[FR] CSA reviews measures to combat the manipulation of information on online platforms

IRIS 2021-9:1/8

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The *loi du 22 décembre 2018 relative à la lutte contre la manipulation de l'information* (Law of 22 December 2018 on combating the manipulation of information), requires online platform operators to cooperate in this area. For the second year, 11 such operators notified the CSA (the French audiovisual regulator) of the methods they had implemented in the fight against the dissemination of false information: Dailymotion, Facebook, Google (Google Search and YouTube), LinkedIn, Microsoft (Bing and Microsoft Advertising), Snapchat, Twitter, Unify (Doctissimo), Webedia (Jeuxvideo.com), the Wikimedia Foundation (Wikipedia) and Verizon Media (Yahoo Search).

Although the standard of the responses varied hugely, the CSA began by highlighting the progress made in terms of quantity and quality of declared information compared with the previous year. Nevertheless, it called for greater cooperation in certain key areas, such as the operation of algorithmic recommendation and moderation systems, the fight against manipulation of information in the advertising field and the provision of data required for a better understanding of these issues. To this end, the CSA encouraged operators, in particular, to supply more information (confidentially if applicable) on their algorithms, especially algorithmic content recommendation systems.

The declarations also reflected the efforts made by the operators in response to an overabundance of false information linked to the health crisis. While special attention had been paid this year to the measures taken in response to this extraordinary situation, the CSA also noted the implementation of some of the recommendations that it had formulated last year and urged platforms to continue to work this way in the future.

In order to provide more information to the public, the CSA urged the operators to improve the transparency of the measures taken and of their impact. With this in mind, the CSA was taking action itself in the fight against the manipulation of information as part of a process of increased transparency. To this end, in addition to the assessment of the measures implemented by the operators, it had published the declarations produced by the operators for the preparation of this assessment.

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The CSA welcomed the meaningful work undertaken to promote content from companies, press agencies and audiovisual communication services, and the partnerships entered into in this regard, and encouraged the platforms to adopt them in the long term. New initiatives had also been taken by some operators against accounts spreading massive amounts of false information and coordinated influence operations. Nevertheless, the CSA noted the lack of information passed on to users on the resulting risks, and wanted to see increased collaborative work between the actors to fight against such practices.

The CSA also noted a slight improvement in the methods implemented in the fight against commercial communications that carry false information, in particular in the establishment of advertising libraries. However, it called for more quantified data to be provided for a better understanding of the risks involved.

In this general context and with the 2022 elections approaching, the CSA announced that it would pay particular attention to the measures deployed by operators to prevent and, where appropriate, counter these risks of massive manipulation of information, while maintaining freedom of communication.

Lutte contre la diffusion de fausses informations sur les plateformes en ligne, Bilan 2020 du CSA

https://www.csa.fr/Informer/Toutes-les-actualites/Actualites/Lutte-contre-les-infox-le-CSA-publie-le-bilan-des-mesures-mises-en-oeuvre-par-les-plateformes-en-ligne-en-2020

CSA, The fight against the manipulation of information on online platforms. Review of measures implemented in 2020.

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