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BEYOND "FAKE NEWS"

HOW INFORMATION INTEGRITY CREATES A BUILDING GROUND FOR DISINFORMATION-RESILIENT SOCIETIES

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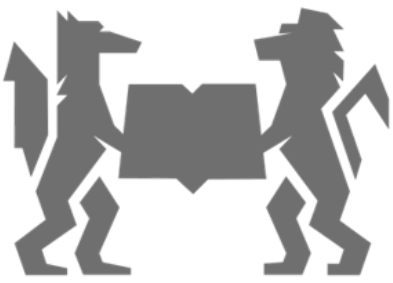

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2023, the Global Declaration on Information Integrity Online set a series of high-level standards seeking to *'offer a positive vision of a broader information ecosystem that respects human rights and supports open, safe, secure, prosperous and democratic societies.'*[1] This Declaration, led by Canada and the Netherlands, is the first intergovernmental non-binding agreement coming with a definition of information integrity: "*an information ecosystem that produces accurate, trustworthy, and reliable information, meaning that people can rely on the accuracy of the information they access while being exposed to a variety of ideas.*"

The notion of information integrity comes after years of debates within a community of researchers, activists, and policy makers, who have tried to come up with a joint approach to deal with the obvious pollution of the information and communication space. While not only focusing on "the bad" (i.e. hate speech, disinformation, propaganda), the concept of information integrity provides a "positive approach" to the information space, including its increasingly online dimension. As much as this shift sounds promising and builds on previous efforts, such as the International Partnership for Information and Democracy, endorsed, as of November 2025, by 57 countries, the notion has ignited debates on its provenance and the breadth of the concept.

A first question arises from the terminology itself. Does information integrity simply refer to the integrity of information, ie. a specific piece of content, or does it encompass the integrity of the broader information space, i.e. the ecosystem where information is created and circulates, and more specifically, digital platforms?

A second comes from the breadth and scope of the notion. With multi-faceted and interlinked challenges, can this one concept unite a community of practice, inform coherent policies, and ensure technology works to the benefit of democracy and human rights?

A third challenge concerns the implementation of the concept. Mainly used for international documents, from the Global Digital Compact (GDC)[2] to the recently adopted COP30 Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change,[3] there does not seem to be any reference to information integrity in national laws and regulations (the term is absent from milestone regulations like the EU Digital Services Act (DSA)).

This paper does not seek to answer this non-exhaustive set of questions. Rather, it is designed to introduce readers to information integrity as a concept, highlight its added value, and propose concrete actions for its implementation at different levels.

1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF INFORMATION INTEGRITY

To an increasingly large extent, tech-intensive companies, so-called Big Techs, are currently creating and owning the infrastructure through which information is produced, disseminated, and shared. Having largely developed in a regulatory vacuum,[4] these companies have changed the very structure of the information and communication space, for better or for worse.

After the hopes of the Arab Springs in 2010-2011 and the candid belief that social networks would be a major tool for democracy by bringing free speech to all nations, the world woke up to the first large-scale online manipulation campaigns in 2016 (notably during the Brexit referendum and the American election), before a string of other scandals, from, for instance, the amplification of hate towards the Rohingya community prior to the genocide in 2017[5] to the unprecedented cancellation of the Romanian presidential elections in December 2024.[6] Left unchecked, these companies had built powerful technological infrastructures, enabling increased participation and information velocity, but with very limited controls and transparency on content, how it is moderated, or promoted. The initial enthusiasm turned into an ongoing contentious conversation on the dramatic impact digital platforms have not only on democracy, but also on the safety of certain vulnerable, underrepresented, or overexposed groups.

“Information integrity” emerged in that conflictual context. As much as it is hard to write its brief history, we can focus on three main steps that led to its establishment.

- First, the concept of ‘fake news’ appeared too vague and was eventually weaponized by political actors against legitimate discourses detrimental to their own, even when they likely spread disinformation themselves (the infamous “you’re fake news”, “no, you’re fake news”)[7].
- Second, Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakshan came up with a conceptual framework in what remains a landmark report for the study of the information space and brought the notions of disinformation and misinformation.[8] With recurring semantic debates on how to define disinformation or evaluate the intent to cause harm to differentiate it from misinformation, researchers, civil society experts, and policymakers soon started to promote a more positive approach to a healthy information space.
- Third, this focus on cases of dis/misinformation failed to encompass more structural issues, such as the biases and perverse impacts of recommender systems or the business models of tech companies based on attention capture.
- Fourth, during the first Summit for Democracy (S4D) *“assembled national leaders discussed their respective visions for rights-respecting democratic governance that delivers for citizens; committed to action to reinvigorate democracy at home and abroad; and identified ongoing challenges to strengthening democracy and promoting human rights, including authoritarian*

*encroachment, radicalism and extremism, economic inequality, the climate crisis, and **information integrity**."*[9]

Since then, the notion of information integrity imposed itself as the 'umbrella concept' unifying discussions ranging from press freedom and economic sustainability of media organizations to platform governance and content authenticity. A few examples:

September 2021: In report 'Our Common Agenda', Antonio Guterres calls for creation of a global code of conduct promoting integrity in public information.[10]
December 2021: Heads of state and government discuss the challenges of information integrity at the Summit for Democracy.
July 2022: Canada and Latvia launch the Cohort on Information Integrity as part of the Summit for Democracy's year of action.
September 2022: Canada and the Netherlands commit to launch the previously mentioned Global Declaration on Information Integrity Online.
June 2023: The 'Our Common Agenda' policy brief number 8 focuses on information integrity on online platforms.[11]
September 2023: Canada and the Netherlands publish their Global Declaration on Information Integrity Online, now endorsed by 36 countries.
March 2024: The OECD publishes its report "Facts not Fakes, tackling disinformation, strengthening information integrity".[12]
April 2024: The Brazilian presidency of the G20 organizes an official side-event on information integrity in Sao Paulo.
June 2024: The UN releases its global principles for information integrity.[13]
September 2024: Information integrity is included in the Global Digital Compact.
December 2024: The OECD launches its Recommendation of the Council on Information Integrity.[14]

Throughout these different international processes, the notion of information integrity has been refined to actually focus on the information space. It brings substantial added value, notably by highlighting the right to reliable information.

2. MAKING SENSE OF INFORMATION INTEGRITY

Although the notion of information integrity has gained a tremendous amount of interest, it does not seek to replace concepts such as disinformation, misinformation, or hate speech, but rather to complement them. The following table shows that references to mis- and disinformation are concurrent with mentions of information integrity in the previously mentioned documents.

Exact mentions of	Disinformation	Misinformation	Hate speech	Information integrity

Global Declaration on Information Integrity Online	10	5	0	18
Global Principles on Information Integrity	128	68	53	78
OECD *Fact not Fakes* report	500+	71	2	313
Global Digital Compact	6	6	4	2
G20 Ministerial Declaration	4	2	2	9

The positive approach referred to in the Global Declaration on Information Integrity Online shifts the narrative from a defensive 'disinformation will cause the end of democracy' to a proactive 'what is a healthy information space and how do we build it'. More precisely, information integrity follows an interesting path of reflection, with:

a. A focus on the receiver

Information integrity marks an evolution in how we think about the information space. After decades of focusing on the right of individuals to express ideas, a need for a more balanced approach that accounts for the interests of the receiver has emerged. In other words, while freedom of expression remains a challenge in most parts of the world, this should not impede freedom of opinion, which implies the right to be free from manipulation and to access reliable and plural information.

The focus on the receiver seems even more necessary at a time of drastic changes in information channels. Mass media, with its limited channels of expression and information access, which might be seen as restricting freedom of speech, are losing their importance in favor of social media, which allows for very broad freedom of speech and offers a low threshold to sharing one's beliefs. Furthermore, the personalization of information channels, including content targeted to demographic groups and more personalized advertising content, means that individuals come across differentiated information. Therefore, the paradigm should be shifted towards ensuring that citizens have the freedom to access reliable and qualitative information.[15]

b. The recognition of the right to reliable information

The right to reliable information is a key concept developed in the International Declaration on Information and Democracy, unanimously adopted in 2018 by the members of the Information and Democracy Commission initiated by Reporters without Borders (RSF).[16] While the document does not directly refer to information integrity, identifying the right to reliable information, alongside freedom of expression, privacy, responsibility, and transparency, as one of the five principles to nurture

democracy-supporting information spaces contributed to a paradigm shift. This text notably inspired the International Partnership for Information and Democracy, endorsed by 57 countries around the world.[17]

Different texts promote various, often overlapping, qualifiers for the right to information, which can be "accurate, trustworthy, and reliable" for the Global Declaration on Information Integrity Online, "independent, free, and pluralistic" for the UN global principles on information integrity, or "accurate, evidence-based, and plural" for the OECD.

The Declaration on Information and Democracy brings some added value on that front as it seeks to provide an unambiguous and comprehensive definition of reliable information: "Information can be regarded as reliable insofar as its collection, processing and dissemination are free and independent, based on cross-checking of various sources, in a pluralistic media landscape where the facts can give rise to a diversity of interpretation and viewpoints."

Therefore, the concept of information integrity is not exclusively focused on content, but it insists on the need to have public interest media and independent journalists in charge of producing reliable information.

c. A structural and systemic approach

Having a well-functioning media ecosystem where all media would be financially sustainable, and journalists could do their work freely and independently, is essential, but it no longer suffices to ensure people can consistently access their content.

As social media – and now increasingly AI-powered chatbots – became a prevalent news source, sometimes even taking over traditional media as the primary source of information for younger generations[18], a handful of tech companies have become the new gatekeepers to the information ecosystem. The emergence of new stakeholders and practices underlines the need for a more structural approach, with policies that are not just focusing on content production, transmission, and moderation, but that are fostering information ecosystems enabling the access of every citizen to reliable information.

The concept of "information ecosystem" brings into focus the diversity of the stakeholders taking part in the entire information cycle, from data collection and investigation to content production, and then dissemination through various streams. It also acknowledges their complex relationships with one another in a holistic manner. For instance, policies designed to foster information integrity may encompass the direct consequences and spillover effects of the emergence of digital information distribution channels on the business model of media organizations, of the technical

choices within platforms (e.g. alterations to recommendation algorithms), of the global competition for attention, and of the erosion of public trust.[19]

Information integrity thus implies information ecosystems must reflect democratic principles, for instance, transparency, accountability, and neutrality, as listed in the Declaration on Information and Democracy. This value-based definition can also be spun to reflect the human rights such an ecosystem must enable, like in the UN Global Principles that advocate for "an information ecosystem that delivers choice, freedom, privacy and safety for all, in which people everywhere can express themselves freely and make informed and independent decisions."

3. ACHIEVING INFORMATION INTEGRITY: A MULTIFACETED CHALLENGE

As much as there are some linguistic considerations to discuss the notion of information integrity, it seems clear that it has become an umbrella term that embraces the three pillars of a functioning information space: the production of reliable, independent, and pluralistic information, its distribution through rights-respecting infrastructures, and reception by citizens properly equipped to independently formulate their opinion and exert their agency.

a. Improving the production

On the production side, individuals need independent, reliable, free, and sustainable third-parties to produce content that helps them make informed choices and decisions. This social function has been, for at least a century, the role of journalism and journalists.[20] While not above all criticism, the deontology and self-regulation of journalism,[21] as well as existing regulation (media laws), have proven rather effective in setting some guardrails for the public debate, especially in Western countries during peacetime.[22]

However, and for a variety of reasons, the production side of reliable journalistic content is under threat. Some are even referring to an extinction era for independent journalism.[23] A key reason for this is the arrival of tech companies, which have captured some major and historical sources of revenue for media outlets: classifieds and advertising. This erosion of business affected the quality of the information and led to the media being captured by a handful of billionaires.

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) brings another layer of challenge for the production of reliable information. Generative AI increases both the competitive pressure on current journalists, incited to adopt these tools to research and create content, when not outright replaced by them, while making research, investigation, and information cross-cutting more difficult due to the proliferation of believable synthetic content online.[24]

In the midst of sometimes harsh debates about 'who should pay for the news', it seems clear that public action is necessary to ensure the future of this social function. A number of initiatives, ranging from the New Deal for Journalism,[25] the International Fund for Public Interest Media,[26] the Media Viability Accelerator,[27] and most recently Media Viability Manifesto,[28] all seek to address different parts of the problem.

b. Improving the distribution

On the distribution side, tech companies that provide services allowing users to access online content (so-called digital platforms) have totally shifted the power dynamics in the information and communication space. The challenges are, here as well, colossal.

Whereas analog communications and traditional media institutions limited *de facto* the number of large scale information producers, as well as the possibility to relay and modify news stories, social media platforms came with the promise that every user could create, share, and engage with content. With little to no means of *ex ante* control over the content creators, platforms are entrusted with the challenging task of moderating content once it is posted online to ensure that it does not infringe on existing laws setting boundaries to freedom of speech (e.g. terrorist content, slander, sexual content…). Besides, the end of the gatekeepers' pivotal role during the mass media era, combined with the lack of a proper identification mechanism for social media users, enabled information manipulation operations at scale, carried out by networks of bots and fake accounts.

But content that is not illegal under that framework can nonetheless be detrimental to information ecosystems, such as some forms of deceptive and/or micro-targeted political advertisement, disinformation, or content promoting conspiracy theories. While some States adopted new legislation to expand the content moderation duties of digital platforms,[29] the scope of these new regulations remains limited and the implementation complex. Besides, it is crucial to note that countries are not equal when it comes to content moderation. The population of low and middle-income countries may represent minimal revenue prospects for online platforms that are rarely hiring sufficient content moderation staff, especially for rare languages or multilingual contexts.[30] There is also a disturbing trend in the policies of the largest social media platforms, which involves laying off employees responsible for content moderation in favor of its automation by AI tools.[31]

Working towards information integrity goes beyond content moderation. The largest social media platforms are not designed for users to access qualitative, diverse, trustworthy information, but primarily to maximize user engagement. In doing so, tech companies tend to develop algorithms engineered to capture users' attention, constantly feeding them massive amounts of information, with algorithms recommending primarily polarizing and toxic content.[32] Greater transparency in social

media's software and data to inform structural changes to the way content is distributed is critical for social media platforms to contribute towards better information ecosystems.

Moreover, the visibility or discoverability of trusted news media should be a cornerstone of information integrity. Achieving this requires both a commitment from tech companies to favorably take into account news media's legitimacy in the curation algorithms, and the development of mechanisms allowing the identification and certification of these media that respect the ethical and professional norms of journalism. The Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI) is an example of such a certification mechanism, based on a standard developed by 120 organizations around the world and already used by more than 2130 news outlets in more than 127 countries[33].

c. Adapting to context

Although social media platforms are borderless and many issues described so far are part of a global trend, there is unfortunately no "one size fits all" solution to achieve information integrity. Rather, it is essential to acknowledge that countries do not share exactly the same needs. Therefore, if we must elaborate on developing a common toolbox for information integrity, tools and policies must be deployed according to strategies adapted to national or regional contexts.
Some of the key variables that we identify are:

- Existing media environments

There are obvious fundamental differences between information ecosystems across regions. While they need to achieve both financial sustainability and pluralism, countries where new forms of media are blooming, for historical or economic reasons, with little institutional coordination, require different solutions than those with very diverse media environments undergoing rapid consolidation and erosion of the journalistic workforce.

- Multilingual and multiethnic contexts

Strategies for information integrity must also take into account the heterogeneity of information landscapes, especially in regions where the population is multiethnic and/or multilingual. The fragmentation of the information environment may reinforce intergroup conflicts and defiance. As an example, the tools developed by the European Union to counteract disinformation might need to be adapted to a country like Moldova, where information manipulation campaigns accentuate tensions between groups accessing news in Romanian, Gagauz, Russian or Ukrainian.[34]

- Public trust

Levels of public trust towards government and the media are intrinsically connected to the health of information ecosystems. Countries with low levels of trust in the government and the media might find centralized approaches to fight against

disinformation less successful than more horizontal ones, such as media education and crowdsourced fact-checking. In a country like Romania, where corruption undermines confidence in public institutions, and the trust towards media is as low as 27%,[35] supporting media literacy and identification of disinformation would allow the population to use media in a more beneficial way. The lack of trust in political elites and public institutions limits the scope and efficiency of centralized solutions.

- Historical context

Similarly, in countries with a history of illiberal control over information (state surveillance, propaganda), the development of public policies to tackle disinformation may prove difficult in the short-run. In a country like Chile, the fact that the Secretary General of the Government, Camila Vallejo-Dowling, assembled an Advisory Committee on disinformation, spurred criticism that the government could be trying to censor independent voices[36]. In a country where the memory of the dictatorship is still very lively, addressing issues related to information and freedom of expression becomes a bigger challenge than in other contexts.

- Technological preferences

People have unequal access to equipment, connectivity, and digital technologies, which translates into various technological choices. For instance, the population of a country that "leapfrogged" computers and digitalized through smartphones might favor direct messaging apps over "public boards" type of social media. Using end-to-end encrypted messaging apps such as WhatsApp or Telegram makes strategies relying on content moderation much more difficult. Specific, user-controlled solutions have been successfully experimented with in Taiwan.[37]

- Internal threats vs. external threats

Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) is an increasingly global phenomenon, and some States have made the weaponization of information a central tool in their influence strategy, such as Russia and China.[38] Nonetheless, some information ecosystems are exposed primarily to external threats, some to internal threats, and some are experiencing both. Responses to disinformation must be tailored accordingly, like in Brazil, where information manipulation comes in majority from one side of the political spectrum.

Adapting to local context does not mean that working towards information integrity is the business of countries on their own. Journalists, activists, policymakers, and citizens need an international network to mutualize resources, share knowledge and good practices to assess the current problems they face and identify the best solutions to implement, replicating strategies that proved effective in countries that share the same characteristics. Such a network would also be a forum where stakeholders could join forces and gain leverage when negotiating with Big Tech companies or political forces associated with FIMI operations.

d. Translating international commitments into national policies

As presented, information integrity is now a well-implanted concept in international organizations and agreements. While these developments are very much welcome, their actual translation into national policies largely remains to be seen. If the cross-national variations mentioned in the previous section definitely play a role here, the discontinuity and overall lack of coordination between Ministries for Foreign Affairs and other administrations with the mandate to apply these international agreements are also factors slowing down implementation.

The creation of National Focal Points on Information Integrity (NFPII) could fill the gap between international commitments and national application. Inspired by the Open Government Partnership (OGP), they would act similarly to its points of contact: *"The point of contact [...] is the person responsible for coordinating a participating government's domestic and international [...] activities. This person is a working-level counterpart to a ministerial-level representative. The role is crucial and multidimensional: points of contact are at the forefront of transparency, participation, and accountability efforts for a [...] country."*[39]

Ideally, and while different administrative and institutional configurations could be imagined, the Focal point should be appointed to serve within the government, ensuring good coordination between administrations. For example, a focal point within the office of a Prime Minister could ensure that the actions taken by the Ministry of Health to tackle disinformation are complementary with the ones taken by the Ministry of the Environment to tackle climate disinformation and synchronized with education policies implemented by the relevant ministry. They would also be responsible for ensuring these actions taken at the national level are in line with the country's international commitments and treaties.

The Focal point should have enough resources (human and financial) to ensure it can keep track of the public policies being developed at the national and international level. The position should also have enough political leverage to ensure it can oversee and coordinate what different administrations and public institutions are doing when it comes to information integrity.

Going further than a single punctual treaty, the network of NFPII could gather regularly to flag emerging threats, review successful initiatives, and update a shared roadmap. This network could coordinate with international funding mechanisms, public and philanthropic, dedicated to the freedom of the press and independent journalism to identify high-priority funding needs and to support common resources.

CONCLUSION

Over the last three years, information integrity imposed itself as a unifying concept to define a desirable path forward for our information ecosystems. It is now being applied to specific issues, including most recently to tackle climate disinformation. On November 12 2025, the Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change was launched at COP30 and is now endorsed by 20 countries. The signatories commit to combat climate misinformation, climate denialism, and promote evidence and science-based information on issues related to climate. Combining information integrity with one of the most pressing challenges of our era, this declaration further reinforces the authority of the concept of information integrity and represents an important milestone towards political implementation at the global level.

Moreover, it is crucial to note that emerging trends can largely influence information integrity and change the media ecosystems in the coming years. One of them is certainly the use of AI chatbots as a source of information - a phenomenon that is, although quite small in relative numbers, rising and especially significant among younger generations. This new channel has the potential to further transform the media landscape, the relationships between journalists and tech companies, as well as the way users access information.

While the mobilization of the international community is laudable, the multiplication of international initiatives and overlap between different organizations may cause some confusion, a dilution of resources, and a mismatch between the urgency to act and the funding put on the table. Translating international declarations into national public policies remains challenging.

To move from concept to action, information integrity must become a globally recognized right. Media organizations contributing to plural and resilient information ecosystems must be better supported. Regulators, researchers, and civil society organizations should have access to relevant data from tech platforms. Existing initiatives and projects must build towards common, interoperable toolboxes to mutualize resources without sacrificing national adaptation. Finally, a network of National Focal Points should be entrusted to facilitate policy design, adoption, and review, within and across national administrations to strengthen information integrity, locally and globally.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recognize the right to reliable information in international agreements**

The different international processes should enshrine the right to reliable information, as defined in the International Partnership for Information and Democracy. Expanding the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles to foster information integrity would establish a positive precedent for other international frameworks.

- **Promote and support media organizations that abide by ethical and professional norms of journalism**

Competing with all types of content, journalistic work from reputable individuals and organizations should be promoted on media platforms and financially supported to sustainably preserve their editorial freedom. International, independent certification bodies could verify compliance with clearly established legal and deontological norms and transparently operate accountability mechanisms in case of failure. Safeguards should ensure that media remain independent from political and financial pressure.

- **Ensure access to data and strengthen research capacity**

A better understanding of how digital platforms work, especially recommendations or moderation systems, is crucial to shape evidence-based policies. Access to data for vetted researchers should be guaranteed by law, with safeguards such as the independence of the oversight body. Specific attention should be drawn to researchers from the Global South, who should, in case of a lack of legal and governance framework, benefit from the extraterritoriality of frameworks (notably the DSA). Widening information laws to private actors could increase transparency.

- **Use already existing, preferably interoperable tools and projects**

A wide array of initiatives and tools has spurred across the world, some of them mentioned in this paper, aimed at increasing capacity-building efforts and providing necessary resources. Since information integrity is mutually beneficial at a global scale, amplification and synchronization of these cross-border initiatives and common toolboxes is both a pragmatic and efficient way to maximize impact.

- **Establish National Focal Points on Information Integrity**

With the appropriate mandate, human and financial resources, National Focal Points on Information Integrity could play a crucial role in better coordinating international efforts and their translation into national public policies.

[1]Zaken, Ministerie van Buitenlandse. *Global Declaration on Information Integrity Online - Diplomatic statement - Government.nl.* Diplomatieke_verklaring. 20 Sep. 2023,

[2]United Nations, Global Digital Compact, September 2024

[3] Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change, COP 30, Belém, Nov 12, 2025

[4] Or at least, for American social media companies, under the very protective "Section 230" of title 47 of the U.S. Code adopted in the 1996 Communications Decency Act, which exempts online service "providers" from the existing legal responsibilities of "publishers".

[5] „Myanmar: Facebook's Systems Promoted Violence against Rohingya; Meta Owes Reparations – New Report". *Amnesty International*, 29 Sep. 2022.

[6] Martinescu, Andra-Lucia, Sorina Stallard, Alina Balatchi-Lupascu, Mihai George Forlafu, and the Osavul Data Team (Yan Kurtov, Dmytro Bilash, Dmytro Plieshakov, and Yevhen Popov). *Networks of Influence: Decoding Foreign Meddling in Romania's Elections. A Collaborative Investigation into Disinformation Campaigns and Influence Operations*. December 2024.

[7] Feeding into the narrative that we moved into a so-called "Post-Truth" era (see the work of scholars like Jayson Harsin or Lee McIntyre's *Post-Truth* book). This may also include focusing political discourse on actual cases of information manipulation to dismiss broader protests as entirely illegitimate.

[8] Wardle, Claire and Derakhshan, Hossein, *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making*, Council of Europe report, September 2017

[9] "Summit for Democracy Summary of Proceedings". White House statement, December 2021

[10] United Nations. *Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-General*. United Nations, 2021.

[11] United Nations. *Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 8 – Information Integrity on Digital Platforms.* United Nations, 2023. United Nations Digital Library

[12] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Facts Not Fakes: Tackling Disinformation, Strengthening Information Integrity*. OECD Publishing, 4 Mar. 2024, doi:10.1787/d909ff7a-en.

[13] United Nations. *United Nations Global Principles for Information Integrity: Recommendations for Multi-stakeholder Action*. United Nations, June 2024.

[14] OECD Legal Instruments. Recommendation of the Council on Information Integrity. 17 Dec. 2024

[15] This evolution has been documented at various scales and in different contexts. For theoretical systematization of these phenomena, see for instance Jürgen Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, 2023 or Han Byung-Chul, *Infocracy: Digitization and the Crisis of Democracy*, 2022.

[16] International Declaration on Information and Democracy. *Forum on Information & Democracy*, 5 Nov. 2018.

[17] *International Partnership for Information & Democracy* formally signed during the 74th UN General Assembly in September 2019.

[18] See the recent surveys for European (*Social Media Survey*, European Parliament, 2025) or American citizens (*News Platform Fact Sheet*, Pew Research Center, 2025).

[19] For a thorough discussion of the definition of "information ecosystem", see Mansell, R., Durach, F., Kettemann, M., Lenoir, T., Procter, R., Tripathi, G., and Tucker, E. (2025) *Information Ecosystems and Troubled Democracy:A Global Synthesis of the State of Knowledge on New Media, AI and Data Governance*. International Observatory on Information and Democracy. Paris.

[20] For a historical review of the evolving role of journalism in Europe, the UK and the US see Tambini, D. (2021). *Media freedom*. Polity.

[21] See, for instance, the International Federation of Journalists (IJF) Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists (1954) and its more recent Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists (2019).

[22] For a foundational critique of the information inequalities between wealthiest and Global South countries, see the 1980 UNESCO's International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems report, *Many Voices One World*, also known as "MacBride Report".

[23] Notably Craig Silverman, "The Coronavirus Is A Media Extinction Event", *BuzzFeedNews*, March 23, 2020, since then repeatedly cited, for instance in IFPIM 2020 feasibility study "An International Fund for Public Interest Media" or in the 2022 UN Human Rights Council report "Reinforcing media freedom and the safety of journalists in the digital age"

[24] See Courtney C. Radsch, *Can journalism survive AI?* Brookings, 25 Mar. 2024

[25] Forum on Information & Democracy. *A New Deal for Journalism.* 16 Jun. 2021.

[26] Since 2022, the International Fund for Public Interest Media has distributed more than $15 million worth of grants to support independent journalism in 22 low- and middle-income countries.
[27] The Media Viability Accelerator, led by US non-profit Internews, is a platform launched in 2024 to "support media to compete more effectively for audiences and revenues" by learning from peers.
[28] Moore, Laura, Elena Köhler, and Clare Cook. *The Media Viability Manifesto: A Common Framework for Joint Action*. Sept. 2024.
[29] A non-exhaustive list in Western Europe would include the 2017 German Network Enforcement Act, the 2018 French Information Manipulation Law, the broader European Digital Services Act passed in 2022 and, more recently, the 2023 UK Online Safety Act.
[30] For instance, according to Amnesty International's *The Social Atrocity* 2022 report, only had one Burmese-speaking content moderator working on Myanmar in 2014, ahead of the Rohingya genocide. In 2018, this number was bumped to five, for 18 million Facebook users.
[31] For instance, after firing its 300 content moderators in the Netherlands, TikTok has been reported to consider a similar fate for the UK trust and safety team (Almeida, Lauren. "Hundreds of TikTok UK Moderator Jobs at Risk despite New Online Safety Rules" *The Guardian*, 22 Aug. 2025) while Meta is getting rid of more than 2000 content moderation contractors in Spain ("Meta Content Moderator Cuts over 2,000 Jobs in Spain: Union" *France 24*, 5 May 2025)
[32] See for instance Ross Arguedas & al. "Echo Chambers, Filter Bubbles, and Polarisation: A Literature Review" Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2022 or Bouchaud, P., Chavalarias, D. & Panahi, M. "Crowdsourced audit of Twitter's recommender systems", *Scientific Reports*, 2023
[33] See Journalism Trust Initiative Compliance Guide. *JTI : Journalism Trust Initiative*
[34] See Botero Arcila & Parmentier, *Under 35 And Under Siege*, SciencesPo Tech & Global Affairs Innovation Hub, 2024
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