

Editorial: Ethics, Transparency, and Safeguarding Privacy

Abhilash Nair

Welcome to the second Issue of 2020 of the European Journal of Law and Technology. In this Issue, we present three original research articles, a commentary and a book review.

In our first article titled ‘Ethical and Responsible IoT: The Edinburgh Initiative’, Andrés Domínguez, Ewan Klein, Charles Raab and James Stewart elucidate on the work of an Action Group on Governance and Ethics in assessing the use of a new Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure at Edinburgh University. The authors review three use cases of IoT from the perspective of ethical and responsible IoT that could be generalised to data-driven innovation, and to the wider universities and research institutions. In doing so, the authors explore, and shed valuable insights, on a broader set of issues in ethical practice that go beyond the confines of IoT in research and education.

Social media recommender systems decide what we see online, and what remains hidden. There has been much debate surrounding its regulation, and remains controversial in many respects. Paddy Leerssen, in his article ‘The Soap Box as a Black Box: Regulating Transparency in Social Media Recommender Systems’ addresses this topic. In a well thought after article, Leerssen analyses the existing transparency measures and highlights the benefits of public data access as a supplement to the existing three categories of disclosure rules involving user-facing disclaimers, government auditing, and data-sharing partnerships with academia and civil society.

Jonida Milaj offers a comprehensive overview of the key differences between the right to privacy as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the right to protecting personal data under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which is often highlighted as a ‘right to privacy’ in itself. In her article, ‘Safeguarding Privacy by Regulating the Processing of Personal Data – An EU Illusion’, Milaj analyses the extent to which the GDPR actually safeguards the right to privacy.

Justine Pila offers a thoughtful and comprehensive commentary on the use of technology in regulation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in her piece ‘Covid-19 and Contact Tracing: A Study in Regulation by Technology’. Pila uses the example of contact tracing in

Nair

analysing its implications on not just privacy and data protection but also the wider impact on individuals and communities concerning legality, moral responsibility and community, autonomy, and democracy. By doing so, Pila offer a broader perspective on the issues going beyond the usual discourses focused on privacy and data protection.

Finally, Giorgia Spolverato provides a comprehensive review of the book, 'Decider avec les algorithmes. Quelle place pour l'homme, quelle place pour le droit'. I would like to thank Dr. James Griffin, our Books Review Editor for organising the books reviews in a timely manner, but also for his valuable help with the technical editing of the journal.

Abhilash Nair
Editor-in-Chief