



European Internet Forum  
Political Leadership for Digital Society

TOWARD 2030

# The Top 10 Digital Trends

THAT WILL SHAPE EUROPE'S FUTURE  
AND DEMAND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Now it's real.



## DEFENCE OF DEMOCRACY

If our open societies become ungovernable and our democratic institutions untenable under attack from malevolent interests enabled by digital technologies, all other issues become academic. Attacks on press freedoms and performance are a particular and growing concern.



## EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Rapidly evolving digital technologies will transform all sectors and play a crucial role for society in confronting many challenges we face, notably for the environment, resource efficiency and climate change. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the most consequential evolving digital capability, founded on hyper-convergence of a spectrum of established and emerging technologies. Meanwhile, concerns over AI ethics and inbuilt biases grow.



## DATA

The boundaries of “data policy” are expanding in a ‘Knowing Society’ where the collection of data, access to data, ownership of data, “softwarisation” and the exploitation of data in real time are becoming the primary sources of economic and political power.



## DATA PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

Privacy and consumer protection concerns, notably in response to rapidly-evolving surveillance technologies, will remain at the heart of the Knowing Society. Acquirers of personal data – including governments - will therefore remain under ever-growing pressure not only to protect personal data from breach and unauthorised use, but to make it controllable by data subjects.



## ANTI-TRUST POLICY

Pressure grows for adaptation of fundamental principles underlying anti-trust policy and enforcement to reflect new, digitally-driven, data-dependent, global market dynamics.



## VERY HIGH CAPACITY CONNECTIVITY

Ubiquitous, high performance 5G, fibre and comparable network technologies are increasingly understood to be the essential common infrastructure. This enables globally competitive digital transformation in all vertical sectors, shaping the future global balance of both hard and soft power while also increasing exposure to cyber-security risks.



## ONLINE HARM

Strategies, organisations and tools to combat digitally-enabled threats to our economies, societies and governance will demand constant evolution and increasing resources in a context of growing “tech-lash” with calls for internet regulation to re-establish trust on-line.



## FUTURE OF WORK / SOCIAL STABILITY

Digitally-driven transformation is the key to future economic growth through growth of labour productivity, but also raises concerns over the character and distribution of future employment and, thus, social stability. In the Knowing Society, virtually all jobs across all sectors will require digital skills, creating new demands on education and training to meet the soaring demand for ICT-capable professionals.



## TAX

Digital transformation of our economies and societies will increasingly challenge established fiscal strategies, policies and boundaries, calling for more cross-border cooperation.



## DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

Worldwide pursuit of global leadership in core digital technologies, products and services, notably by the US, China and other Asian tech powers, raises new geopolitical issues and choices for Europe, particularly for Transatlantic partnership and for Africa, a strategic priority and opportunity for Europe’s tech and investment community. Meanwhile, nationalist tendencies in a growing number of countries raise the risk of a fragmented and weaponised internet.



The MEP-led European Internet Forum (EIF) offers this condensed summary of the digitally-driven trends expected to shape Europe’s digital transformation and thus inevitably the EU policy agenda over the next five years.

This summary reflects our multi-stakeholder membership’s recent review of trends already highlighted in our 2014 report, “The Digital World in 2030, What Place for Europe?”, as well as consideration of more recent emerging trends.





## ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

Europe's future will depend on the ability of our political institutions to foresee, facilitate and manage the social, economic and political consequences of digitally-driven transformation across our continent.

This summary is intended both to orient EIF's own programming priorities for the next year and to serve as input for the wider Parliamentary and EU agenda. We are also contributing to the work of ESPAS, the inter-institutional European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, as well as ORBIS, the Open Repository Base for International Strategic Studies. These contents remain our entire responsibility and do not necessarily reflect the views of any individual EIF member.

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## ABOUT EIF

EIF supports European MEPs from all political groups to ensure that Europe remains at the forefront and benefits fully from digital transformation through enhanced global competitiveness and social progress.

Through a continuous programme under MEP leadership of live debates and special projects featuring open and inclusive dialogue, EIF creates a space for greater understanding of the digital world.



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