

EU and US legislation seek to open up digital platform data | Science

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Despite the potential societal benefits of granting independent researchers access to digital platform data, such as promotion of transparency and accountability, online platform companies have few legal obligations to do so and potentially stronger business incentives not to. Without legally binding mechanisms that provide greater clarity on what and how data can be shared with independent researchers in privacy-preserving ways, platforms are unlikely to share the breadth of data necessary for robust scientific inquiry and public oversight (1). Here, we discuss two notable, legislative efforts aimed at opening up platform data: the Digital Services Act (DSA), recently approved by the European Parliament (2), and the Platform Accountability and Transparency Act (PATA), recently proposed by several US senators (3). Although the legislation could support researchers' access to data, they could also fall short in many ways, highlighting the complex challenges in mandating data access for independent research and oversight.

[...]

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