Settles Five More Investigations in HIPAA Right of Access Initiative
- Joint Statement on Internet Shutdowns in Belarus : statement by the Governments of the United States of America, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Ukraine
- See sustainable development 17 September: New ITU study estimates US$ 428 billion are needed to connect the remaining 3 billion people to the Internet by 2030
- See sustainable development 18 September: Broadband Commission calls on world leaders to prioritise universal connectivity as fundamental to sustainable development and global recovery
- See sustainable development 19 September: GSMA releases a public policy position paper to drive the digital revolution with improved mobile coverage
- See Sustainable development 19 September: GSMA published The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity 2020

Internet disruptions reported in Azerbaijan

Inclusive finance (Grace - gracem@diplomacy.edu)
- Ethiopia calls for Africa to promote digital financial services to boost women's economic opportunities
- **Edited DN** 25 Sep: Ethiopia calls for financial inclusion for women
  Ethiopia is calling on Africa to increase financial inclusion so as to increase women's economic participation. Speaking during a panel discussion of G7 and African countries during the 75th UN General Assembly, Minister of Finance Eyob Tekalign stated that while Africa was undertaking a digital transformation, much more remains to be done to ensure the inclusion of girls and women in the digital economy. He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic was an opportunity to make more inclusive policies for vulnerable groups like rural women.

  Edited DN 23 Sep: South Africa commits to women's financial inclusion
  South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa reiterated the country's commitment to women's financial inclusion. He was speaking during a High Level Virtual Panel hosted by the G7 Partnership for Women's Digital Financial Inclusion in Africa. South Africa has among the highest number of cases of COVID-19 in the world, necessitating varied lockdown measures. The President emphasised the pandemic had set back Africa's development and disproportionately affected women. He therefore called for the cancellation of interest on African national debts, arguing that the money could be redirected to programmes for urgent issues such as housing, health care, water and sanitation, and education.

Edited DN **14 Sep : SASSA launches online grant application portal**

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) launched an online grants application portal that will initially cover child support, older persons, and foster child grants. This is expected to ease the process for applicants who often have to stand in line as they pursue processing of their applications. The self service portal is also mobile accessible and is expected to have a turn around time of 10 days. Opposition leaders welcomed the new system, advising SASSA to ensure its robustness so as to protect grantees and offer meaningful service to beneficiaries. Scaling the Impact of Digital Financial Services: The Opportunity and Imperative during COVID-19

24 Sep: Digital financial inclusion must include gender - says report
A report by Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth and HERproject shares insights on financial inclusion during COVID-19. From studying digital wages for low income earners across several countries, the report found that financial literacy training greatly assists low income earners to save. This is more meaningful financial inclusion as such workers can make big purchases and use their savings to improve their lives. Another finding is the role of gender sensitive design for financial products. This has enabled women to make financial decisions as opposed to handing over all their wages to their husbands. The report therefore calls for contextual knowledge and thoughtful planning and implementation of financial inclusion programmes.

Capacity development (Tereza - terezah@diplomacy.edu and Katarina - katarinaa@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited MB** **16 Sept: President von der Leyen's State of the Union address: leading the way on digital**
  European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen addressed the European Parliament and pledged that the Commission will drive Europe's sustainable and transformational recovery, focusing on several areas, including digital transformation. To this end, she called for a common plan for digital Europe with clearly defined goals for 2030, such as for connectivity, skills and digital public services. Moreover, she announced that the EU will invest 20% of Next Generation EU's budget on digital.

E-waste (Katarina - katarinaa@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited MB** **12 Sept: Rwanda to collect 10,000 tonnes of e-waste annually**

  By the end of 2020, all districts will have e-waste collection points aimed at helping Rwanda collect over 10,000 tonnes per year for dismantling and recycling. This was revealed during the launch of one of the E-waste collection points and conclusion of training for 300 repair technicians in sustainable e-waste management.

- **Edited MB** **14 Sept: Thailand plans to extract high-value metals from recycled e-waste to serve high-tech industries**

  Thailand's Ministry of Industry plans to develop a new recycling technology that would enable the extraction of rare-earth metals from recycled industrial and household waste to serve high-tech industries.

According to the ministry's Department of Primary Industries and Mines, Thailand generates 500,000 tons of electronic waste per year, which contains recyclable metal worthy of an estimated 30 billion baht (959 million U.S. dollars).

- <mark>Edited MB</mark> **15 Sept: Apple refuses to answer questions on product sustainability**

    Apple has refused to answer questions from the [Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) on its environmental record and repairability of its devices](#), ahead of an event where the company is expected to unveil a new generation of products. The deadline for submitting the response was 4 September.

    Earlier this year, the company was invited to participate in EAC's Electronic Waste and the Circular Economy inquiry, but it cancelled at short notice.

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Sociocultural Basket

(Coordinator: Andrijana)

Content policy (Marco - marcol@diplomacy.edu)
- Internet companies urge FCC to reject Trump bid to impose new social media regulations
- See Liability of Intermediaries 3 **September – Platform companies request FCC to reject Trump new social media regulations**
- **Disinformation: EU assesses the Code of Practice and publishes platform reports on coronavirus related disinformation**
- See Liability of Intermediaries - **16 September – Twitter expands policies against election-related information**
- **See Liability of Intermediaries - 16 September – EU Commission has assessed the effectiveness of the Code of Practice on Disinformation**
- **See Liability of Intermediaries - 16 September – EU Commission releases reports on actions taken to fight COVID-related disinformation**
- **See Liability of Intermediaries - 3 September – Facebook responds three hours of questioning related to political bias by Indian National Congress**
- **See Liability of Intermediaries - 23 September: Twitter expresses regret for racist algorithm**
- **See liability of intermediaries - 24 September: Facebook removed hundreds of coordinated attacks from fake accounts against foreign and domestic politics**
- "Managing the COVID-19 infodemic: Promoting healthy behaviours and mitigating the harm from misinformation and disinformation: Joint statement by WHO, UN, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNAIDS, ITU, UN Global Pulse, and IFRC.."

Cultural Diversity (Marco - marcol@diplomacy.edu)
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Multilingualism (Mamadou - mamadoul@diplomacy.edu)

- <mark>Edited SH</mark> 22 September - **Amazon India adds four vernacular languages on its platform**

Amazon India [has added four new Indian languages](#) to its platform, a move that will help expand access to online shopping to 200-300 million customers. The four languages added are: Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu. The language expansion aims to help the company grow its online

shopping experience and its customer base in the country. Customers can select their preferred language from the Amazon app on their Android or iOS devices and through the mobile or desktop site.

Previously, shoppers on Amazon India could search and buy products in Hindi and English only.

Online education (Dragana - draganam@diplomacy.edu)
- UNICEF: Business, government, multilateral agency and UN leaders commit to connecting children and young people to the internet by 2030

- Phillipine: Online Learning Guidelines Issued to Help Protect Student Privacy and Reduce Data Breaches in Schools

- Brazil, Deputy Danilo Cabral introduced Bill 4695/2020 which seeks to protect the personal information of students when using distance learning platforms. (portuguese source)

Trust, ethics, and interdisciplinary approaches (Jana - janam@diplomacy.edu)
Commission unveils its first Strategic Foresight Report: charting the course towards a more resilient Europe
- **11 Sep: EU Commission's Strategic Foresight Report on a resilient Europe**
- **11 Sep: European members of parliament worried about Clearview AI in policing** link
- **11 Sep: EU leaders to call for an EU electronic ID by mid-2021** https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/eu-leaders-to-call-for-an-eu-electronic-id-by-mid-2021/
- **11 Sep:**

Tech Industry Urges U.S., Brazil to Ensure Inclusion of Digital Trade Principles in Bilateral Talks

EU: Cross-border digital criminal justice : European commission new studies on digital justice final report

Digital identities (Grace - gracem@diplomacy.edu)

- **Digital Identity: Call for Evidence Response**
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Edited SH **1 Sep : UK releases consultation on digital identity responses**

The UK government has shared the responses received following a call for evidence on digital ID. The government says that after the call on July 2019, over 100 organisations responded, giving perspectives on questions such as who should take a lead role in developing the ID, ID uses, and a regulatory framework. The government lists online security, personalised services, increasing productivity, and boosting the economy among objectives for the ID. It has also committed to further consultations on the project.

Insurance Europe endorses Commission's digital ID proposals

Edited SH 9 Sep: East African Community rolls out digital COVID-19 certificates for cargo drivers

The East African Community is implementing the regional electronic cargo and driver tracking system (RECDTS) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The system will enable issuance of digital COVID-19 certificates for cargo drivers, minimising the time taken for drivers to cross borders of member states. It will also monitor crew health and assist in contact tracing in case of illness. The certificates are on a mobile application and they are mutually recognised across member states.

Edited SH 9 Sep: EU Insurance body welcomes digital ID proposals with caution

European insurance and reinsurance federation, Insurance Europe has welcomed the idea of a European digital identity (EUid) in principle, but cautioned that the EUid should be designed to avoid further regulatory burdens on private businesses. In a statement, the federation stated that while digital identities should be secure and easy to use, they should 'not be subject to any higher legal requirements than non-digital solutions'. Insurance Europe comprises national insurance associations as well as pan-European companies, mutuals and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Edited DN 25 Sep: Gambia: Biometric roll out to start in October

Gambia's President Adama Barrow announced that biometric identity cards will be issued to citizens starting in October. This follows the reinstatement of the contract with biometric company Semlex earlier this year. The Gambian identity card will be recognised as both an identity and a travel document in the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) region. To acquire the new card biometric registration is required, as well as Gambian citizenship documents such as a birth certificate, identity card, or passport.

Edited DN 16 Sep: Kenya to issue identity cards to children

Kenya's government announced that the biometrics of children six years of age and older will be captured in a new digital ID registration drive. The Principal Secretary for Interior and Coordination of Government stated that Kenya has acquired technology that makes it possible to capture biometrics from this age group. Registered children will be issued a unique identifier through which their education and healthcare will be monitored. Infants will be issued a unique number at birth. Kenya's digital ID programme, popularly known as *Huduma Namba*, was previously contested in court with a January 2020 judgment requiring the government to put in place comprehensive legal frameworks prior to its roll out.

Edited DN 4 Sep: DRC to roll out a national population register

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s President Felix Tshisekedi announced a digitalisation plan that includes the development of a population register for the country. The DRC currently does not maintain national identity documents but adults are provided with voter registration cards. The voters roll was last updated during the 2018 elections.

Although details on the national population register have not been published, the president states that the country is considering public private partnerships for the implementation of digital ID. The country will also introduce biometric visas for visitors and foreign nationals.

Edited DN 14 Sep: Nigeria gives timeline for national digital ID

The Nigeria Identity Management Commission (NIMC) estimates that it will take three to five years to register all Nigerians in its national digital ID programme. Among activities to be undertaken during this

time are registration of citizens and residents, harmonisation of state and federal databases, and verification and cleaning up of data. Digital identity stakeholders are also envisioning a revision of the relevant laws to incorporate private sector and civil society representation in the governance of the NIMC.

Edited DN 18 Sep: Ghana opens voter register for verification

Opposition leaders in Ghana are [complaining](#) about the ongoing exhibition of voter registers. The exercise is being undertaken ahead of the general election in December. Complaints range from there being a lack of Biometric Verification Devices (BVDs) in some areas to allegations of secret printing of voters cards and missing names from the voter registers. The electoral management body is now considering [extending](#) the exercise for a few more weeks or redoing voter registration.

Edited DN 19 Sep: Ghana to launch health ID

Ghana's National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) plans to integrate with the national digital ID GhanaCard to move towards universal health coverage. Since its launch in 2019, over 15 million people have [registered](#) for a GhanaCard. The NHIA envisions that integration with the GhanaCard will enhance health insurance enrolment, curb fraudulent claims, and enhance efficiency by giving patients access to their healthcare information. A [pilot mass registration](#) exercise is set to be launched once a feasibility study is completed.

Processes

Roadmap for Digital Co-operation (andrijanag@diplomacy.edu)
- ●

UN High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation (Natasa - natasap@diplomacy.edu)
- ●

Geneva Dialogue on Responsible Behaviour (Andrijana - andrijanag@diplomacy.edu)
- ●
- ●

UN GGE and OEWG (Vlada/Andrijana/Ilona - vladar@diplomacy.edu, andrijanag@diplomacy.edu, ilonas@diplomacy.edu)
- ●
- ●

GGE on LAWS (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)
- ●

New gTLD Program (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)
- ●

Internet Governance Forum (Mamadou - mamadoul@diplomacy.edu)
- ●
- ●
- ●

TRENDS

Contact tracing apps (Pavlina - pavlinai@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited SH** **1 September: Apple and Google integrate contact tracing into mobile operating systems**

  Apple and Google are integrating their contact tracing technology directly into their mobile operating systems (OS), in hopes to promote the adoption of the COVID-19 exposure notification tool.

  When integrated, iPhone users will no longer need to download a separate public health app to opt in to the contact tracing, while Android users will be prompted to download a Google app created on behalf of public health officials.

- **Edited SH** **2 September: President Ramaphosa welcomes launch of official contact tracing app**

  In a statement, South African President Ramaphosa welcomed the use of COVID Alert South Africa App to track COVID-19 cases and provide exposure notifications. The app is based on the Apple and Google API, uses Bluetooth technology for proximity tracking, and was designed with privacy in mind.

- **Edited SH** **3 September: Finnish contact tracing app widely accepted**

  The Finnish contact tracing app 'Corona Blinker', launched on 1 September, was downloaded 1.5 million times since it became available. Such a number of downloads makes this app the most accepted contact tracing tool in Europe. The Finnish app is based on Bluetooth technology and does not reveal the identity of its users.

- **Edited SH** **4 September: CNIL inquiry into contact tracing app closed**

  In June 2020, the French data protection authority, CNIL undertook a review of the StopCovid app to establish whether the app is in accordance with data processing and privacy regulations. CNIL noted several breaches of the provisions of the GDPR and of the French Data Protection Act, such as lack of information provided to users on the recipients of their data, the right to refuse data processing operations, as well as incomplete data protection analysis on processing of data collected by the app. Breaches were corrected by the French Ministry of Solidarity and Health and the StopCovid app was declared compliant with French data protection regulations.

- **Edited SH** **4 September: eHealth Network adopts security and interoperability architecture for contact tracing apps**

  In order to ensure the interoperability of contact tracing apps within the EU and the secure exchange of related data, the eHealth Network published the architectural specification of

the [Federation Gateway Service](#), comprising its general functioning, interface specification, data structures, security aspects, traffic volume estimates, and storage options. Two documents - [Security Architecture for contact tracing apps](#) and [Interoperability Architecture for contact tracing and warning apps](#) state how the national back end uploads the keys of newly infected citizens (diagnosis keys) every couple of hours and downloads the diagnosis keys from other countries participating in this scheme. Data conversion and filtering is done in national back ends.

- **Edited SH** **10 September: Singapore introduces TraceTogether tokens for proximity tracing**

  With the further opening up and allowing meetings of up to 250 people, Singapore started requiring carry on devices - [TraceTogether tokens](#) for all residents of age 7 years and up for contact tracing. Issued by the government, the TraceTogether tokens are linked to users' IDs. The government of Singapore is [also considering using these tokens to check into certain venues.](#)

- **Edited SH** **10 September: Phillipine Privacy Commission calls for limited data collection in contact tracing**

  The Phillipine National Privacy Commission (NPC) [has issued a statement](#) regarding limiting the collection of personal data through contact tracing technologies to the necessary minimum. The statement was issued after the NPC received complaints about unproportionate collection of personal data from users. 'In every aspect of the data processing cycle, activities must observe the basic principles of transparency, legitimate purpose and proportionality,' stated a representative of NPC Compliance and Monitoring Division.

- **Edited SH** **11 September: EAC implements tracking app for cargo drivers**

  The East Africa Community (EAC) Secretariat has [introduced a mobile phone app](#) to allow cargo drivers to cross borders with COVID-19 digital certificates via its Regional Electronic Cargo and Driver Tracking System (RECDTS). This app allows sharing COVID-19 test results of drivers between EAC states, hence reducing the need for testing in multiple countries.

- **Edited MB** **14 Sept: EC starts testing interoperability gateway service**

  The European Commission (EC) [has commenced test runs](#) between servers of the contact-tracing apps in the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, and newly established gateway servers. The EC set up this gateway service to provide for the interoperability of national contact-tracing apps throughout the EU.

- **Edited MB** **14 Sept: England and Wales to launch new contact-tracing app**

  A new contact-tracing app, that will replace the National Health Service's (NHS) COVID-19 tracing app, will be launched on 24 September 2020, [UK government officials announced](#). Based on Apple's and Google's application programming interface (API), the app will use Bluetooth technology for proximity tracing and QR codes to track visits to public spaces.

- **28 Sept: New app for England and Wales downloaded 10 million times**

  Despite initial glitches in reporting positive cases, the new contact-tracing app launched on 24 September [has already reached 10 million downloads](#).

- **30 Sept: Belgium introduces contact-tracing app Coronalert**

To help spread COVID-19, the Belgian authorities have launched a contact-tracing [Coronalert app](). Based on the decentralised model, the app stores contact information on the device for 14 days. [According to the co-creator Axel Legay](), the app needs to be downloaded by 15% of the population to be effective.

The European Commission's eHealth Network adopt Security Architecture for contact tracing and warning apps
The European Commission's eHealth Network adopt interoperability Architecture for contact tracing and warning apps

Phillipines: NPC issues recommendations for contact tracing forms and DPO duties
East Africa: EAC Rolls Out Mobile App for Issuing Covid-19 Digital Certificates to Cargo Drivers
Coronavirus: European Commission starts testing interoperability gateway service for national contact tracing and warning apps
State of Delaware Launches COVID Alert DE Mobile App

Digital and environment (Natasa - natasap@diplomacy.edu)

- **Edited SH** **2 September: Amazon and Microsoft partner on open source climate platform**

[Tech giants Microsoft and Amazon, together with Allianz and S&P Global]() have partnered on an initiative that aims to mobilise digital technologies to improve climate risk analysis and increase the funding of low-carbon solutions. As part of the initiative, partners will make use of artificial intelligence (AI) powered tools, open data, and open source (OS) analytics. The final outcome of the initiative is meant to be a digital OS-Climate platform that allows for a mapping of numerous economic and physical scenarios applicable to different geographies and business sectors.

The tool will be available to investors and banks to develop financial plans according to climate issues.

Edited MB **15 Sept: Microsoft and bp conclude partnership on digital innovation and zero carbon**

Tech giant [Microsoft and British Petroleum (bp)]() have signed a partnership agreement in order to foster digital innovation and endorse commitment towards zero emissions. bp will make use of Microsoft Azure's cloud services to advance its digital transformation whilst Microsoft will rely on bp's renewable energy so as to meet the company's renewable energy commitments by 2025.

Coronavirus (Natasa - natasap@diplomacy.edu and Katarina - katarinaa@diplomacy.edu)
- See digital health - 2 September: Google makes search trends dataset available to help COVID-19 research
- **See Liability of Intermediaries - 16 September – EU Commission releases reports on actions taken to fight COVID-related disinformation**
- **See digital health - 18 September: Cathay Pacific to launch digital health passport**
  See Privacy and DP - 21 Sep – Privacy commissioner in Canada to hear First Nations' complaints on COVID-19 location information
- **See DP and Privacy - 23 Sep – CNIL releases guidance on collection of employee data in the context of COVID-19**
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The .org controversy (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)

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Libra cryptocurrency (Arvin - arvink@diplomacy.edu)
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AI governmental initiatives (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)
-

The rise of autonomous vehicles (Pedro - pedrov@diplomacy.edu)
- See Liability of Intermediaries - **15 September – Uber's self-driving operator charged over fatal autonomous car crash**
- **Edited DNAmerican researchers propose cyber-infrastructure standard for autonomous vehicles**
  Researchers at the North Texas University are developing a framework that will allow for autonomous vehicles (AVs) to share data with each other in a standardised manner. Since most AV manufacturers use proprietary sensor data collection and storage, the vehicles wouldn't be able to share data with each other. With the standard framework for infrastructure, sharing of data between vehicles from different manufacturers will be possible, allowing for extended line of sight and field of view, as well as enhanced machine learning.

Digital health (Nagisa - nagisam@diplomacy.edu)

- Africa CDC launches web-based tool to better manage public health emergency workforce deployments

- **Edited SH 1 September: Africa CDC launches web-based tool for public health emergency workforce management**
  The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has partnered with the International Health Regulations (IHR) Strengthening Project of Public Health England (PHE) for a public health tool. The new web-based tool, AvoHC Net, enables rapid deployment and better administration of a standby workforce for public health emergencies in Africa. AvoHC Net will facilitate easy and prompt access to profiles of members of the African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC), exchange of relevant information with partner organisations for public health emergency deployments, training of experts on disaster preparedness, management and response, and access to country-specific health information for risk mapping and vulnerability assessment. AVoHC is a multidisciplinary standby workforce to respond to public health emergencies across Africa and was created following the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa in 2014 by the African Union heads of state and government.

- **Edited SH 2 September: Softbank updates robot with mask detection feature**
  Softbank Robotics announced that it has released a mask detection feature for its robot Pepper. Pepper can scan the faces of up to five people in a group and simultaneously check if they are wearing a mask. Then, Pepper displays a green or red circle on its tablet depending on whether the person is wearing a face covering or not. The technology is based on AIZoo's FaceMask Detection. Businesses can deploy Pepper to remind its customers to wear a mask before entering the shop.

- **Edited SH 3 September: US HHS releases roadmap for rural telehealth**
  The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released the Rural Action Plan that focuses on evaluating and addressing challenges facing rural communities regarding healthcare. The action plan outlines the current rural healthcare landscape, particularly the unique challenges that rural residents and communities face in accessing and financing healthcare. The plan laid out a four-point strategy, including leveraging technology and

innovation to deliver quality telehealth to rural regions. The plan notes that the Trump Administration's fiscal year 2021 budget would require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to value telehealth services separately from similar services that are provided in person, in hope of broadening beneficiary access to Medicare telehealth services. It also aligns with the budget's proposal to allow rural health centres and qualified health providers to be distant site providers for Medicare telehealth services to increase access to Medicare telehealth services for Indian Health Services and Tribal Centres.

See sustainable development -- 7 Sept: **ITU and WHO kicked off new ad-hoc group on digital health technologies to combat COVID-19**

- <mark>Edited SH</mark> **9 September: California passes medical privacy bills**
  According to [POLITICO](#), The California legislative session passed three bills related to medical privacy and data. Governor Gavin Newsom must sign or veto them by 30 September 2020.

  The first bill would relax restrictions in California's Consumer Privacy Act that grants state residents the right to request companies to delete their personal information. The proposed measure would exempt patient data that is protected by federal medical privacy safeguards. It aims to help efforts to monitor the effects of the Coronavirus on certain patients or drug safety studies.

  A second bill, titled the Genetic Information Privacy Act, is directed to companies that offer consumers genetic tests to trace ancestral roots or learn about potential health risks. The measure will require these companies to detail their practices of collecting, storing, and disclosing data, as well as to secure consumer consent before collection. It also will require them to destroy biological samples within 30 days of a consumer revoking their consent.

  The third bill aims to extend the use of blockchain technology in COVID-19 test verification. It is legal in California for companies to utilise the encrypted, decentralised ledger to verify test results. The proposed measure will require the state medical board to set up a pilot programme on the use of blockchain for this purpose.

- <mark>Edited SH</mark> **9 September: US Senators call for modernisation of COVID-19 data collection**
  US Senators Tom Carper and Bill Cassidy led a bipartisan group of senators to call on the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to modernise COVID-19 data collection and management. The group of senators issued a letter to the HHS Secretary Azar and the CDC Director Dr Redfield to demand that the agencies harness advanced technology and build on existing data sources in order to provide public health officials with more accurate, real time information. The senators noted that case reporting and contact tracing in the USA are inefficient due to a fragmented health system and outdated technology, including manual entry of patient data and result sharing via fax. They stated that modernising and automating data collection should enhance detection, testing, and contact tracing strategies. In the letter, Florida and North Carolina are named as good examples. For instance, in Florida, nurses can register patients for COVID-19 testing in the field by using tablet devices that are connected to a cloud that is compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The process has reduced lab processing time and eliminated transcription errors.

- <mark>Edited SH</mark> **7 September: ePrescription services available in new EU countries**
  The European Commission's eHealth network has [announced](#) that citizens of Croatia, Estonia, Finland, and Portugal can pick up their prescriptions in pharmacies overseas. Estonia and Portugal are added to the list of countries that Croatian citizens can retrieve their prescription. While Estonian citizens can pick up prescriptions in Croatia and Finland, Finnish residents can do so in Portugal, Estonia, and Croatia, which was made possible

since 2019. Portuguese citizens can now retrieve their prescription in three countries: Estonia, Finland, and Croatia.

- **Edited SH 2 September: Google makes search trends data set available to help COVID-19 research**
  Google [announced](#) that it has made a data set of search trends available for researchers to study the link between symptom related searches and the spread of the Coronavirus. The released data set includes aggregated, anonymised search trends for more than 400 symptoms, signs, and health conditions. It includes trends in the USA from the past three years in order to support public health officials to gain insight. Google noted that the COVID-19 symptom data set is powered by the anonymisation technology that the company uses in the Community Mobility Reports and other products to protect privacy of users.

- **Edited SH 11 September Hampshire and Isle of Wight to launch population health platform**
  Hampshire and Isle of Wight in England are [reported](#) to launch a population health platform called the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System. The platform will be offered by Cerner and provide clinicians, public health officials, and other healthcare professionals with a comprehensive view of their population's health and needs. The project will first aggregate data, followed by the standardisation and normalisation, and the application of advanced intelligence to deliver actionable insights to care providers, patients, and citizens.

- **Edited SH 14 Sept: FDA releases update on digital health software precertification pilot programme**

  The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [published](#) an update on digital health software precertification (pre-cert) programme. The pre-cert programme was launched in 2019 to address the challenge that the FDA's traditional approach to regulate hardware based medical devices that are not well suited for faster and more iterative design, development, and validation techniques applied to develop high quality, safe, and effective software, including software as a medical devices (SaMD). The update unpacks learnings to date from the building and testing of the pre-cert pilot programme. It also underscores that the COVID-19 pandemic further highlights the importance of enabling rapid access to safe and effective devices for public health.

- **Edited SH 14 Sept: Dubai integrates clinical decision support tool with EHR**

  The Dubai Health Authority (DHA) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is [reported](#) to have become the first healthcare authority in the country to integrate a clinical decision support resource, UpToDate, with an electronic health record (EHR). UpToDate will enable doctors, nurses, and pharmacists from 18 of DHA's sites to access EHR to make evidence based clinical decisions for patients.

- **Edited SH 4 Sept: Judge dismisses health data privacy suit against Google and University of Chicago**
  Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer of the US District Court of the Northern District of Illinois [dismissed](#) a class action suit against Google and the University of Chicago Medical Center, alleging that they had failed to deidentify data that was used for machine learning research and predictive analytics projects. In her decision, Judge Pallmeyer wrote that Google can potentially identify who the patients in the electronic health records (EHRs) that are shared by the university by combining it with its expertise in data mining and access to geolocation information of its users. However, she stated that the amended complaint did not allege that Google has in fact used the data to reidentify EHRs.

- **Edited SH** **15 Sept: US telehealth task force publishes final recommendations**

  The US Taskforce on Telehealth Policy (TTP) was formed to assess early findings and experiences under the flexibilities made by the US Congress and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The TTP has [released](#) consensus recommendations and called policymakers to make most, but not all, of the amendments made to increase access to telehealth. They include the following: (a) lifting geographic restrictions and limitations on originating sites of care; (b) allowing telehealth for various types of clinicians and cares; (c) acknowledging that telehealth visits can meet requirements for establishing a relationship between a clinician and patient if the interaction meets appropriate care standards or unless analysis demonstrates that a previous in person relationship is necessary; (d) removing unnecessary restrictions on telehealth across state lines. The TTP further stated that the enforcement of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which was suspended at the beginning of the pandemic, should be reinstated to protect patient privacy.

- **Edited SH** **15 Sept: Singapore and Apple partner on health initiative**

  The government of Singapore and Apple has [announced](#) to partner on Singapore's national health initiative, LumiHealth, a personalised programme to promote health activity and behaviours of citizens by using Apple Watch. The programme was designed by Singapore's Health Promotion Board and Apple as part of the country's Smart Nation initiative. The LumiHealth app was designed with user privacy and security at its core, and the two-year programme will be available from late October 2020. Apple noted in the statement that no data from LumiHealth will be sold or shared for marketing purposes.

- **Edited SH** **14 Sept: Fitbit receives regulatory clearance for atrial fibrillation detection in USA and EU**

  Fitbit has [received](#) regulatory clearance from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the EU for its electrocardiogram (ECG) app to assess heart rhythm for atrial fibrillation (AFib). AFib affects more than 33.5 million people across the globe. AFib increases the risk of serious complications, such as strokes which can be highly difficult to detect. The Fitbit ECG app will be available in October 2020 to Fitbit Sense users in the USA, the UK, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Poland, Belgium, Portugal, Romania, Ireland, Italy, Spain, France, Hong Kong, and India.

- **Edited SH** **15 Sept: NIH partners with private sector to develop digital health tool**

  The US National Institute of Health (NIH) has [selected](#) six companies and one university to partner in developing digital health tools in support of Coronavirus response efforts. The seven awardees will develop software, wearable devices, or mobile applications that can be deployed for contact tracing, health monitoring, and test results tracking.

- **Edited SH** **10 Sept: Finland selects Cerner to develop digital platform for health and social services**

  Cerner has [announced](#) that it will collaborate with Finald's regional leadership to develop a digital platform to support the delivery of healthcare and social services. Finland is undergoing a transformation to shift responsibility for the organisation of health and social services from municipal based health and social care to combined regional authorities. Aster is a co-operational organisation across 4 of Finland's 19 regions. In the first phase of the project, the focus will be on development and planning. In the second phase, Cerner plans to contract with Aster to deliver and implement the technology.

- **Edited SH** **14 Sept: South Korean telecoms to develop digital health tools**

According to a [report](#), South Korea's major mobile carriers, ST Telecom Co., KT Corp., and LG Uplus Corp. are partnering with local healthcare companies to create new digital services in healthcare. KT Corp. has partnered with Green Cross Healthcare Co. to develop a personalised digital health management service that utilises KT's artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and cloud technology. The three telecoms have partnered with a healthcare company, Huraypositive Corp. to develop an AI-based diet management tool for diabetes patients. The tool enables patients to access personalised dietary information by uploading pictures through a mobile app.

- **Edited SH** 18 Sept: Cathay Pacific to launch digital health passport

  According to a [report](#), Hong Kong based airline Cathay Pacific and health start-up Prenetics has announced the launch of a digital health passport. Travelers will be allowed to show their negative COVID-19 test results on a mobile app before boarding, which can potentially ease international travel restrictions. The pilot will begin on the Hong Kong-London route in October 2020. [The Commons Project](#), a Swiss-based non profit organisation backed by the Rockefeller Foundation, is also a collaborator in the project.

- See IoT 22 September – US FDA creates the Digital Health Center of Excellence

- **Edited DN** 23 Sept: EU regulators extend deadline for decision on Google-Fitbit merger
  Reuters [reported](#) that EU antitrust regulators have extended their deadline to make a decision on Google's proposed acquisition of Fitbit to 23 December 2020. The investigation into the deal began in the summer after the regulators deemed Google's pledge to not use Fitbit's user data for advertising purposes insufficient to mitigate competitive concerns. Google has claimed that the proposed merger would boost competition in the fitness tracker sector in which Apple and Samsung dominate.

- **Edited DN** 22 Sept: China launches national radiology image database
  China is [reported](#) to have launched a national radiology image database, the country's first standardised medical image platform, to enable the sharing and exchange of patient information and take a step forward in implementing smart healthcare powered by artificial intelligence (AI). The project involves 350 to 400 hospitals across the country and has been approved by the National Health Commission. Radiology imaging, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computerised axial tomography (CAT) scans, is used to help diagnose diseases. Until now, medical images have been stored separately in hospitals and could only be shared among affiliated hospitals or those that have agreements with each other.

- **Edited DN** 23 Sept: UN agencies urge member states to take action against infodemic
  The UN and its specialised organisations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization (UNESCO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UN Global Pulse, and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), have [issued](#) a joint statement in which they call on member states to develop and implement action plans to manage the world's infodemic. The statement notes that COVID-19 is the first pandemic in history in which technology and social media are being used to keep people safe and informed, while at the same time the same technology also amplifies an infodemic that undermines the global response to and jeopardises measures to contain the pandemic. The organisations ask member states to promote the timely dissemination of accurate information based on science and evidence to all communities, and in particular to high-risk groups. Furthermore, they called on all other stakeholders, including media and social media platforms through which mis- and disinformation are disseminated, to respond to the infodemic.

- **Edited DN** **17 Sept: CynergisTek: fewer health groups compliant with cyber standard**
  Cybersecurity consulting firm CynergisTek released its third annual report, which revealed that only 44% of healthcare providers in the USA are compliant with cybersecurity rules outlined by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). In some cases, scores have declined since 2017. Cyber-threats against health systems and hospitals have increased exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **30 Sept: CTA and CHI launch initiatives to address health disparities in USA**
  The Consumer Technology Association (CTA) and the Connected Health Initiative (CHI) announced that they are launching the Health Equity Access Leadership (HEAL) to address health disparities in the USA. The HEAL coalition consists of public and private actors, including Google, Microsoft, and AT&T, and will present recommendations on the greater use of technology to reduce health disparities. Vice President of digital health at the CTA Rene Quashie said that the coalition can help reduce inefficiencies and provide more personalised care for marginalised populations through greater use and adoption of technology.

- **29 Sept: El Salvador begins telemedicine for pregnant women, new mothers, and other priority group**
  The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that the government of El Salvador launched telemedicine services for three priority groups: pregnant and post-partum women, children under the age of five, and people requiring mental health care. The initiative is run by the Ministry of Health, with technical and financial support from the UNFPA and the Embassy of Canada in El Salvador. Pregnant women and mothers can reach health professionals, including gynecologists, pediatricians, and general practitioners by dialing 131 on their phone. UNFPA's representative in El Salvador said that telemedicine offers many potential advantages, such as reduced costs, increasing equity in health, and reduced waiting time to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- **25 Sept: Health insurer pays USD6.85 million to settle data breach**
  The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that Premera Blue Cross has agreed to pay USD6.85 million and to implement a corrective action plan to settle potential violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy rules related to a data breach incident that had affected over 10.4 million people. The resolution is the second largest payment to resolve a HIPAA investigation in the OCR history. The company is the largest health plan in the Pacific Northwest of the USA. The data breach was reported by Premera Blue Cross on behalf of itself and its network of affiliates in March 2017, stating that cyber attackers had gained unauthorised access to its IT system. The hackers used a phishing email to penetrate malware that granted them access to the company's IT system in May 2014, which left undetected for almost nine months until January 2015. The undetected cyberattack, also known as an advanced persistent threat, caused the disclosure of more than 10.4 million individuals' protected health information, including their names, addresses, dates of birth, email addresses, Social Security numbers, bank account information, and health plan clinical information. The OCR's investigation discovered that the company's IT system was not compliant with the HIPAA rules and the company had failed to conduct an enterprise-wide risk analysis, implement risk management, and undertake audit controls.

Water and technology (Efrat - efratd@diplomacy.edu)
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- **Edited MB** **15 Sept: EDF, NASA, DRI and Google design water consumption app for US farmers**

  The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), together with NASA, the Desert Research Institute (DRI), and Google, plan to develop a new web application called OpenET to enable US farmers and water managers to track water consumption by crops and other vegetation by using data from satellites and weather stations. The application will be able to: inform the irrigation management when to water the crops to maximise water efficiency; allow water and land managers to develop accurate water budgets and management programmes; and support groundwater management, water trading, and conservation programmes. Additional collaborators in the project include the Google Earth Engine, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service, the Ca State Monterey Bay University , the University of Idaho, the University of Maryland, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

- **Edited SH** **18 September – Indian government launch contest for smart water supply monitoring solutions.** The Jal Jeevan Mission under the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation Ministry of Jal Shakti in India, in partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology launched a contest for creating a smart rural water supply ecosystem that measures and monitors the service delivery of water supply in rural areas. The pilot programme will be conducted at 100 villages, and the best solution will get a cash prize of Rs 50 lakh (around 67,000 US$) while runner ups will get a prize of Rs 20 lakh (around 27 000 US$) each. Successful developers will be given an opportunity for further developing their solutions.

- **Edited SH** **20 September – Partnership between DEWA subsidiary and smart IoT on smart water and air monitoring.** Moro Hub (Data Hub Integrated Solutions), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), signed a partnership with Smart Internet of things (IoT), a United Arab Emirates (UAE) IoT innovator. The partnership will enable Moro Hub to add to its Smart Cities Command and Control Centre a smart water and air quality monitoring service. The service will allow regulators and private sector clients to monitor and manage locations such as swimming pools, water tanks, schools, and restaurants for indoor air, and water quality.

- **Edited SH** **21 September - Microsoft announces its goal to become water positive by 2030.** Microsoft announced its goal to be water positive for its direct operations by 2030. According to the announcement, Microsoft intends to reduce water use intensity and to replenish water in roughly 40 water-stressed regions they operate. To do so, Microsoft plans to invest in projects such as wetland restoration and the removal of impervious surfaces, which will help replenish water back into the basins that need it most.

- **Edited DN** **September 24 - European Innovation Council grants the Horizon Prize to the UNHCR for IoT based water monitoring system**. The European Innovation Council granted the Horizon Prize (€1m) in the field of water, hygiene, and sanitation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for creating real-time solutions for the remote monitoring of water tankers to improve the effectiveness of water trucking programming. The system uses a series of networked, ultra-sonic water-level sensors that are installed in the tanks of water delivery trucks as well as static water tanks in refugee settlements to provide real-time data on water deliveries and consumption. The devices send their readings to a central gateway, which can examine data from up to 20,000 individual sensors. The data is fed to an online dashboard that gathers information from all active gateways in a country or region. Then, the accumulation of the data enables real-time monitoring of how much water is being delivered and consumed across the entire country. During the pilot stage of the project, the technology has already been installed in settlements in Iraq, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya, and will be rolled out in

Bangladesh by the end of this year.

- **September 25 – GI Hub grants the global innovation award for an IoT based system for wastewater**. The Global Infrastructure Hub (the G20 advisory forum for creating sustainable, resilient, and inclusive infrastructure) awarded the InfraChallenge prize for global innovation to the Lebanese tech start-up Mrüna for its IoT based system for wastewater treatment. The company will receive an approximately $35,000 funding package, ongoing support from GI Hub and MIT Solve, and exposure to the G20's Infrastructure Working Group.

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Migration and technology (Aida - aidam@diplomacy.edu)
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Cambridge Analytica (Andre - andree@diplomacy.edu)
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Mapping Uber (Ana Maria - anamariac@diplomacy.edu)

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Quantum technology (Sorina - sorinat@diplomacy.edu)
- **2 September. UK launches National Quantum Computing Centre.**

Fake news (Paula - paulas@diplomacy.edu)

September 1st: China launches new app to combat online misinformation

Cyberspace Administration of China and state news agency Xinhua launched a new app to combat online misinformation. The app, called the United Rumour Debunking Platform, is part of a broader campaign to address the issue of misinformation in the biggest internet market in the world. This app and other programs that will run within some major Chinese apps like WeChat and Baidu, will enable users to quickly fact-check online rumours. It will also allow the users to report online misinformation.

Introducing a Forwarding Limit on Messenger

See Liability of Intermediaries - 16 September - Twitter expands policies against election-related information

See **See Liability of Intermediaries - 16 September – EU Commission releases reports on actions taken to fight COVID-related disinformation**
See digital health, 23 Sept: UN agencies urge member states to take action against infordemic