Risk-reducing regulatory strategies for illegal and harmful conduct and content in online social network sites

# Details

## Year

2014

## Scope

Multinational

## Countries

Belgium

## Type

Empirical research – Qualitative

## Methodologies

Textual / documentary / content analysis

## Researched Groups

Policymakers and regulators

## Children Ages

All (0-18 years old)

## Funder

FWO: Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek

## Funder Types

Regional Government

## URL

https://www.law.kuleuven.be/citip/en/research/projects/finalized/risk-reducing-regulatory-strategies-for-illegal-and-harmful-conduct-and-content-in-online-social-net

# Goals

Social network sites (SNS), such as Facebook, Twitter, Netlog and LinkedIn, have transformed the way in which individuals interact, by offering an innovative and sophisticated environment to share information and to maintain existing or create new relationships. However, social media also generate new risks or transform risks that also exist in the offline world, in particular for vulnerable users, such as minors. This project will focus on illegal and harmful conduct and content risks in SNS for this specific target group. Examples of such risks are bullying, stalking or grooming (conduct) and defamation, incitement to hatred, and exposure to harmful and illegal images, such as sexual and violent images as well as child pornography (content) (Enisa, 2007; Livingstone Brake, 2010; Livingstone et al., 2011). The project starts from the hypothesis that the application of a carefully structured combination of legislative and alternative regulatory instruments may reduce such risks. Building on the results of my doctoral research, which examined the use of alternative regulatory instruments (such as self- and co-regulation, technology and supporting mechanisms) to protect minors against harmful digital content, this research project aims to (1) analyse the peculiarities of SNS risks (expanding the scope of my research from content to conduct risks), (2) assess the gaps in current legislative frameworks (at the intersection of media and communications law, criminal law, civil law and juvenile protection law), and (3) identify the requirements for risk-reducing regulatory strategies aspiring to offer an enhanced and balanced protection of fundamental rights and principles in the social media ecosystem.