

New EU censorship measures go into effect Aug. 25

BY ROB VELLEKOOP - JULY 21, 2023

Starting Aug. 25, the EU is going to ban all messages from the Internet that it considers disinformation, fake news or violations of fundamental and human rights.

This will be done through the Digital Services Act (sounds very innocent), or Digital Services Act (DSA). Enforcement of this law is in the hands of the European Commission and special coordinators.

The Commission oversees the largest online platforms and major search engines. European digital services coordinators will be responsible for overseeing smaller platforms and search engines. This second censorship measure through the coordinators will become operational by Feb. 17 next year.

A sea of propaganda

It will become more difficult to find government-critical information on the Web in the near future. There will be little or no dissent online within the Union about climate, the war in Ukraine, 5G, pandemics, diseases, demonstrations, geoengineering, and so on.

Search engines will select only that information which the European 'may' read. Right now, 'googling' already means passing on limited information to some extent, but after the end of August, the gate will really be opened. The search results will then present you with a sea of government propaganda.

News coverage via the European Internet will not rise above the level of the NOS eight o'clock news. Probably after the TV, the computer can now go out the window for this purpose as well.

Bear in mind that the mailings you still receive as a reader from alternative news providers will find it more difficult to penetrate the

ensorship barrier! After all, as of February 2024, Internet hosts and their customers will also be scrutinized! And forget about being a bit critical on Facebook or Twitter any longer, because before you know it you'll be off and not getting back on.

### Alternative media

European alternative online media face an important choice. They can seek an Internet service provider based outside the EU in hopes of escaping this dance. Or they may have to go other than online to reach their audience.

In either case, from now on they will no longer be able to promote their articles through social media platforms. They have had problems with the latter in recent years anyway, but this was not always hard proof. After all, even now many dissenting articles no longer appear in search results.

And another thing: email (think sneeze letters) will become more important, but the EU is also curtailing this freedom through the ISPs.

### Print

For now, I see as the best resort a different attitude from critical readers. They will have to go directly - and not through some online platform - to the site of their alternative news media. In addition, I think printed newsletters, i.e. print, will get a huge boost. EU censorship is digital. Out there, fortunately, is still a world of possibilities, if only we are willing to start using them.

### Background

On December 15, 2020, the Commission released the Digital Services Regulation (DSA) proposal, along with the Digital Markets Regulation (DMA) proposal. That package was supposed to go to ensure a "more secure and equitable digital space for all. After EU co-legislators reached political agreement in April 2022, the Digital Services Regulation entered into force on Nov. 16, 2022.

This censorship law applies to all Internet service providers and platforms:

- \* Intermediary services providing network infrastructure: internet service providers, domain name registrars,
- \* Hosting services such as cloud and web hosting services,
- \* Online platforms where sellers and consumers come together, such as online marketplaces, app stores, sharing economy platforms and social media platforms
- \* Very large online platforms. Specific rules are set for platforms that reach more than 10% of Europeans (i.e. 45 million users).
- \* Online marketplaces must collect and publish more information about the companies (merchants) on their platform. Digital services must explain the rules for removing information or user accounts more comprehensively to users.

Large platforms

The 19 very largest online platforms and search engines must comply with the DSA rules from August 25, 2023. If these very largest platforms and search engines fail to comply, the European Commission may impose fines.

They are:

Alibaba AliExpress

Amazon Store

Apple AppStore

Booking.com

Facebook

Google Play

Google Maps  
Google Shopping  
Instagram  
LinkedIn  
Pinterest  
Snapchat  
TikTok  
Twitter  
Wikipedia  
YouTube  
Zalando  
Search engine Bing