

Rita Gsenger | Marie-Therese Sekwenz (Eds.)

Digital Decade

How the EU Shapes Digitalisation Research



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Normsetzung und Entscheidungsverfahren
Schriftenreihe des Weizenbaum-Instituts für
normative Wissenschaften

herausgegeben von | edited by

Simon Schrör

Prof. Dr. Herbert Zech

Band | Volume 3

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 **TU Delft**



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The book processing charge was co-funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), grant no. 16D11131, and the Open Access Publication Fund of the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Berlin. The open access edition of this book was also co-financed by the TU Delft Open Access Fund.

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The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

1st Edition 2025

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Published by

Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG
Waldseestraße 3–5 | 76530 Baden-Baden
www.nomos.de

Production of the printed version:
Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG
Waldseestraße 3–5 | 76530 Baden-Baden

ISBN 978-3-7560-1741-6 (Print)

ISBN 978-3-7489-4399-0 (ePDF)

DOI <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748943990>



Online Version
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Preface

Simon Schrör & Herbert Zech

In 2025, we are in the midst of the European Union's proclaimed "Digital Decade". With its ambitious and multi-layered policy program, the EU Commission is planning a framework - not only regulatory - to accompany and contain Europe's digital transformation. This undertaking alone raises many interesting questions for the legal and social sciences in the broadest sense. After all, as scientists we do not operate in a space untouched by regulation: data protection regulations, data governance, copyright law, AI regulation and many other provisions not only influence our practical everyday work, but also the subjects we research. A certain knowledge of relevant regulations, their genesis, structure and interactions with state law is increasingly necessary, even outside the legal academia, to ensure valid and excellent research.

The EU's digital decade represents a far-reaching transformation process that makes cross-disciplinary research imperative. The complex interactions between technology, society, economy, law and science require a comprehensive approach that goes beyond the boundaries of individual disciplines. Such an approach presents a promising pathway for a comprehensive analysis and normative evaluation of the social, ethical, political, and, not least, scientific implications of digitization (and its regulation). Critical monitoring of EU regulatory proposals is of central scientific importance in this context. It ensures that political decisions are based on sound knowledge and that potential risks are minimized. These are all major demands and challenges facing scientists today.

Until now, however, there has been a lack of interdisciplinary introductory literature to help researchers deal with these new, and often evolving regulations. Rita Gsenger and Marie-Therese Sekwenz, together with the contributors to this volume, are now filling that gap. The edited volume "Digital Decade: How the EU shapes digitalization research" offers introductions to the most important digital regulations of the EU and combines accessibility with in-depth knowledge of the relevant laws and regulations.

It should be emphasized that the genesis of the anthology itself arises from a community that sees interdisciplinary research and transdisci-

plinary dialogue as an important means to a comprehensive understanding of digital regulation and its impact. The editors and authors deserve great thanks for the rapid completion of the book, the contents of which were discussed and compiled at an interdisciplinary workshop at the Weizenbaum Institute in Berlin in the fall of 2024. Readers will find a carefully curated overview and introduction to the most important EU regulatory proposals, as well as methodological notes and research demands.

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