Internet Governance in January 2018

30 January 2018

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A look back: Main events in January

17-19 Jan. MAPPING Surveillance Event (Rome)

17-19 Jan. ITU Expert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations
- 3rd Meeting (Geneva)

22 Jan. Visions of the Internet from Delhi, Wuzhen, Geneva, and Everywhere
Else (Washington)

22 Jan. ITU CWGs Internet / Child Online Protection / WSIS meetings (Geneva)

22-25 Jan. Putting the European Open Science Cloud Vision into Practice (Porto)

23-24 Jan. 10th International Cybersecurity Forum (Lille)

23-26 Jan. World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2018 (Davos-Klosters)

24 Jan. Big Data, Big Problems? Challenges and Opportunities in the context
of Data Ownership, Privacy and Protection (Geneva)

24 Jan. WSIS Forum 2018 Open Consult. Process – 2nd Physical Meeting (Geneva)

29 Jan. 14th Annual State of the Net Conference (Washington)

29-31 Jan. CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation – 5th Meeting (Geneva)

Visit dig.watch/past-events for details & reports

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What happened in January?

Internet Governance BAROMETER (JANUARY 2018)

IG Barometer indicates the presence of specific IG issues in the public policy debate in comparison to the previous month

Global IG architecture

The World Economic Forum has launched the Global Centre for Cybersecurity, which will focus on cybercrime and the application of new technologies in finance, healthcare, telecommunications, and mobility. Based in Geneva, the autonomous organisation will gather governments, the corporate sector, experts, and law enforcement agencies to consolidate existing cybersecurity initiatives, establish an independent library of cyber best practices, and work towards an appropriate and agile regulatory framework on cybersecurity.

Sustainable development

The UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development has set new targets for connecting the other half of the unconnected population by 2025. The targets, published in *2025 Targets: Connecting the other Half,* include access to broadband Internet for 75% of people worldwide, 65% in developing countries, and 35% in least developed countries.

Security

Researchers have discovered critical vulnerabilities in processor chips made by Intel, AMD, ARM, Qualcomm, and other companies.

The US Departments of Commerce and Homeland Security have published a draft report – open for public consultations – titled *Enhancing the Resilience of the Internet and Communications Ecosystem Against Botnets and Other Automated, Distributed Threats.* The report recommends establishing basic security standards for IoT devices in home and industrial applications, and promoting international adoption through bilateral arrangements and the use of international standards.

Japan and Estonia announced they will strengthen their cooperation on cybersecurity, and in particular, cyberterrorism. Japan will also join the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Center of Excellence, based in Tallinn, Estonia.

A new German law has entered into force, requiring Internet platforms with more than two million users to proactively report and delete illegal content swiftly. Pressure on Internet companies to tackle illegal content mount also in the UK, and at EU level.

E-commerce and Internet economy

Singapore, which started its chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2018, singled out e-commerce as a priority. ASEAN's digital economy is projected to reach USD$200 billion by 2025.

The EU has started its work on the 2018 programme, which will focus on adopting pending legislation in line with the Digital Single Market strategy.

Google reportedly moved billions in revenue to Bermuda to avoid paying taxes, Bloomberg revealed.

Following the growth of e-commerce in Southeast Asia, several ASEAN countries are introducing, or considering introducing, taxes on e-commerce sales.

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Digital rights

In preparation for the entry into force of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), ICANN has proposed models to ensure compliance of the so-called WHOIS policy with the data protection rules. All three models proposed a tiered/layered access to domain name registration data, as opposed to current policies which allow broad access to such data.

France has added data and artificial intelligence to the list of sectors requiring approval by the state before companies are acquired by foreign investors. The French Finance Minister hinted that foreign investors should not be allowed to market citizens' data.

A number of shutdowns were reported: In DR Congo, the telecommunications ministry has cut off access to the Internet as anti-government protests continue. The Iranian government control has shut down social media and disrupted Internet access in response to protests.

Jurisdiction and legal issues

Apple has set up a new data storage centre in China to comply with the country's rules. The company's new terms and conditions agreement with China reveals that all personal information and files of Chinese customers stored on the iCloud will be shared with the Guizhou-Cloud Big Data and could be further assessed and scrutinised by Chinese authorities.

Around 300 companies, groups, and individuals have filed briefs with the US Supreme Court, in support of Microsoft in its long-standing battle with the US government over access to e-mails held on the company's Irish data server.

Infrastructure

Alphabet-owned Google is planning to build three submarine cables in 2019 to expand its cloud computing infrastructure. The first, called the Curie cable, will connect Los Angeles to Chile; the second cable, Havfrue, built in partnership with Facebook, will link the USA to Denmark and Ireland; the third cable, for the Pacific region, will run from Hong Kong to Guam. With these three connections, Google now has direct investment in 11 cable systems.

Net neutrality

Following December's vote by the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to repeal net neutrality rules, legislators in different states across the USA are proposing bills to enforce the net neutrality principle at state level. The US Senate is expected to vote on a draft bill that would reverse the order with which the FCC repealed the net neutrality rules. The bill is now entitled to bypass committee review and move directly to a Senate floor vote.

New technologies (IoT, AI, etc.)

In line with its Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan, announced in 2017, China will build a technology park for over 400 companies working in artificial intelligence, with an investment of USD$2.1 billion.

Half of all new cars in China will be powered by AI by 2020.

In Stockholm, citizens can use driverless buses for free during a trial project implemented by Ericsson in collaboration with Stockholm City.

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Presented during the Geneva Internet Platform briefing on 30 January. More: dig.watch/briefings

Which were the main digital policy trends in January?

1. Internet companies' behaviour scrutinised

- Opportunities and challenges of digital technology discussed at WEF annual meeting in Davos

- Philanthropist George Soros criticised 'rise and monopolistic behaviour of giant IT platform companies':

  – Companies are manipulating users' attention and engineering addiction to their services

George Soros (Bloomberg News)

  – Internet monopolies have neither the will nor the inclination to protect society against consequences of their actions

- Google's first report to the EU on how it is complying with antitrust order was due 28 Jan.

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2. More pressure to remove illegal content

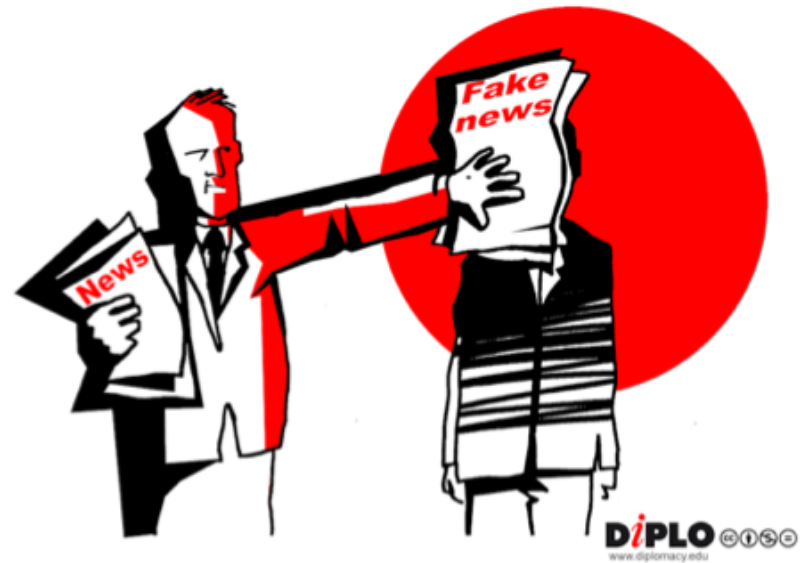Governments are exert more pressure on companies to remove illegal content

- Germany: New law, NetzDG, requires Internet platforms with more than two million users to proactively report and delete illegal content

- UK: Internet companies are called 'ruthless profiteers' by Home Office Minister; they are costing government extensive resources when they fail to assist in time

- European Commission: Internet platforms must remove illegal content within 2 hours. Meeting considered to be 'last chance' for companies, before being forced through regulation

3. New legal measures planned to tackle fake news

- Pope Francis, in message for World Communications Day, condemns 'manipulative use of social networks' and other forms of communication

- UK Prime Minister announces anti-fake news unit to combat disinformation by state actors and others

- French President announces plans for new law: judges may block a website or account, and oblige platforms to reveal names behind sponsored content

- Prime Minister of Malaysia: regulation could prevent uprisings, or prevent elections being affected by spread of false news

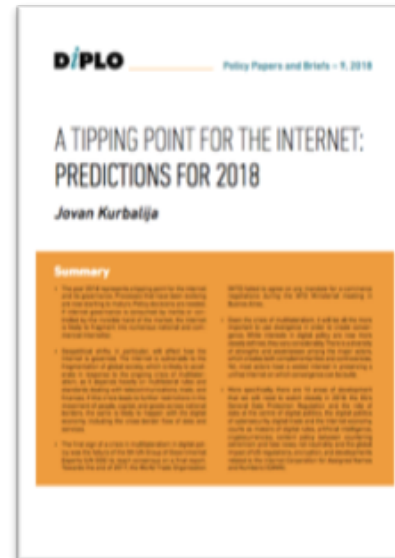# 4. Taxation for Internet economy into focus again

- Bloomberg reveals that Google shielded billions in revenue through tax-avoidance scheme

- Google: it is ready to pay higher amounts of tax; issue is where it should be paid. OECD encouraged to take the lead

- US Supreme Court to revisit 1992 tax ruling which made the Internet a largely tax-free zone in USA

- Next: OECD's interim report expected in March; European Commission's proposals expected first few months of 2018

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

- January is typical for 2017 round-ups and 2018 predictions. Our two reports: *The Top 20 Developments in 2017*; GIP head's predictions for 2018

- Geopolitical shifts will affect how the Internet is governed; Internet vulnerable to fragmentation of global society, which can also happen to digital economy; actors should use divergences to arrive at convergences

- 10 areas to observe closely: GDPR; digital politics of cybersecurity; digital trade and Internet economy; courts as makers of digital rules; AI; cryptocurrencies; content policy; net neutrality; encryption; ICANN developments

Upcoming: Main events in February

5-7 Feb.	ITU-T Focus Group on Application of Distributed Ledger Technology – Second Meeting (Bern)
12-14 Feb.	MAPPING Final General Assembly (Malta)
16-18 Feb.	Munich Security Conference 2018 (Munich)
19 Feb.	WSIS Forum 2018 Open Consultation Process – Final Brief (Geneva)
19-21 Feb.	NANOG 72 (Atlanta)
26 Feb-23 Mar.	UN Human Rights Council - 37th Session (Geneva)
26-28 Feb.	Global Internet and Jurisdiction Conference 2018 (Ottawa)
28 Feb-2 Mar.	EBU Big Data Week 2018

Visit dig.watch/events for details

From the Geneva Internet Platform & DiploFoundation

New reports

- IGF 2017 Report - https://dig.watch/igf2017
- Top 2017 Developments - https://dig.watch/2017
- A tipping point for the Internet: 10 predictions for 2018 - https://dig.watch/2018pred

Ongoing

- Digital Commerce course – launched on 29 Jan.

Upcoming

- January's Geneva Digital Watch newsletter (31 Jan) - https://dig.watch/newsletter
- February's briefing on Internet governance (27 Feb) - https://dig.watch/briefing-feb18

Local hubs & regional perspectives

More: dig.watch/briefing-jan18