

Singapore passes social media law against harmful content



Singapore strengthens online safety with approval of new law requiring social media sites to block access to 'egregious' content

Singapore has passed a social media law intended to strengthen online safety, in a move that requires platforms to block access to harmful content.

The Online Safety Bill was passed by parliament on 09 November following two days of debate, and imposes fines for failure to remove harmful content 'within hours'.

Social media platforms face fines of up to USD715,000 if they fail to comply with the new law, intended to protect users from content deemed "egregious".

The law allows the national regulator, Infocomm Media Development Authority

(IMDA), to order online platforms to block access by users in Singapore, regardless of where the content is hosted or initiated.

Minister for Communications and Information, Josephine Teo, told parliament that the new law aims to deal with gaps not addressed by other legislation.

Ms Teo said: "If such harmful content existed only on websites, IMDA would be able to deal with them under the existing Broadcasting Act."

She added: "But today, users are much more likely to consume content from the feeds of Social Media Services. ➔

New Zealand to legislate 'fair price' for local news content

New Zealand's Broadcasting Minister, Willie Jackson, has announced plans for legislation requiring online platforms to "pay a fair price" to news media for their content.

The government's move, announced on 08 November, follows Australia's 2021 News Media Mandatory Bargaining Code and Canada's proposed Online News Act.

Media business models, particularly newspapers, have been eroded by the move to online advertising.

According to industry figures, newspapers enjoyed a 40 per cent share of domestic advertising spend amounting to NZD606 million in 2001. The figure declined to 26 per cent by 2011 and to just 10 per cent by 2021.

Commenting on the legislation, Mr Jackson said: "It's not fair that the big digital platforms like Google and Meta get to host and share local news for free. It costs to produce the news and it's only fair they pay."

He added: "New Zealand news media, particularly small regional and community newspapers, are struggling to remain financially viable as more advertising moves online. So it is critical that those benefiting from their news content actually pay for it."

Brook Cameron, General Manager of the News Publishers' Association said: "We welcome this legislation, which will level the playing field for Kiwi journalism."

"Well over AUD200 million a year has been injected into the Australian news industry since their Government introduced similar legislation. Fair deals ensure the sustainability of quality local news." ■

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News agency PA Media Group acquires Hydrogen, Scotland's largest social media agency

PA Media Group, a UK news agency, has announced its acquisition of Hydrogen, a Glasgow-based social media agency.

Hydrogen is the second agency acquired by 154-year-old PA Media Group as it expands beyond media and content services.

Under the terms of the deal, announced on 01 November, Hydrogen will continue to operate under its current leadership, and as a stand-alone agency within PA Media Group's large portfolio of media businesses.

PA Media Group owns a portfolio of media and creative businesses across the UK, including image licensor Alamy, video tech services company Stream AMG, and horse

racing coverage firm PA Betting. It also owns PR and media training provider PA Training.

Commenting on the acquisition, PA Media Group CEO, Clive Marshall, said: "The acquisition of Hydrogen allows PA Media Group to respond to our clients' increasing demand for social media services."

Mr Marshall continued: "Social media and social commerce are the fastest growing areas of digital marketing in the UK.

Hydrogen CEO, Mike Scott, said: "A growth mindset has always been at the heart of everything we do at Hydrogen. It's allowed us to quickly become the largest social media agency in Scotland." ■

Singapore passes social medial law

← Harmful content will be defined in the law to include content that promotes suicide, self-harm and violence, as well as content that undermines racial and religious harmony.

During parliamentary debates, MPs also commented on the risks of harmful content to young viewers.

Ms Teo explained: "There have also been reports of users' accidental deaths while attempting to mimic videos of impossible

physical stunts. Unknown to some victims, these reckless acts and dangerous challenges had been heavily edited."

She added: "Our children, who may lack the capacity or maturity to deal with certain types of content, are particularly vulnerable when exposed to inappropriate content and unwanted social interaction online."

While the IMDA will have the authority to issue orders to platforms, Ms Teo clarified that

Bulgaria's far-right party introduces 'foreign agent' law

Bulgaria has introduced a 'foreign agent' law involving potential sanctions for media outlets that receive funding from abroad.

The draft legislation was filed on 02 November by the country's far-right Revival party. It compels media outlets receiving more than BGN1,000 (EUR500) a year from a foreign source to register as a foreign agent in the Ministry of Justice.

Individual journalists, considered by the Ministry to be foreign agents, who fail to register could face fines of between BGN1,000 and BGN5,000.

Legal entities, such as media organisations, would face fines ranging from BGN5,000 to BGN10,000. The draft law applies to individuals, mass media outlets, organisations and NGOs.

The Civil Society Development Council, an advisory body to the Ministerial Council has criticised the legislation.

In a statement published on 02 November, the Council commented: 'The project affects civil and political rights, the freedom of expression of Bulgarian citizens, and contradicts the Constitution, the laws of the European Commission and international acts to which Bulgaria is a party.'

The Bill on the Registration of Foreign Agents applies to money coming from authoritarian states such as Russia and China. It also applies to grants from EU Member states and the US, as well as state funds. The only exempt funding source is that of the EU Commission itself. ■

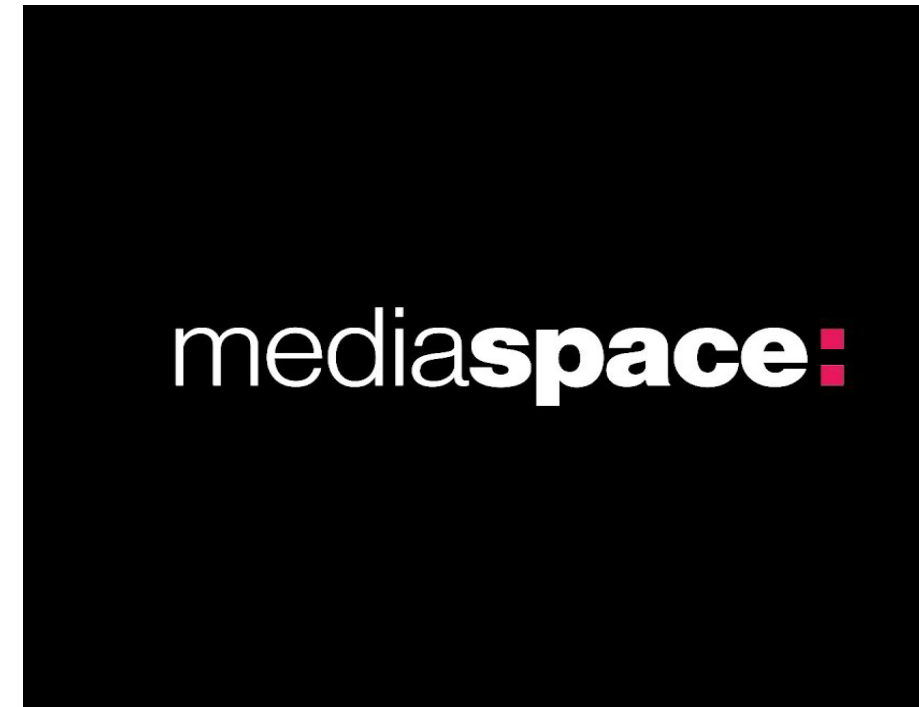
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the IMDA will not have "unfettered" authority to issue new codes of practice, rather it will work collaboratively with service providers.

In her closing speech, Ms Teo explained: "I would also like to remind members of the overarching purpose of the Bill, that is to provide a safe environment and conditions that protect online users while respecting freedom of speech and expression as enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution." ■

Media Law International partners with mediaspace.global

Mina Kouchih



Mediaspace.global brings new era of global networking opportunities

Media Law International (MLI) is pleased to announce its partnership with Mediaspace.global, a professional social platform for media, marketing, technology and regulation.

The partnership takes effect on 01 February 2023, and strengthens our position in the legal media publishing industry with a new joint offering. Mediaspace.global brings a new era of B2B global networking opportunities to firms to 'meet people, not profiles'.

The platform allows industry professionals from different segments and jurisdictions to start conversations, grow their network outside of current circles, build visibility and stay up-to-date on industry changes through interactive events.

The partnership with Mediaspace.global allows MLI to offer its participants a range of networking opportunities, with access to C-Suite subscribers from a diverse media community.

Enhancing MLI's Worldwide Offering: What the partnership means for MLI Clients

- Mediaspace.global Members' Daily Videos
- Monthly network sessions online
- Leadership Club: Invite-only quarterly sessions for premium members globally online, and in person, limited to 12 people, in London and Budapest.

- 10% discount on Mediaspace.global premium subscription for MLI Network.

Zineb Serroukh-Ouarda, Managing Editor at Media Law International, commented: "We are proud to partner with Mediaspace.global. The partnership strengthens our offering and adds an engaged new audience to the MLI Network.

"There is a clear synergy between both organisations and a shared industry dedication.

"We are already working on new initiatives that will strengthen our 2023 coverage and visibility

packages, including event. By multiplying our network and worldwide coverage, we can better serve the MLI Network across continents, platforms and throughout the year.

"Our partnership reflects increasing market demand for compelling content and engagement within the media market, and expands our international reach. We look forward to working with Mediaspace.global as well as with its Founder and CEO, Kinga Incze."

Mediaspace.global was launched in May 2020 by Founder and CEO Kinga Incze, as a global ecosystem for the media industry to change its very fragmented, location-based, elitist nature that keeps you in your professional bubble.

Commenting on the partnership, Kinga Incze, Founder and CEO of Mediaspace.global said: "We're thrilled to partner with Media Law International and Managing Editor Zineb Serroukh-Ouarda and provide a digital space where MLI participants can meet each other, not just their social media profiles.

"The media and advertising industry goes through fundamental changes, so combining MLI's high quality content with Mediaspace.global's interactivity and networking opportunities provides members of both communities with an even higher value.

"Professionally diverse conversations among legal, business, marketing, adtech leaders and innovators are crucial in a transformational time like the 2020s. As the shift to digital is happening right now also in B2B communication, this collaboration is a win-win."

"MLI's audience can benefit from growing its digital presence and engagement on Mediaspace.global, while Mediaspace members will learn more about specialised content, research insights and the legal ecosystem. comprehensive coverage of law firms and practitioners with media law expertise. I can't wait to share more details about our exciting offerings soon."

If you have any questions about this exciting news and what it will mean for you, please contact us. We look forward to introducing you to some of our new partners and associates. ■

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