



World Press Freedom Day 2023
Side Event
**How to build a healthier online information ecosystem
to ensure access to public interest information**

3 May, 11.30-13.00
New York Bar Association, Vence Centre

co-organised by the [OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media](#), in the context of its [Spotlight on Artificial Intelligence & Freedom of Expression \(SAIFE\)](#) project together with [UNESCO](#), in the framework of its [Social Media 4 Peace](#) project

Large online platforms have become a dominant source for information and news consumption. These platforms undertake many functions of information management that were previously carried out by traditional actors, such as editors and publishers, thereby changing the information ecosystem and how news is produced, published and shared. Content governance processes of large online platforms therefore tremendously influence media freedom, access to information and freedom of expression.

Along with the exponential growth of information shared online, many platforms have turned to developing and deploying technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) for content governance. AI is used to support the prioritization, downgrading and dissemination of content to audiences (content curation), as well as to filter and take down illegal, harmful, or otherwise unwanted content (content moderation). These AI-led processes provide the basis for how society interacts with information online today. However, the data and advertising-driven business model of online platforms is not necessarily conducive to safeguarding media pluralism or to ensure the universal access to public interest and newsworthy content. On the contrary, AI-driven content curation processes mostly focus on their own and advertisers' economic interests rather than diversity, accuracy or the public good.

Moreover, these AI-driven processes – that shape and arbitrate political and public discourse online – are executed by technology that is designed, developed, and deployed in potentially biased, and error prone ways, negatively impacting freedom of expression. There are notably significant geographic and linguistic disparities, with these tools being far less effective for users in less wealthy and non-English speaking markets.

Part of the problem is the lack of transparency of these AI tools.

As digital platforms continue to transform and drastically change the media and information consumption as we know it, this session will explore ways forward in promoting a healthier online information space, one that ensures citizen’s access to public information, to enable democratic debate peace and security.

The session will not only discuss how to address societal harms brought by online content governance systems, but will particularly focus on ways to harness digital technologies for fulfilling the media’s democratic role and promoting human rights online.¹

The session will also discuss latest policy and regulatory developments aimed at regulating the impact of AI on freedom of expression and other human rights, which creates a momentum to call for a healthier digital public sphere. With this in mind, UNESCO has engaged in a series of consultations to develop global Guidelines on the structures and processes needed to ensure users have a safer and more critical interaction with online content, to simultaneously support freedom of expression and the availability of accurate and reliable information in the public sphere, and the OSCE RFoM has developed a Policy Manual to give guidance to States on developing human-rights centred regulation for online content governance.

Opening Remarks

Teresa Ribeiro, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Panelists

Robyn Caplan, Senior Researcher at Data & Society

Catalina Moreno, Project Coordinator and Researcher, Karisma Foundation

Daniel O’Maley, Senior Digital Governance Specialist at the Center for International Media Assistance at the National Endowment for Democracy

Closing Remarks

Adeline Hulin, Senior Project Coordinator, UNESCO

Moderation

Deniz Wagner, Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

¹ As described in the recent publication, marking the 25th anniversary of the OSCE RFoM, “can there be security without media freedom?” see [530239.pdf \(osce.org\)](#).