

DEBATE

Tatsuo MASUDA, Visiting professor at the NUCB Graduate School

Thank you very much. I have a question for the former prime minister of Finland. You talked about balancing privacy and economic benefits, but to my knowledge, when I contacted the top security specialists in the world, they whispered to me, 'There is nothing you can do about privacy. It is gone. The time has passed'. If you say that you need a balance, are you saying that for the sake of bureaucratic completeness as OECD or do you still believe there is anything we can do about that? Thank you.

Mari KIVINIEMI, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD, former Prime Minister of Finland

That is a very good question. I am always an optimist, so I think that there is something to be done and there is something that needs to be done. Something needs to be done in the sense that should tackle the problem exactly, as we have to tackle the ethics problem. Global solutions are the answer. Countries really have to work together, in order to make sure that an open Internet does not really mean that everything is open and that nothing is private. Of course, when it comes to companies and how they earn their money, the same logic applies and not everything can be completely open and accessible. There will always have to be certain restrictions.

Abdulmajeed AL-SHATTI, Member of the Supreme Petroleum Council in Kuwait

I have a question for Patrick first. Do you think the consumer should be paid for the data that is being used by the different platforms and companies? My second question is for Mari. How can our countries in the Arab world use the Internet and the digital economy to transfer this negative energy that the youth has into more positive energy and enhanced employment, economic opportunities and investment? My last question is for Susan. Do you think we have enough laws or can we apply the old laws that we have to the new technologies that exist now? Thank you.

Patrick NICOLET, Member of the Group Management Board, Capgemini

I think gratuity has been a challenge in the economic model of the Internet and the digital world for more than a decade. I think it has been used to sustain hyper-growth, so the logic of technology in the world of technology, it is all about domination, so whatever it costs, you have to cannibalise what is in it. Now, to your question about the consumer, they have a benefit. It is 'free'. They give data and they get services in return. Where I find it completely imbalanced is that people who give data do not know to which extent they give it and more importantly, they do not know the value of it, so they could not even express a value for what they give because they do not know what is done with it. What matters is the aggregation of data, so if you look at the consumer level, you might say it has zero value. The aggregation of millions of consumers allows the extraction of value from this data.

This debate might be extremely difficult, but back to what Susan said, I think there is a responsibility and today I do not believe it is assumed in the technology world. There is the platform excuse you referred to. It cannot be an excuse. We have to be more specific about what we do with this data and what it means. That is my belief.

Mari KIVINIEMI, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD, former Prime Minister of Finland

These are very challenging questions and not necessarily easy to answer. However, I would like to point out that there is a certain negative energy amongst young people not only in the Arab world, but all over the world. And especially amongst young people who are out of work. First and foremost, I think that part of the solution of course concerns education. We should ensure that access to a good quality education is provided to everyone. Then, other policy measures can be taken in order to create growth and jobs, so that youth unemployment, which is far too high all over the world, can be decreased. The digital world also provides us with great opportunities to create jobs and stimulate growth. Therefore, it is important that we use all the possibilities we have for companies to create more jobs in this area.



Susan LIAUTAUD, Vice Chairman of the London School of Economics and Political Science Council and Court of governors, Visiting Scholar at the Stanford Center of Philanthropy and Civil Society

I will start by just drawing a distinction between the law and ethics. I take the law, even in areas that are heavily regulated and better understood than digitalisation, as the lowest common denominator, not the highest standards of ethical behaviour. As to your specific question about whether there is enough, the problem in this area is that it is very hard to develop regulation when you do not really understand what the reality is that you are regulating. It is even harder to understand whether that regulation will bring the benefits that are intended, will be enforceable and will be cost-effective. It is very tricky and that is why I am arguing for much broader assumption of ethics responsibility across the stakeholders, and in particular, as Patrick said, at a corporate level to start. I think there can be an enormous benefit to society from this focus on ethics, but also to the corporations and I think we are starting to see that. I think we are starting to see that the corporations that go head-on into 'I do not need to do that because there is not any law' – they are starting to back-pedal a little bit, so much so that they are starting to hire Washington lobbyists. I think I will leave it at that.

François BARRAULT, Chairman of Idate/DigiWorld Institute; former CEO of BT Global Services and a BT Group PLC board member

I need to finish now. Thank you very much colleagues.