

## Proposal of the APOOS Projects on the market power of Internet companies

### Catalog of measures & digital laws

- Immediate introduction of information obligations on online platforms and apps on **addiction factors**, especially for the functions concerned.
- Legal **ban on** the use of **addiction factors** in online platforms, search engines and apps that access the Internet.
- Creation of an **information law**: Online platforms must provide users with comprehensible information about their **business model** (type of financing) and about how **their algorithms work**.
- Introduction of a legal **right for users to choose** on online platforms and apps what kind of **algorithms** they want to use. Including a long-term storage of the setting. Here, online platforms and app operators must **offer** a comprehensible **basic algorithm based** on a simple technical standard, such as a date, which **does not** contain local information, personal profiles or general behavior patterns of users.
- Creation of a **legal claim to reach** in online platforms and apps. The reach to followers may not be restricted or manipulated by online platforms and apps, neither for private individuals nor for companies.
- **Search engines** have a very great social significance: creation of a legal basis that the first five search results comply with the **general duty to inform**. **This** means that no other products such as yellow pages, shopping products or advertisements may be displayed before the **first five** organic (natural) **search results**. This applies both to our

own products and those of third parties as well as to members with and without a login. The organic search results must be displayed legibly.

- Creation of legal foundations that **organic (natural) search results** may **not be discriminated against** for own products (this includes products of subsidiaries, sister or parent companies).
  
- Legal **prohibition of advertisement placement** if an organic search entry is already delivered for the keyword. With this step online platforms cannot create dependencies of success in their advertising programs. Furthermore, **domain names** such as Bundestag.de may not be used as keywords for online advertising programs. (Why pay for something that already exists).
  
- **Access to advertising programs** may only be denied to companies with good reason and may not contradict free market access. A refusal must be comprehensible and **concretely justified** by the online platform or the app operator (the general reference to guidelines or terms and conditions is not sufficient). Furthermore, a personal contact person with contact details (e-mail, tel, fax) must be named to whom complaints can be submitted.
  
- Creation of a **legal basis for contact data**. For all services that a company can use on an online platform, there must be a telephone contact person. No value-added telephone services - such as 0900 numbers - may be used for this purpose.
  
- Audit - finding and closing **loopholes in** how foreign companies avoid paying VAT in online trading
  
- Audit - What legal measures can be taken to **protect consumers from fraud on online platforms**.

- Discussion about increasing the **value added tax** for online platforms, online trade and online advertising. The funds will be used to promote local trade. Further examination of exemptions for local stores. Thus, **locally based companies** should also benefit from online trade. Advantage for the consumer there are **contact persons on site**.
  
- Discussion about **funding** for German online platforms that promote fair internet and democracy. (With increasing competition, international online platforms are forced to be fairer to the customer).
  
- Discussion whether online platforms will gain **access to the US market** if their employees - *including freelancers from subcontractors of these Internet groups* - are not paid according to the **minimum wage requirements** of the respective countries.
  
- Creation of a legal basis for punishment in case of violation of the above-mentioned digital laws. The amount of the **penalty** should be fixed at **5% of the annual turnover** of the respective online platform per incident.

Sie möchten Teenager, Unternehmen und Arbeitsplätze schützen?  
Then sign this catalog of measures. Thank you!

## Why no digital tax?

The introduction of a digital tax would further increase costs for businesses and consumers. Internet companies would simply add the tax to their offers. The **goal of** the Federal Government must be to make the Internet fairer and thus **free** companies and consumers **from a financial burden of billions and from addiction factors**.

## Did you know?

- ✓ Search results are influenced by online platforms.
- ✓ Social media can be addictive.
- ✓ More than 90% of all search queries are made via Google.
- ✓ More than 50% of all search queries are answered directly on the Google website.
- ✓ Former employees of Google & Facebook warn of addiction factors. <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wirtschaft/ehemaliger-google-entwickler-warnt-wir-sind-auf-dem-direkten-weg-ins-digitale-mittelalter/25523798.html>
- ✓ For quite some time there has been speculation as to which insolvencies of the last few years in Germany (and the world) could fall under the responsibility of US Internet groups. <https://www.netztrends.de/id/9709/Kommentar---Auch-Google-hat-Schuld-an-Thomas-Cook-Pleite/>
- ✓ For large brands, the organic (natural) reach of the social media network Facebook is said to have decreased significantly. Why should you pay money to reach your own fans? <https://t3n.de/news/facebook-reichweite-omr-801942/>
- ✓ Voting manipulation via social networks cannot be ruled out.
- ✓ Algorithms influence us daily, yet they are not publicly comprehensible. <https://www.zdf.de/dokumentation/unheimliche-macht---wie-algorithmen-unser-leben-bestimmen-102.html>
- ✓ Over micro work humans are for Internet companies - *with the help of subcontractors* - partly for few cent on the day active.

<https://www.zdf.de/dokumentation/zdfinfo-doku/ghost-workers-wie-klickarbeiter-von-konzernen-ausgebeutet-werden-100.html>

## The numbers

- × In 2018, every person aged 0 years and older (even without an Internet connection) will have generated revenues of around USD 25 on Facebook & Google's parent company Alphabet. With this money, a child in Africa could be fed for one month.  
<https://utboerg.com/ratgeber/fairen-internet-schuetzt-arbeitsplaetze-und-das-klima-011573/>
  
- × Alphabet is considered the richest company in the world in 2019 with **117 billion USD in cash reserves**.  
<https://boerse.ard.de/aktien/alphabet-jetzt-reichstes-unternehmen-der-welt100.html>
  
- × Alphabet: Revenues up **18%** to US\$161.9 billion in 2019, US\$136.82 billion in 2018, net income in 2019 US\$34.3 billion
  
- × Facebook: Revenues increased in 2019 by **26.62%** to USD 70,697.00 million, in 2018 it was USD 55,838.00 million
  
- × A study for 2018 covers **100,000 social media addicted teenagers** in Germany alone: [https://www.focus.de/digital/internet/studie-vorgestellt-zu-wenig-schlaf-wegen-social-media-100-000-teenager-suechtig-nach-sozialen-netzwerken\\_id\\_8543549.html](https://www.focus.de/digital/internet/studie-vorgestellt-zu-wenig-schlaf-wegen-social-media-100-000-teenager-suechtig-nach-sozialen-netzwerken_id_8543549.html)
  
- × An investigation of 100 German enterprises showed that these use the Google advertising program, although for the desired search word already a free search entry at TOP position (means in first place) exists. Annual costs for these measures are about **45 million EUR per year**.

<https://utboerg.com/blog/fares-internet-rund-45-millionen-euro-einsparpotential-031987/>

- × Even at the Corona crisis these Internet companies profit:  
<https://www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/boerse/corona-technologiekonzerne-gesundheitssektor-101.html>
- × To the digital tax decided in France, *which affects large Internet companies in the USA*, the US government reacted with tariffs against France:  
<https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/digitalsteuer-usa-frankreich-101.html>

## Further information and contact details

<https://apoos.com/imprint/>

For this translation we use the help of: <https://www.deepl.com>