

## Editorial

### **Reimagining Digital Governance for a Human-Centred Society**

Brittany Craig, Iván Kirschbaum, Jingxian You

Over the past years, digital technologies have significantly transformed how information flows across online spaces. The pervasiveness of digital communication technologies in many users' everyday lives, together with the rising power of giant platform companies, has raised concerns about digital governance. A growing body of literature recognises that non-state actors, such as Google, Apple, and Facebook, are becoming 'the new governors' who have 'mediated', 'constituted', and 'moderated' public discourse (Klonick, 2018; Gillespie, 2018). From single applications to the emergence of 'super apps', the expansion of digital, data-driven platform economy has subtly shifted conventional national based regulatory practices towards a more global phenomenon.

In digital communication studies, an increasing amount of research pays attention to the practices and debates surrounding how globalising technologies should be regulated (Flew et al., 2019; Gillespie et al., 2020). The growing global 'techlash' – marked by strong resistance to and rising scrutiny of the negative impacts associated with giant technology companies – alongside the global nature of digital communication technologies, has influenced not only macro-level international digital regulatory practices but also micro-level interactions between individual users and technologies. Consequently, more studies have sought to identify the multiple discursive dimensions of digital governance. Platform and app scholarship, for instance, has examined major global platform companies' influences on content moderation (Gillespie et al., 2020; Gorwa et al., 2020), 'super app' conglomeration (van der vlist et al., 2024), and the acceleration of uneven global flows of digital capital (Nieborg et al., 2020; Joseph et al., 2023).

The rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the 2020s, coupled with its perceived contributions to productivity and economic development, has been accompanied by escalating concerns about algorithmic bias, data privacy, online security, and public trust (Flew, 2024; Nah et al., 2024; Sahebi & Formosa, 2025). The increasing deployment of AI in diverse contexts has heightened the demand for more comprehensive digital and data regulation of AI technologies. AI governance, therefore, has become a focal point of attention across academic, industrial, and political spheres. Intergovernmental policy agendas, for example, have underlined 'responsible and human-centric AI' and the protection of human rights, as reflected in the updated OECD AI Principles and the European AI Act (OECD, 2024; EU, 2024).

One pressing issue within AI governance, however, is the lack of consensus on the ethical framework guiding AI regulation. How could we understand the changing relations between technology, human, and the natural environment in the context of AI? What different approaches to AI ethics might reshape our notions of 'justice' and 'fairness'? These are questions explored in the first article of this Special Issue. In *A Virtuous Ethics of AI: Conviviality as a Regulatory Framework*, Gavin Duffy examines John Rawls' theory of 'justice as fairness' and Ivan Illich's notion of 'conviviality' as applied to AI

regulation. Duffy argues that a ‘convivial’ perspective on AI offers a more sustainable regulatory approach for a human-centred society. Another central concern in contemporary AI discourse is how ordinary users regulate their informational privacy when encountering automated systems. In the following article, “*I'm a bit cautious of jumping in with both feet: exploring information ownership and negotiated control in AI chatbot users' communication privacy management*,” Mark Bo Chen illustrates how users negotiate information ownership, boundary regulation, and control when interacting with AI chatbots.

Shifting to the intersection of AI chatbots and urban digital governance, Juan Martín Marinangeli focuses on the AI chatbot Boti promoted by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires in Argentina. In the third article, *Coding Trust: The Promise and Perils of Digital Transformation in Buenos Aires' AI Governance*, he discusses how public trust is constructed – and concealed – through the official AI chatbot. The final article of this Special Issue brings us to postdigital arts practices in Europe. Focusing on an increasing technological opacity, Etienne Malecki in *Postdigital Art & Privacy: In Search of a Sensible Experience of Technology* reveals how a group of European multimedia artists engage with the politics of technology and challenge surveillance norms and digital control.

Overall, the articles collected in this Special Issue tap into discussions on how digital governance might be reimagined for a more human-centred, responsible, and trustworthy technological future. They provoke questions regarding the norms, values, and power asymmetries embedded in today's complex and globalised digital environment. Taken together, these contributions shed light on the complex power structures that shape digital infrastructures – from global platform firms to municipal AI initiatives and artistic participations – and demonstrate how such structures influence individuals' everyday interactions with advanced technologies. Connecting these works is a shared concern with how societies might find more balanced relationships between public value and private interest in an increasingly interdependent and rapidly digitalising world.

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### **Editorial Team:**

Brittany Craig is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne and the University of Potsdam. Focusing on the work of Lisa Robertson, Annette Messager, and Rei Kawakubo, her thesis examines how experimental aesthetics across literature, fashion design, and visual art are used to explore and contest feminist issues related to gendered embodiment and subjectivity.

Iván Kirschbaum is a PhD candidate at the School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne. His current research focuses on digital media usage, urban precarity, and cities, examining

how Latin American immigrants living in Melbourne use digital media to navigate everyday challenges in housing, work, and practices of belonging.

Jingxian You is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne. Her thesis investigates the globalisation of mobile applications and their role in the merging of virtual and physical spaces. Her research interests include digital governance, app globalisation, transnational digital policy, and digital city.

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