



finnmedia

15.10.2025

**Finnish Media Federation (Finnmedia) response to the Commission's Consultation on the Digital Omnibus (digital package on simplification), call for evidence
October 14, 2025**

The Finnish Media Federation (Finnmedia) is an advocacy organisation for companies in the media and graphic industries. Our member organisations represent news and magazine media, publishing of books and learning materials, radio and printing companies. Together, we represent approximately 600 media companies. The member companies directly employ approximately 20,000 people in Finland, and the combined turnover of the industries represented is approximately EUR 3.1 billion. Finnmedia is registered in transparency registers in the EU and in Finland

The European Commission has indicated the following areas in the Digital Omnibus it will particularly address, including measures targeting problems and seeking simplification:

- the data acquis (Data Governance Act, Free Flow of Non-Personal Data Regulation, Open Data Directive).
- rules on cookies and other tracking technologies laid down by the ePrivacy Directive.
- cybersecurity related incident reporting obligations.
- the smooth application of the AI Act rules.
- other aspects related to electronic identification and trust services under European Digital Identity Framework, including in view of the regulatory alignment with the forthcoming proposal for an EU Business Wallet and applying the 'one in, one out' principle

Finnmedia concentrates on giving views to rules on cookies laid down by the ePrivacy Directive.

In the call for evidence document the Commission has formulated specific objectives for the Digital Omnibus proposal as regards rules on cookies:

- Reduce cookie consent fatigue, strengthen users' privacy rights online, with clear and straightforward information and options for managing cookies; facilitate the use of cookies and other technologies for businesses for increased data availability. The initiative will pursue a stronger alignment with the general rules on the protection of personal data under the EU data protection law, potentially including modernised rules on cookies under that framework when personal data are collected through such technologies.

Reform of Cookie Regulation

- **The current e-privacy directive rules on cookies are outdated and in need of urgent reform. Cookie regulation should be made more compatible with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).** The division of cookies into necessary and not necessary cookies is no longer sufficient to account for the legitimate interests of different parties in internet services. **Regulation must also take into account the special role of reliable**

journalism in the online information flood and strive to safeguard the conditions for publishing journalism in digital channels.

- Firstly, cookie regulation should be reformed so that the use of *editorial cookies* in journalistic services does not require separate consent. Editorial cookies are used both for the personalization of editorial content and for editorial analytics. The curation of journalistic expression is part of the media's role, and also meets consumer expectations for modern online media. Regulation must ensure that online services are by default high-quality and promote freedom of expression, even for users who do not spend time adjusting cookie settings. The processing of editorial cookies is also low-risk from a privacy perspective. However, it would not be justified to apply the exemption from the consent requirement to third parties—such as online platforms or search engines—that may reorganize journalistic content produced by the media using their own cookies.
- Secondly, *audience measurement techniques* should be exempt from consent requirements. Reliable information on audience size serves as the currency of the internet and should be based on the actual audience, not just those who have given consent. This also aligns with the objectives set for audience measurement in Article 24 of the European Media Freedom Act. Audience measurement is very low-risk from a privacy perspective, and some techniques are comparable to simply counting the number of customers. Cookie regulation should also be clarified so that cookie rules do not apply to mere web requests.
- **Regulation should continue to address the harms caused by the competitive imbalance between gatekeeper platforms and online service providers such as media companies.** Gatekeeper positions are harmful to both competition and freedom of expression, and their emergence—such as among browser operators—should be made more difficult, not easier, through cookie regulation reform.
- It should be noted that, especially regarding first-party cookies, the ability to utilize audience knowledge for both editorial content development and advertising is part of the centuries-old business model of the press, which is familiar to the public and low-risk from a privacy perspective. The rules for first-party cookies should be more permissive than those for third-party cookies, both generally and especially in situations where the media uses cookies for its own advertising measurement, for example in the context of contextual advertising.
- **It should also be noted that consent for advertising and cookies used for advertising must continue to be available as an alternative to paying for access to media services.** Restrictions imposed by data protection legislation on so-called “consent or pay” models for very large online platforms should not be applied to media services.

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Riikka Tähtivuori
Director of Business Environment

Mikko Hoikka
Legal advisor & Sector director, Magazine Media

Please find information about The Finnish Media Federation (Finnmedia) on
<https://www.medialiitto.fi/finnmedia/>