International Institute of Communications

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REGULATORY WATCH

A round up of the latest news from the world of communications and media policy

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Anthropic settles copyright lawsuit with $1.5 billion payment

AI company Anthropic has had its $1.5 billion offer to settle a class action lawsuit over copyright infringements approved by a judge in San Francisco. A group of authors and publishers had accused Anthropic of using pirated versions of their books without permission in order to train its Claude chatbot model. A judge had previously ruled that Anthropic had made fair use of the authors' work, but that had violated their rights by saving 7 million pirated books to a 'central library' that would not necessarily be used for AI training. The action is one of a series of cases being brought by copyright owners against tech companies over the training of large language models (LLMs). The settlement is the largest known payout under US copyright law. (Reuters)

Publishers rethinking Google deals as AI supplants traditional search

Reddit is one of a number of publishers thought to be re-evaluating its relationship with Google. Under a $60 million deal struck in 2024, Reddit allows Google to use its material to train AI models. But with AI-generated answers to queries reducing clicks to external websites, the value of the company feeding its content to Google is now under question. Other publications, including Politico, The Economist and Reuters, are all known to be considering how, if at all, they want to continue working with Google as the platform continues to expand its AI search features and publishers watch their Google search traffic decline. Reuters president Paul Bascobert said, 'we are certainly looking at the economic trade-offs between search and AI summaries'. Publishers can turn off crawling for training Google's AI models, but have to allow the bot to crawl for both AI query results and traditional search if they want their content to feature. (Wall Street Journal).

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3,000 websites taken down for illegal world cup streams

Almost 3,000 websites have been blocked or seized for illegally streaming world cup matches, according to the US Department of Justice (DOJ). Over 1,000 domains were shut down in the US with a similar number closed in Colombia. Enforcement agencies in the United States and across South America worked together on investigations named ‘operation offsides’ and ‘operation red card’. The actions have been largely overseen by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a US federal agency. Due to its global popularity, football is pirated ‘at an industrial scale’ according to analysts, who estimate the revenues lost to companies and broadcasters to run into billions of dollars per year. (BBC)

EU fines AliExpress 550 Million euros for sales of illegal goods

The European Commission has imposed a fine of 550 million euros on Chinese online marketplace AliExpress, accusing the company of failing to take sufficient action to reduce the risk of its platform being used to sell illegal goods in the EU. Under the Digital Services Act, companies are obliged to assess and address such risks. The Alibaba-owned company has until October to submit a risk assessment and mitigation plan to the commission, but said it disagreed with the decision and will appeal. According to Bloomberg nine in ten packages imported into the EU come from China, and the move is seen as part of a wider crackdown on Chinese ecommerce platforms. (Financial Times)

EU refers four member states to the European Court for not transposing cybersecurity rules

The European Commission has referred Ireland, Spain, France and the Netherlands to the European Court of Justice for ‘failing to notify measures transposing the NIS2 directive into national law.’ The directive is designed to strengthen EU cybersecurity by setting standards for entities operating in critical sectors such as health, energy and transport. Member states had until 17 October 2024 to transpose the directive. The commission’s referral includes a request to the court to impose financial sanctions consisting of a lump sum and daily fines. (ec.europa.eu)