BRIEFING
Key Studies

DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Purpose
How could anyone have imagined a few years ago that cars would now drive themselves, drones would be used to deliver and advertise products, 3D printing would allow increased product customisation, data glasses would be used for virtual shopping, and information would be stored in the cloud? The Digital Revolution has opened up new opportunities to boost the economy and empower customers as never before. Access to information and content is potentially on offer at any time, anywhere and on any device. The European Parliament is working hard to turn potential into reality. It has called for a clear and coherent legal framework able to break down digital barriers between Member States. It has further focused on the skills gap, security and consumer confidence, and attractive, legal supply of digital content. It has managed to secure a complete ban on roaming charges, with effect from June 2017. The European Parliament continues to negotiate better rights for European citizens in the areas of cybersecurity, privacy and data protection.

Inside
This leaflet provides extracts from relevant supporting analyses prepared by Parliament’s policy departments for the committees on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, Foreign Affairs, Employment and Social Affairs, Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industry, Research and Energy, and Culture and Education. Scan the QR code or click on the title of the publication to access it.

Publications

Over-the-top (OTTs) players: Market dynamics and policy challenges - December 2015
European online services experience additional costs and barriers when developing over-the-top (OTT) services, while the regulatory environment differs from the environment for traditional telecom and media services, triggering the question of possible reforms. The key ‘milestones’ listed in the DSM Strategy provide limited details as regards the specific changes that will be made to achieve its goals. Given the lack of focus on results and lengthy timeframes involved, the delivery of concrete outcomes risks to be substantially delayed in time.

Smart Single Market regulation - September 2015
This study proposes a consolidated governance system that would serve as a tool for smart Single Market regulation toward 2020 and beyond. It outlines areas for improvement in Single Market regulation through the adoption of performance-based policy concepts; and reviews the scope for making better use of the Single Market governance tools to improve the effectiveness of regulation. The study was prepared at the request of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee.
Building blocks of the ubiquitous Digital Single Market - February 2015

The workshop aims at giving an overview of most advanced market and technological trends built on mobile connectivity and cloud computing, that can transform the Digital Single Market into the main engine of growth and job creation in the EU. It points at Estonia and South Korea as leading jurisdictions that made the most of digital technologies both in private and public sectors. It examines net neutrality and cybersecurity as upcoming political and regulatory challenges.

Network neutrality revisited: challenges and responses in the EU and in the US - November 2014

This analytical study provides background on the debate over network neutrality, including (1) its technological, economic, and public policy aspects, and (2) the implications for European public policy going forward, including the position of the European Parliament on the Telecoms Single Market Regulation that was adopted in the first reading of the European Parliament in April 2014. It includes a comparison between the US and the EU, two leading jurisdictions where these issues continue to be debated intensely.

Streaming and online access to content and services - March 2014

As a result of technological progress in the area of cloud computing and mobile connectivity, Internet is increasingly offering an omnipresent and interactive - ubiquitous - access to information and content. This leads to efficiency, innovation and a significant reduction of the environmental footprint, with potential changes in the economic and societal landscape. However, the current legal and economic setting in Europe is leading to a partitioning of mobile Internet access and Internet content along national borders, affecting benefits that could be derived by Europeans from the Digital Single Market.

Discrimination of consumers in the Digital Single Market - November 2013

The study collates information on discrimination against consumers on grounds of place of residence or nationality in the Digital Single Market (DSM). Collected evidence indicates such practices as refusals to sell or discriminatory conditions depriving consumers of access to goods and services on DSM or obliging consumers to pay higher prices. The study assesses discrimination from the perspective of different areas of European law and provides for policy recommendations.

Ubiquitous developments of the Digital Single Market and e-commerce - October 2013

Ubiquitous solutions providing access from anywhere at any time are a next step for government and commercial services, and are expected to result in lower costs, increased flexibility, and an enhanced user experience. These solutions, based on modern cloud technologies, may facilitate re-use across borders, avoid duplication and achieve scale economics as well as cross-border interoperability for e-government services.

Performance-based full policy cycle for Digital Single Market - October 2013

A benchmarking exercise of a number of Digital Single Market policy initiatives recently proposed by the European Commission against the performance-based policy model shows that the current policy development and assessment process could be improved. The key features of a performance-based full policy cycle are a clear articulation of policy objectives, the use of quantitative indicators of expected policy impacts, the identification of synergies between policies, and a greater use of quantitative data.
Employment and skills aspects of the Digital Single Market strategy - November 2015

Active inclusion is a comprehensive policy strategy recognising equal importance to each of the three strands: adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services. It also promotes integrated policies to modernising social protection systems. This study analyses policies to enhance the implementation of active inclusion policies at European level and in the Member States with a view to strengths and weaknesses. It finds that many policy initiatives have been enacted in the last seven years, nevertheless, the overall picture remains mixed.

Challenges for competition policy in a digitalised economy - July 2015

This study describes the challenges for competition policy in relation to the digital economy. It explores the specific characteristics of digital economy markets and how these characteristics impact competition policy. The study focusses on competition policy and its instruments such as anti-trust laws, merger regulation, state aid and sector regulation. Neighbouring policy fields such as copyright and data protection are outlined where important but not analysed in detail.

Cross-competition among information (digital) platforms - May 2015

The workshop addressed the question of avoiding global information monopolies and the place for European platforms. It is unclear how dominant large digital platforms actually are. Markets are often contestable due to dynamic competition for the market. Policy should focus on paving the way for European champions and there is a need for revising non-digital policies governing traditional industries in order to remove barriers for enterprises to adapt to new realities.

Mapping smart cities in the EU - January 2014

This report was commissioned to provide background information and advice on Smart Cities in the European Union (EU) and to explain how existing mechanisms perform. In exploring this, a working definition of a Smart City is established and the cities fitting this definition across the Member States are mapped. An analysis of the objectives and Europe 2020 targets of Smart City initiatives finds that despite their early stage of development, Smart City objectives should be more explicit, well defined and clearly aligned to city development, innovation plans and Europe 2020 in order to be successful.


This study was commissioned to analyze the transatlantic digital economy and data protection issues and their future implications for the EU and the world. The study first describes the state of play in the digital economy, data protection and data-transfer issues in the European Union and the United States; it then explores the points of collaboration and friction across the transatlantic in these areas; and finally it assesses the broader geopolitical and foreign policy implications of the developments in the transatlantic digital economy and sets out policy recommendations for the EU.

Public and commercial models of access in the digital era - April 2013

This study provides an overview of the status and potential evolution of how content is delivered to the wider public in Europe, including the experience of the public sector and commercial providers. On the base of problems and causes identified, a series of recommendations are made to respond to the challenges of the digital era regarding access to content in Europe.
The challenges of connected TV - September 2013

At the convergence of broadcast and broadband, Connected TV offers opportunities to drive growth, and enhance social inclusion for all European citizens. In order to remedy lack of interoperability, some stakeholders are developing ecosystem strategies to enter new areas of content aggregation and non-linear distribution, while legacy linear TV is demonstrating considerable resilience. Several EU directives are relevant, but the time is not for a deregulatory ‘big bang’. EU Premium content remains strategic and requires long-term incentive policies.

Adult education and open educational resources - September 2015

This study reviews the current use of Open Educational Resources in Adult Education, assesses its potential and makes recommendations for policy interventions, taking account of the European Commission's policy frameworks. It incorporates new research on over 12 Member States, leveraging on a synthesis of existing research from a range of projects including POERUP (Policies for OER Uptake) and a 2014-15 study on Shared OER for the Joint Research Centre, augmented by two more recent studies for JRC and LLP.

Innovative schools: Teaching & learning in the digital era - May 2015

The digital revolution is transforming the way children and young people play, access information, communicate with each other and learn. But, so far, this revolution has not transformed most schools or most teaching and learning process in classrooms. Education has an important role to play in increasing the European competitiveness and reducing unemployment, but what can policy makers do to take full advantage of emerging technologies in education while avoiding their downsides? The document is the compilation of the background papers and presentations prepared for the workshop.

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Policy Departments

There are five policy departments within the European Parliament's DGs for Internal Policies and for External Policies. They are responsible for providing both in-house and external high-level independent expertise, analysis and policy advice at the request of committees and other parliamentary bodies (delegations, President, Bureau, Secretary-General). Their expertise covers all areas of activity of the European Parliament. They are closely involved in the work of committees which they support in shaping legislation on and exercising democratic scrutiny over EU policies. Policy departments deliver policy analysis in a wide variety of formats, ranging from studies and in-depth analyses to briefings and the Fact Sheets on the EU. This written output serves a variety of purposes by feeding directly into the legislative work of a specific committee or serving as a briefing for delegations of members.

Policy departments also organise events, including workshops and expert panels, which enhance Parliament’s analytical capacity and develop common approaches to current political issues.

Fact Sheets on the EU

The Fact Sheets provide an overview of European integration and of the European Parliament’s contribution to that process. They cover six main themes: the EU’s functioning; a citizens’ Europe; the internal market; the economic and monetary union; sectoral policies; and external relations. The online version, available in 23 languages, is updated regularly throughout the year.

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