Glossary:
Digital media and elections

Deliverable of the Observatory on Social Media

Fourth Plenary Assembly
of the Global Network on Electoral Justice (GNEJ)

Version: October 2021

General coordination: Board of the Observatory on Social Media

Editorial Committee: Technical Secretariat of the GNEJ

Academic Coordinator: Rafael Rubio, Professor of Constitutional Law at the Complutense University of Madrid

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I. Objective of the Glossary

This glossary defines concepts in the field of digital communication technologies and their use in elections, focuses on the technical elements of digital communication media and includes the exercised or affected rights[1], addressing the different realities of the countries linked to the Global Network on Electoral Justice (GNEJ).

It aims to serve as a source of reference to aid the authorities who administer electoral justice to better understand the social media landscape, how to approach these new challenges and thereby adapt their judicial decisions accordingly. It will be central to understanding, discussing, and analyzing experiences and recommendations in the field, within the Global Network. The glossary will be updated periodically with new concepts, as well as examples of how they are applied in national electoral contexts.

II. Conceptual introduction

The free exercise of suffrage rights, such as the **right to vote**, the **right to be voted for** and the **right to participate in government**, have their normative basis in international instruments[2] and are protected by freedom of expression, which is an indispensable aspect of any modern democracy and electoral system. This right to express ideas and opinions, to exchange them with fellow citizens and to request or share information, is indispensable to public and political life. It is also related to **freedom of assembly and association** and the **right to information**.

With the digitization of politics, freedom of expression has become the cornerstone of the new digital communication technologies and, therefore, this freedom and the right to vote and be voted for on equal terms must **also be guaranteed online**. **Social media** constitutes one of the most important tools for modern politics, digital platforms are the new 'public square'. They have presented novel opportunities for increased electoral participation, while at the same time challenging the trustworthiness of information sharing and the integrity of authorities through complex threats.[3] Ultimately, new digital challenges threaten the **right to a level playing field in an electoral contest** and to **free and fair elections**.[4]

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[1] For more information about the context and methodology of the glossary, please see **Annexes 1** and **2**.

[2] See: Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

[3] See: Venice Commission. *Principles for a fundamental rights-compliant use of digital technologies in electoral processes*, 2020.

[4] For more information on the conceptual framework and international references, please see **Annex 3**.

III. Glossary of digital media concepts and elections

The current context of democracy underscores the importance of understanding the social media landscape from an electoral perspective. The glossary below considers the key concepts that have been found in numerous dictionaries on technology and democracy.

A

Concepto	Definición general	Ejemplo nacional[5]
A/B Testing	A method in marketing research where variables in a control scenario are changed and the ensuing alternate strategies tested, in order to improve the effectiveness of the final marketing strategy.[6]	
Advertising network	A network representing many Web sites in selling advertising, allowing advertising buyers to reach broad audiences relatively easily through run-of-category and run-of-network buys.[7]	
Algorithm	Finite suite of formal rules (logical operations, instructions) allowing a computer to obtain a result from input elements. This suite can be the object of an automated execution process and rely on models designed through machine learning.[8] Social media platforms use algorithms to, among other things, compile and curate the content that users see.	
Algorithmic bias	Technologies that fail to contemplate the entire range of available ideas, and presents	

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[5] En la segunda reunión del Consejo Directivo, se acordó concretar la lista de conceptos y sus definiciones en una primera etapa, y que, en una segunda, se incluirán casos nacionales. Por lo mismo, se encuentra vacía la columna de ejemplos nacionales.

[6] https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/ab_testing/

[7] https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/advertising_network/

[8] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

	repeatable errors in a computer system outcome, privileging one result over another. An algorithm can 'program' a software to not take in a full range of inputs, but only a smaller spectrum. This bias is found across search engine results and social media platforms.[9] This concept is linked to *Artificial intelligence*, and can also be described as *digital gerrymandering* of elections when an intermediary uses a selective presentation of information to favor its agenda, instead of the users, which in this case are the voters.[10]	
Anonymity	The situation in which someone's name or other personally identifiable information is not given or known.[11] May also be interpreted in combination with *Privacy* and *Pseodonymization*.	
Application Programming Interface (API)	An API, or application programming interface, is a means by which data from one web tool or application can be exchanged with, or received by another. Many working to examine the source and spread of polluted information depend upon access to social platform APIs, but not all are created equal, and the extent of publicly available data varies from platform to platform. Restrictive APIs on certain social platforms and a lack of API standardization creates challenges to comprehensive and replicable	

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[9] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021PC0206

[10] http://cdn.harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/vol127_Symposium_Zittrain.pdf

[11] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/anonymity

	research regarding social media uses and impacts.[12]	
Artificial intelligence	A blanket term for various computer applications[13], meaning a set of sciences, theories and techniques whose purpose is to reproduce by a machine the cognitive abilities of a human being. Current developments aim, for instance, to be able to entrust a machine with simple and complex tasks previously delegated to a human.[14]	
Astroturfing	The practice of disguising an orchestrated campaign, intended to create a false impression of a widespread, spontaneously arising, grassroots movement in support of or in opposition to something (such as a political policy) but that is in reality initiated and controlled by a concealed group or organization. A modern form of astroturfing uses the Internet: for example, groups flood an inbox with messages that come from a single source, using many accounts.[15]	
Authentic behavior (and inauthentic behavior)	To act in accord with one's values, preferences, and needs as opposed to acting merely conform to social norms or expectations or falsely attain external rewards.[16] While authenticity is important to gain trust and sympathy, it is also	

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[12] "Information Disorder: The Essential Glossary," The Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy, https://firstdraftnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/infoDisorder_glossary.pdf?x32863

[13] Blanket term for various computer applications https://rm.coe.int/cahai-2020-23-draft-feasibility-study-fin/1680a0a5a9

[14] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[15] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/astroturfing

[16] http://psychology.iresearchnet.com/social-psychology/control/authenticity/#:~:text=Behaving%20authentically%20means%20acting%20in,rewards%20or%20to%20avoid%20punishments.

	linked to increasing support or gaining a competitive advantage.[17] Authenticity has become a currency in the branding of politicians in social media. However, authenticity illusions are now linked to political communication strategies that are not truthful or trustworthy, or because of a staged or manipulated media landscape due to new technologies.[18] Inauthentic behavior is when people misinterpret themselves on social media using fake accounts, artificially boosting the popularity of content or engaging in conducts that may violate the *Terms of service*, in some cases.[19] Linked to *Coordinated behavior*.	

B

Concept	General definition	Country example
Big data	The term "big data" refers to a large heterogeneous data set (open data, proprietary data, commercially purchased data).[20]	
Blacklist	In the case of websites and social media links, this means that that the content is labeled as dangerous to visitors, due to spam or malware indented to infect communications.[21]	

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[17] https://www.falcon.io/insights-hub/topics/social-media-strategy/why-authenticity-matters-in-todays-social-media-landscape/

[18] https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315716299.ch8#sec8_2

[19] https://transparency.fb.com/policies/community-standards/inauthentic-behavior/

[20] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[21] https://blog.sucuri.net/2015/05/how-social-media-blacklisting-happens.html#:~:text=The%20initial%20reaction%20to%20hearing,labeled%20as%20dangerous%20to%20visitors.

Concept	General definition	Country example
Bots	Social bots are simple computer codes that can simulate human beings and make posts online. Botnets are the coordinated hacking efforts of multiple bots.[22] These can be used to perform *Distributed Denial of Service (DDos)*.	

C

Concept	General definition	Country example
Campaign personalization	The personalization of modern election campaigns has stepped into the digital realm, with the assistance of social media where *posts* update users of what a politician is currently doing, aiming to attain a higher level of emotional appeal.[23]	
Chatbot	A conversational agent that dialogues with its user (for example: empathic robots available to patients, or automated conversation services in customer relations).[24]	
Cluster	Any group of people or things that share a common characteristic. Data is combed through by AI to uncover patterns and connections that humans might not readily see. Clusters can be used to identify target segments or audiences, creating marketing opportunities through commonalities.[25]	
Cognitive science	The broader form of study that includes AI in addition to philosophy, linguistics,	

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[22]

https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf

[23]

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2014/140709/LDM_BRI(2014)140709_REV1_EN.pdf

[24] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[25] Business 2 community: https://www.business2community.com/marketing/artificial-intelligence-terms-marketers-need-know-01891972

	psychology, neuroscience, and anthropology. All of these combine together to learn how the mind functions and, when applied to AI, how machines can simulate human thought and action.[26]	
Collective intelligence	Shared intelligence that emerges from the collaboration and competition of many individuals and appear in consensus decision-making in social networks.[27]	
Community manager	A person responsible for building and managing the online communications for a business in an effort to grow an online community.[28]	
Community standards	See *Terms of service.*	
Computational propaganda	Means employing automated tools to influence behavior.[29] It is the use of algorithms, automation, and human curation to purposefully distribute misleading information over social media. Involves learning from and mimicking real people so as to manipulate public opinion across a diverse range of platforms and device networks.[30]	
Content or click farms	Commercial enterprises that employ individuals to generate fraudulent profiles, posts and likes to promote specific narratives online. Coordinated efforts to direct the attention of Internet trolls toward targets or in promotion of certain messages can use the same model as content farms and are referred to as troll farms.[31]	

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[26] Business 2 community: https://www.business2community.com/marketing/artificial-intelligence-terms-marketers-need-know-01891972

[27] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

[28] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

[29] https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/8/451150_0.pdf

[30] IFES: Disinformation Campaigns and Hate Speech: Exploring the Relationship and Programming Interventions, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2019.

[31]

https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf

Content scrapers	Tools that use automation to gather and store information from publicly accessible versions of websites or social media platforms, allowing analysts to filter, sort and tag the content. Depending on the platform, the scraped content could differ from information obtained through an *API (see above)*.[32]	
Cookie	Information stored on a user's computer by a website so preferences are remembered on future requests.[33]	
Coordinated behavior	The simultaneous posting of similar content across multiple social media accounts and pages, designed to broaden its reach. The coordinated postings could be done by actual people, or by inauthentic accounts.[34] Social media allows third party cookies (meaning they are external to the social network and the user) and can be linked to dataveillance or privacy issues.[35]	
Cybercrime	Criminal or illegal activity that is done using the Internet. For example: *phishing*, misusing personal information (identity theft), *hacking*, *hate speech* and inciting terrorism, distributing child pornography, and grooming (sexual advances to minors). This applies to all digital devices, including computers, tablets and smartphones that are connected to the Internet.[36]	
Cybersecurity	Is the application of technologies, processes and controls to protect systems, networks, programs, devices and data from *cyber-attacks*. It aims to reduce the risk	

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[32] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/27564/content-scraping

[33] https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/cookie/

[34] https://transparency.fb.com/policies/community-standards/inauthentic-behavior/

[35] https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/archived/learning/management_thinking/articles/cookies.htm

[36] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cybercrime y
https://www.government.nl/topics/cybercrime/forms-of-cybercrime

	of cyber-attacks, and protect against the unauthorized exploitation of systems, networks and technologies. It is often confused with *information security*.[37] It may also involve the prevention of damage to, protection of, and restoration of computers, electronic communications systems, electronic communications services, wire communication, and electronic communication, including information contained therein, to ensure its availability, integrity, authentication, confidentiality, and nonrepudiation.[38]	
Cyberspace	The interdependent network of information technology infrastructures, and includes the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers in critical industries[39] considered as an imaginary area without limits where one can meet people and discover information about any subject.[40] Cyberspace allows users to share information, interact, swap ideas, engage in discussions or social forums, among others. Widely used to describe any facility or feature that is linked to the Internet and virtual interfaces that create digital realities.[41]	

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[37] https://www.itgovernance.co.uk/what-is-cybersecurity

[38] https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nspd/nspd-54.pdf

[39] https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nspd/nspd-54.pdf

[40] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/cyberspace

[41] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/2493/cyberspace

Concept	General definition	Country example
Database	A database is a "container" storing data such as numbers, dates or words, which can be reprocessed by computer means to produce information; for example, numbers and names assembled and sorted to form a directory.[42] Extracted information from social media content can make up a database of information.	
Datamining	A process of discovering patterns in large data sets, involving machine learning, statistics and database systems. It makes it possible to analyze a large volume of data and bring out models, correlations and trends.[43] The goal is to extract patterns and knowledge from large amounts of data and transform the information into a comprehensible structure for further use, and not the extraction of data itself.[44]	
Data protection and data security	Data protection generally refers to securing data against loss, damage or exploitation[45], while data security refers to securing data against unauthorized use[46].	
Data science	A broad grouping of mathematics, statistics, probability, computing, data visualization to extract knowledge from a heterogeneous set of data (images, sound, text, genomic data, social network	

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[42] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[43] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[44] http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/rdehkharghani/files/2016/02/The-Morgan-Kaufmann-Series-in-Data-Management-Systems-Jiawei-Han-Micheline-Kamber-Jian-Pei-Data-Mining.-Concepts-and-Techniques-3rd-Edition-Morgan-Kaufmann-2011.pdf

[45] https://www.polyas.com/election-glossary/data-protection

[46] https://www.polyas.com/election-glossary/data-security

	links, physical measurements, etc.[47]	
Deepfake	Digitally altered images and videos that tend to use artificial intelligence to combine real source material with manufactured content to create hyper-realistic portrayals of individuals saying or doing things that did not occur.[48]	
Deep learning	A type of *artificial intelligence* that uses *algorithms* based on the way the human brain operates, to find links and classify sets of data.[49] See *Machine learning* and *Neural Network*.[50]	
Digital citizen	Someone who is skilled in using the Internet in order to communicate with others, buy and sell things, and take part in politics, and who understands how to do this in a safe and responsible way.[51]	
Digital communications technology	The design and construction of communications technology that transmits information in digital form.[52] They are digital tools that allow two or more people to communicate with another.[53]	
Digital divide	The discrepancies that exist between social groups in terms of access to digital technology.[54] It can be generational, socioeconomic, geographic, and due to gender etc.	

[47] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary
[48] https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf
[49] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/deep-learning
[50] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary
[51] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/digital-citizen
[52] https://www.thefreedictionary.com/digital+communications+technology#:~:text=1.,WordNet%203.0%2C%20Farlex%20clipart%20collection.
[53] https://clcs.weebly.com/digital-communication-technologies-dct.html
[54] https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/social-media-guide-for-electoral-management-bodies.pdf

Digital gerrymandering	An algorithmic bias that is employed in search engine results and social media platforms[55] during elections or electoral campaigns, that is used by an intermediary to selectively present information to favor its agenda, instead of the users, which in this case are the voters.[56]	
Digital literacy (computer, media or information literacy)	The complementary and interwoven skills, both technical and social, that people must employ when using Internet-based communication—including hypertext, images, audio, and video—to consume and create messages across a variety of academic, civic, and cultural contexts. It is the literacy of emerging digital practices, where competent learners need to perform equally as well in face-to-face and print communication, as new online tools. Related concepts are computer literacy, information communication technologies (ICT) literacy, information literacy, media literacy, new literacy/ies, and multiliteracies.[57]	
Disinformation	False or misleading information that is created or disseminated with the intent to cause harm or to benefit the perpetrator.[58] The intent to cause harm may be directed toward individuals, groups, institutions, or processes.[59]	
Disintermediation	The elimination of intermediaries in the supply chain, also referred	

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[55] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021PC0206

[56] http://cdn.harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/vol127_Symposium_Zittrain.pdf

[57] https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756841/obo-9780199756841-0239.xml?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI2InMgKPQ8gIVWz2tBh3TGgXPEAAYAyAAEgItU_D_BwE

[58] https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Disinformation%20and%20Electoral%20Integrity_NDI_External_Updated%20May%202019%20%281%29.pdf

[59] IFES: Disinformation Campaigns and Hate Speech: Exploring the Relationship and Programming Interventions, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2019.

	to as "cutting out the middlemen"[60] in online political communication. This means that journalistic actors are excluded from their traditional role as communicators between publics and politics, and from the networks of political actors.[61]	
Distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack	When an adversary takes control of a multiple connected online devices (see *botnet* above), using them to "ping" or overwhelm a target website with fake traffic[62] all at once, causing it to crash. It can be used to block the website owner (for instance a political party) from fundraising or causing a considerable disruption to a campaign.[63]	

E

Concept	General definition	Country example
E-safety	Refers to staying safe online, and as Internet-accessible devices are given to people of younger ages, it is important that they are protected from harmful content and services (such as cyber bullying, aggression, harassment, and pornography.[64] Also known as *digital, online* or *cyber safety*.[65]	
Echo chambers	In general, the term "echo chamber" illustrates the ways that data bottlenecks or silos restrict available choices and options for people or machines. In social media and other interactive platforms, where technologies often select bits of data from a general source according to heuristics or learning algorithms,	

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[60] https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/disintermediation/
[61] https://www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication/article/view/1825/1825
[62] https://www.imperva.com/learn/ddos/denial-of-service/
[63] https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/INCampaignPlaybook%20-%20draft2.pdf
[64] https://www.itpro.co.uk/strategy/28709/what-is-e-safety
[65] https://www.willowdene.greenwich.sch.uk/node/438

	users might see a social media feed turning into an "echo chamber" of common, similar ideas and think about why that happened. An echo chamber can also be defined as a situation in which people only hear opinions of one type or that are similar to their own. This means that other voices have been actively excluded and discredited.[66] Members of echo chambers have been brought to systematically distrust all outside sources. In epistemic bubbles, other voices are not heard while in echo chambers, other voices are actively undermined.[67]	
Electioneering	Refers to the act of campaigning to influence the result of an election in favor of a particular candidate or party. The key element of electioneering is effectively communicating with the electorate, usually though campaign rallies which are televised by the media.[68] Today, electioneering relies heavily on social media to distribute political messages.[69]	
Election campaign (traditional and online)	A campaign prior to an election that encourages sympathizers of a candidate or party as well as undecided voters to take part in the election and vote for certain candidates. There is typically a clear legal framework and timeline for election campaigns both offline and online. Social media is now widely used - primarily to win over younger voters, but it can also help parties and candidates achieve different	

[66] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/23423/echo-chamber
[67] https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/episteme/article/abs/echo-chambers-and-epistemic-bubbles/5D4AC3A808C538E17C50A7C09EC706F0
[68] https://www.polyas.com/election-glossary/electioneering
[69] https://www.cqu.edu.au/cquninews/stories/general-category/2020-general/expert-warns-about-the-pitfalls-of-electioneering-on-social-media

	goals alongside winning over voters. These channels have also been used to position parties and candidates in the area of so-called "infotainment" - presenting the campaign information in an entertaining way.[70] Please see *Political campaign*.	
Election advertisement or propaganda	Election advertising is a form of campaigning during a clear period that permits candidates to directly convey their message to voters and influence the political debate. By running ads or propaganda on various types of media, candidates can reach audiences that otherwise may not have been paying attention to the election and build name recognition, highlight important issues, and call attention to the shortcomings of their opponents, among others.[71]	
Epistemic bubbles	A social epistemic structure in which other relevant voices have been left out, perhaps accidentally. Members of epistemic bubbles lack exposure to relevant information and arguments. In epistemic bubbles, other voices are not heard while in echo chambers, other voices are actively undermined.[72]	

F

Concept	General definition	Country example
Fact-check or checking	To check that all the facts in a piece of writing, a news article, a speech, etc. are correct.[73] Fact-checking is the process of the aforementioned.	

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[70] https://www.polyas.com/election-glossary/election-campaign
[71] https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/voting-in-2020/political-advertising-on-social-media-platforms/
[72] https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/episteme/article/echo-chambers-and-epistemic-bubbles/5D4AC3A808C538E17C50A7C09EC706F0
[73] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/fact-check

Fake news	False stories that appear to be news, spread on the Internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views.[74] There is a movement to use the term of *Misinformation* or *Malinformation* instead of fake news (see below).	
Follower	In a social media setting, a follower refers to a person who subscribes to another person's account to receive their updates.[75]	
Forum	An online discussion site. It originated as the modern equivalent of a traditional bulletin board, and a technological evolution of the dial-up bulletin board system.[76]	
Free and fair elections	The right to take part in the government of one's country, directly or through freely chosen representatives,[77] and by virtue of the right to self-determination, all peoples have the right to freely determine their political status.[78] Free and fair elections tend to be linked to being held at regular intervals on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage.[79] Commonly referred to as credible, legitimate or participatory elections.[80]	

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[74] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/fake-news

[75] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

[76] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

[77] Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

[78] Common Article 1 of the Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

[79] https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/strong-parliaments/setting-standards/declaration-criteria-free-and-fair-elections

[80] https://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/54818966

Freedom of assembly	The right to peacefully hold meetings, sit-ins, strikes, rallies, events or protests, both offline and online.[81] Peaceful assemblies play a critical role in allowing participants to advance ideas in the public domain and to establish the extent of support for or opposition to those ideas or goals.[82] Intrinsically linked with other rights and guarantees, such as *Freedom of association, Freedom of expression and opinion* and the *Right to participate in government.*	
Freedom of association	Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests,[83] which is extended to the participation in political organizations.[84] This right must be enjoyed peacefully.[85]	
Freedom of expression and opinion	This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.[86]	
Freedom of information (access to information)	Everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart information. This right is an integral part of the right to freedom of expression and facilitates citizens holding their governments accountable.[87]	

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[81] https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/AssemblyAssociation/Pages/Freedom-Peaceful-Assembly-Index.aspx
[82] https://undocs.org/en/CCPR/C/GC/37
[83] Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
[84] https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training2en.pdf
[85] Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
[86] Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
[87] https://www.un.org/en/observances/information-access-day

G

Concept	General definition	Country example
Gendered disinformation	The use of false information to confuse or mislead by manipulating gender as a social cleavage to attack women and/or to sway political outcomes.[88]	

H

Concept	General definition	Country example
Hacking	The activity of using a computer to access information stored on another computer system without permission, or to spread a computer virus.[89] This tends to be illegal due to the violation of privacy and constitutes a cybercrime.[90]	
Handle	A term used to describe someone's username on Twitter.[91]	
Hashtag	A way to label content and make it searchable in social media. The hashtag (#) in social media platforms turn the adjacent word into a searchable link. This lets others easily find your content according to the keyword that follows the hashtag.[92]	

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[88]
https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Addressing%20Gender%20%26%20Disinformation%202%20%281%29.pdf

[89] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/hacking

[90] https://www.britannica.com/technology/hacking-computing

[91] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

[92] https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-hashtag/

Hate speech	Hate speech covers many forms of expressions or attacks which spread, incite, promote, or justify hatred, violence and discrimination against a person or group of persons for a variety of reasons.[93] It also encompasses polarizing speech that promotes intolerance, hatred, and incitement to violence by explicit or indirect reference to race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability or other immutable groupings,[94] usually with the aim to generate a tangible difference in an institution, organization or society.	
High performance computing	High-performance computing (HPC) is the ability to process data and perform complex calculations at high speeds. As technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and 3-D imaging evolve, the size and amount of data that organizations have to work with is growing exponentially. For many purposes, such as streaming a live sporting event, tracking a developing storm, testing new products, or analyzing stock trends, the ability to process data in real time is crucial.[95]	

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[93] https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/hate-speech-and-violence

[94]

https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf

[95] https://www.netapp.com/us/info/what-is-high-performance-computing.aspx

Concept	General definition	Country example
Image recognition (or computer vision)	A process for machine learning where computers can be programmed to understand what is happening in an image. AI searches for patterns within images to quickly identify nuances that humans may not see.[96]	
Inauthentic actor	Individuals or organizations working to mislead others about who they are or what they are doing.[97]	
Influencer	Someone who affects or changes the way that other people behave. Recently, companies have paid online influencers to show and describe their products and services on social media, encouraging other people to buy them.[98] Although mainly applied in the commercial field, this concept or personality has recently entered the political and electoral sphere.[99]	
Influence campaigns (and malign influence campaigns)	Actions taken by governments or organized non-state actors such as advocacy or political campaigns. A malign version of this kind of campaign, is aimed at distorting domestic or foreign political sentiment, most	

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[96] Business 2 community: https://www.business2community.com/marketing/artificial-intelligence-terms-marketers-need-know-01891972

[97]
https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf

[98] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/influencer

[99] Albeit not part of the definition, this precision is necessary in order to link the concept to the subject matter of this glossary. Examples: https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuciu/2020/02/12/will-political-social-media-influencers-impact-this-years-election/?sh=bef09016fc06 and https://restofworld.org/2021/the-influencer-politicians-are-coming/.

	frequently to achieve a strategic and/or geopolitical outcome.[100] Influence campaigns increasingly deploy an array of disinformation tactics with the goal of manipulating public opinion and undermining the integrity of the information environment.[101]	
Information and communication technologies (ICTs)	Technology that is used to handle communications processes such as telecommunications, broadcast media, intelligent building management systems, audiovisual processing and transmission systems, and network-based control and monitoring functions. It describes the convergence of several technologies, and the use of common transmission lines carrying very diverse data and communication types and formats.[102]	
Information operations	Strategies executed by strategic communication experts where disinformation and propaganda are spread in order to skew online discourses.[103] They may involve a selective combination of lethal and non-lethal means to achieve campaign objectives, offline and online.[104]	
Information security	Different from cybersecurity, information security is a broader category that looks to protect all	

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[100] Wardle (2017), p. 16.

[101] https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf

[102] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/24152/information-and-communications-technology-ict

[103] Expert from International IDEA, Third Plenary Assembly of the Global Network on Electoral Justice.

[104] https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--3658--SE

	information assets, whether in hard copy or in digital form.[105]	
Interference (foreign, domestic and external)	Electoral interference is one of the ways in which actors that are *external* to a country's political institutions seek to undermine a nation's democracy, by injecting misinformation and disinformation into public discourse on social media. Such interference can be both *domestic*, in the sense that they are national actors that are not formally linked to the electoral process or campaign, and foreign.[106] Foreign interference campaigns target specific groups and spread misinformation on social media platforms, ultimately attempting to increase distrust of a target country's political institutions.[107] This kind of political manipulation usually involves political advertising, spending and evasion of domestic campaign finance rules.[108]	
Internet	A system architecture that has revolutionized communications and methods of commerce by allowing various computer networks around the world to interconnect. It supports access to digital information by many applications, including the World Wide Web.[109]	

[105] Find source

[106] https://fsi.stanford.edu/publication/election-2020-foreign-interference-and-domestic-manipulations-aimed-voters-and-electoral

[107] https://www.lawsociety.com.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/20200313_Submission_to_the_Select_Committee_on_Foreign_Interference_th.pdf

[108] https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/social-media-now-prime-conduit-foreign-interference

[109] https://www.britannica.com/technology/Internet

	Internet is the medium for social media. Not all Internet sites or platforms meet the definition of social media, as some websites make no provision for interactivity with the audience.[110]	
Internet intermediaries	The term 'Internet intermediaries' commonly refers to a wide, diverse and rapidly evolving range of service providers that facilitate interactions on the Internet between natural and legal persons. Some connect users to the Internet, enable processing of data and host web-based services, including for user-generated comments. Others gather information, assist searches, facilitate the sale of goods and services, or enable other commercial transactions. They also moderate and rank content, mainly through algorithmic processing, and they may perform other functions that resemble those of publishers.[111]	
Internet of things (IOT)	It is the fact of connecting any device with an on and off switch to the Internet (and/or to each other). This includes everything from cellphones, headphones, wearable devices, and even washing machines etc. This also applies to components of machines. The IoT is a giant network of connected "things" (which also includes people). The relationship is between people-	

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[110] https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/guidelines-for-the-development-of-a-social-media-code-of-conduct-for-elections.pdf
[111] https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/internet-intermediaries

	people, people-things, and things-things.[112] IoT can be used or misused to shift political discourse online, by accessing and storing considerable amounts of personal data or device users, and affect civic engagement online or in politics.[113] IoT *botnets* is a network of devices connected to IoT that are infected with malware or are controlled by malicious actors. This can also be linked to *Distributed denial-of-service (DDos)*. See above.[114]	
Internet service providers (ISP)	It is a company that provides Internet connections and services to individuals and organizations. In addition to providing access to the Internet, ISPs may also provide software packages (such as browsers), e-mail accounts, and a personal Web site or home page.[115]	
Internet trolls	Human users on Internet platforms who intentionally harass, provoke, or intimidate other, often to distract and sow discord. Trolls can act as individuals, and in this capacity share many characteristics with individual perpetrators of *hate speech*. However, trolls can also engage in coordinated *inauthentic behavior*.[116]	

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[112] https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2014/05/13/simple-explanation-internet-things-that-anyone-can-understand/#5752fdd51d09

[113] https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/videos/civic-engagement-bots-and-the-internet-of-things-iot/

[114] https://www.trendmicro.com/vinfo/us/security/definition/iot-botnet#:~:text=An%20IoT%20botnet%20is%20a,the%20control%20of%20malicious%20actors.&text=Much%20of%20a%20botnet's%20power,devices%20that%20make%20it%20up.

[115] https://www.britannica.com/technology/Internet-service-provider

[116] https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf

Concept	General definition	Country example
Junk news	The publication of propaganda and ideologically extreme, hyperpartisan or conspiratorial political news and information under the guise of providing credible information. The term includes news publications that present verifiably false content or commentary as factual news.[117] The content has low credibility, is often commercially-driven, based on sensationalism, hyperpartisan and/or conspiratorial, and can go beyond politics. Sometimes it is referred to as *clickbait*.	

K

Concept	General definition	Country example
Keyword	A word used in a performing a search in search engines or social media.[118] Tracking keywords used in searches allows actors to optimize their efforts: monitor trending topics on social media, determine search query frequency, identify markets and discover relevant points of engagement.[119] See *Query.*	

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[117]
https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf

[118] https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/keyword/

[119] https://www.wordstream.com/articles/keyword-research-for-social-media-guide

Concept	General definition	Country example
Level playing field (in an electoral contest)	A fair competition that ensures that each party and candidate is treated fairly and are provided precisely the same opportunities and financial resources, irrespective of their size and popularity, ensuring them equal opportunity to put their case to the voters.[120] With the digitalization of politics, this term can be used in relation to online political discourse, the use of social media of wealthier candidates, and so forth.	
Link building	The process of increasing the number of inbound links to a website in a way that will increase search engine rankings.[121] When using search engines, voters might get results (websites or social media pages) of less quality, meaning that they are less relevant, but do not appear as such because of the manufactured high ranking.	

M

Concept	General definition	Country example
Machine learning	Machine learning makes it possible to construct a mathematical model to allow a computer to make decisions or predictions without human intervention based on data, including a large number of	

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[120] https://aceproject.org/main/english/pc/pc21.htm
[121] https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/link_building/

	variables that are not known in advance.[122]	
Malinformation	Accurate information that is shared with the intent to cause harm or to benefit the perpetrator, often by moving private information into the public sphere.[123]	
Meme	The formal definition of the term meme, coined by biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976, is an idea or behavior that spreads person to person throughout a culture by propagating rapidly, and changing over time.19 The term is now used most frequently to describe captioned photos or GIFs that spread online, and the most effective are humorous or critical of society. They are increasingly being used as powerful vehicles of disinformation.[124]	
Metadata	Data used to define, contextualize or characterize other data.[125] It is data that describes the other item's content and is generally used in the context of Web pages, where it describes page content for a search engine.[126] In social media, it is linked to *scraping (see Content scrapers)* meaning that a digital platform uses some of the linked Web page's content in the preview of	

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[122] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe
https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[123] IFES: Disinformation Campaigns and Hate Speech: Exploring the Relationship and Programming Interventions, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2019. And
https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Disinformation%20and%20Electoral%20Integrity_NDI_External_Updated%20May%202019%20%281%29.pdf

[124] https://firstdraftnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/infoDisorder_glossary.pdf?x32863

[125] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe
https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[126] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/1938/metadata

	the shared page on the platform.[127]	
Misinformation	False or misleading information that is shared without the intent to cause harm[128] or realization that it is incorrect. In some cases, actors may unknowingly perpetuate the spread of disinformation by sharing content they believe to be accurate among their networks.[129]	
Multiplier effects (network effects)	A network effect is produced when someone who has seen social media content passes on the same message or reference to their friends or followers. The second-degree network may represent weak social ties but has proven to be useful to make content "go viral".[130]	

N

Concept	General definition	Country example
Native advertising	Online advertising in which the ad copy and format adheres to that of a regular post on the network that it is being posted on. The aim is to make it feel less like an ad, and more part of a conversation.[131]	
Natural language processing (NLP)	This technology allows machines to determine what humans are saying, whether in text or by voice.	

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[127] https://www.wearehydrogen.com/post/the-importance-of-meta-data-to-social-media
[128]
https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Disinformation%20and%20Electoral%20Integrity_NDI_External_Updated%20May%202019%20%281%29.pdf
[129] IFES: Disinformation Campaigns and Hate Speech: Exploring the Relationship and Programming Interventions, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2019. And
https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_working_paper_social_media_disinformation_and_electoral_integrity_august_2019.pdf
[130]
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2014/140709/LDM_BRI(2014)140709_REV1_EN.pdf
[131] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

	More sophisticated programs can decipher speech in various languages, understanding not only the actual vocabulary, but also pulling out context and more hidden meanings. Nuanced language including sarcasm and subtlety and parody are still difficult for artificial intelligence.[132] NLP is sometimes used by data scientists to automate the analysis of social media content.	
Net neutrality	A concept that underscores that Internet service providers have to treat all data equally. No data can be prioritized by the service providers.	
Netiquette	Short for network etiquette, the code of conduct regarding acceptable online behavior.[133]	
Neuromarketing	A study of how people's brains react to advertising.[134] People who build propaganda can obtain the desired result through neuromarketing and programming algorithms.	
Neural network	Family of *machine learning*, whose design was originally schematically inspired by the functioning of biological neurons and which, subsequently, came close to statistical methods. It is used for robotics, automated translation, etc.[135] Using algorithms, they can recognize hidden patterns in raw data, cluster and classify it, filter social networks and over time continuously learn and improve.[136]	

[132] Business 2 community: https://www.business2community.com/marketing/artificial-intelligence-terms-marketers-need-know-01891972.

[133] https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/netiquette/

[134] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/neuromarketing

[135] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[136] sas.com/en_us/insights/analytics/neural-networks.html

Concept	General definition	Country example
Online Violence Against Women in Politics	All forms of aggression, coercion, and intimidation of women in the online space simply because they are women. Also known as *cyber violence against women*.[137] This phenomenon exists online too, as politically active female candidates face threats[138] from other candidates, parties, and/or citizens.	
Open data	The term refers to the public availability, by download, of structured databases. These data may be re-used in a non-monetary way under the conditions of a specific license, which may in particular specify or prohibit certain purposes of re-use.[139]	
Open Internet	The Open Internet (OI) is a fundamental network or related to net neutrality in which information across the World Wide Web (www) is equally free and available without variables that depend on the financial motives of Internet Service Providers (ISP).[140]	
Organic search	A term for search engine results that are naturally generated and not influenced by commercial relationships between an organization and a search provider. The employed search algorithm delivers the most relevant and useful results in a neutral manner. This is the opposite to a *paid search* (see	

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[137] https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/genderreport2015final.pdf

[138] https://www.iknowpolitics.org/en/discuss/e-discussions/online-violence-against-women-politics

[139] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

[140] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/30106/open-internet-oi

	below) result where prominence on a given platform is purchased.[141]	

P

Concept	General definition	Country example
Paid political advertisements, advertising, or ads	In traditional media, advertising is permitted, subject only to other limitations such as campaign spending ceilings and sometimes restrictions on content.[142] With the digitalization of election campaigns, political advertising and paid political ads on social media have emerged and boosted the efficiency of campaigns.[143] The requirements to place political ads and the level of transparency about the ads themselves vary depending on the social platform.	
Paid search	Any search process where results are dictated by payment from advertisers, where the purchased space displays the content of the advertiser. This kind of result is unnatural.[144] Political actors have engaged and tent to invest in this kind of political communication strategy.[145]	
Personal data	Information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person, directly or indirectly, by reference	

[141] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/21194/organic-search#:~:text=Explains%20Organic%20Search-,What%20Does%20Organic%20Search%20Mean%3F,other%20party%20hosting%20search%20results.

[142] https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/me/mea/mec04/mec04b/default

[143] https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/voting-in-2020/political-advertising-on-social-media-platforms/

[144] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/1555/paid-search#:~:text=Techopedia%20Explains%20Paid%20Search,-Paid%20search%20is&text=Organic%20search%20results%20are%20%22natural,the%20advertiser%20and%20Web%20host.

[145] https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/me/mea/mec04/mec04b/default

	to one or more elements specific to that person.[146]	
Personal data processing	Any operation or set of operations performed or not using automated processes and applied to personal data or sets of data, such as collection, recording, organization, structuring, storage, adaptation or modification, retrieval, consultation, use, communication by transmission, dissemination or any other form of making available, linking or interconnection, limitation, erasure or destruction.[147]	
Phishing	A targeted attack by hackers, using bogus emails or other targeted communications, that attempts to get the victim to provide login information or personal information to the hackers.[148]	
Placement of ads (organic and paid)	Advertising locations on websites or social media platforms where an ad can appear, which can be chosen by adding *placement targeting*.[149] These may be free or paid depending on how or when the ad will be displayed.[150] Search engines may offer a targeted placement of ads or search results, as well as *automatic placements* they deem relevant based on the ad's keywords.[151]	

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[146] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe
https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary
[147] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe
https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary
[148] https://pages.nist.gov/ElectionGlossary/
[149] https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/2470108?hl=en
[150] https://ads.google.com/intl/en_id/home/resources/what-is-paid-search/
[151] https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/53215?hl=en

Political advertisements or ads (online)	See *Election advertisement or propaganda* or *Paid political advertisements, advertising, or ads*.	
Political campaign	Unlike the *Election campaign*, a *Political campaign* is not legally restricted in time and usually precedes the official electoral campaign period and comprises of the concerted efforts made by political competitors and their supporters to shape public opinion in their favor, that should subsequently convert into electoral capital. Such a campaign can be conducted offline and online and can include paid ads or not. While election campaigns tend to have a clear legal framework, online political campaigns are far less regulated and tend to include overseas or private actors that manage the online communication strategies.[152]	
Post (posts and dark posts)	Posts are publications on social media platforms created by a user.[153] They tend to be free but can also be paid for. A *dark post* is a targeted social media ad post that is oriented differently than a regular sponsored or promoted post, and only appears when an actor chooses to target selected people. On Facebook dark posts are referred to as unpublished posts and on Twitter they are called promoted-only tweets.[154] See *placement* for further references.	

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[152] https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/regulating-online-campaign-finance.pdf

[153] https://www.gymglish.com/en/gymglish/english-translation/post-social-media

[154] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/33031/dark-post-social-media

Privacy	See *Right to privacy*.	
Profile (of a user)	A short description of someone or something that gives important information and useful details about them.[155] Usually linked to an account of a user in social media or website.	
Profiling	Defined by Article 4(4) of the GDPR, as personal data being processed for the purpose of evaluating certain aspects of a natural person's life (economic situation, health, personal preferences, etc.).[156] Individuals or organizations use profiling to create *targeted* or *microtargeted* advertising campaigns on social media.[157]	
Pseodonymization	Personal data that may no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without recourse to additional information, provided that this additional information is kept separately and subject to technical and organizational measures to ensure that the personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable natural person.[158] It is a method that allows a switch of the original data set, for instance an e-mail or a name, with an alias. It may also reduce the risk of exposing sensitive data to unauthorized personnel. The DGPR sees pseudonymized data	

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[155] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/profile
[156] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary
[157] https://uplandsoftware.com/bluevenn/resources/blog/a-step-to-step-guide-to-audience-profiling/
[158] Artificial Intelligence glossary developed by the Ad Hoc Committee CAHAI of the Council of Europe https://www.coe.int/en/web/artificial-intelligence/glossary

as *personal data*, however, *anonymous* data, is not.[159]

Q

Concept	General definition	Country example
QR code	A type of barcode, or scannable pattern, that contain various forms of data, like website links and account information. They are widely used on social media[160], and allow political actors to automate their process when maximizing outreach during an election campaign.[161]	
Query	Word or phrase a user types into a search engine in the hopes of finding a specific result. A search query is therefore a string of text using a combination of keywords.[162] See *Keyword*.	

R

Concept	General definition	Country example
Retargeting	Means displaying ads to people who have already visited the website or page.[163]	
Right to information	The right to request information (RTI) or the right to accurate information, enables citizens to be informed and hold their authorities accountable. It rests on the notion that the information is rightfully theirs. It leads to a more open and	

[159] https://dataprivacymanager.net/pseudonymization-according-to-the-gdpr/
[160] https://businessinsider.mx/what-is-a-qr-code/?r=US&IR=T
[161] https://blog.beaconstac.com/2020/07/qr-codes-for-election-campaigns/
[162] https://serp.co/seo/search-query/
[163] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

Concept	General definition	Country example
	participatory government,[164] is key when considering *dis/misinformation*, and is slightly different from *Freedom of information*.	
Right to participate in government	The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections. Hence, everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and has the right of equal access to public service in their country. [165]	
Right to privacy	Someone's right to keep their personal matters and relationships secret.[166]	
Right to vote and be voted for	To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing free expression of the will of the electors, and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in one's country.[167]	

S

Concept	General definition	Country example
Search engine	A service that allows Internet users to search for content online. A user enters keywords or key phrases into a search engine and receives a list of Web content results in the form of websites, images, videos, or other online	

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[164] https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/right-to-information/

[165] Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

[166] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/privacy

[167] Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

	data that semantically match with the search query.[168] There are search engines can also be used to measure public social mentions in social networks, thus assessing the performance of certain content or the behavior of users' activity.[169]	
Semantic analysis	A more sophisticated form of *Natural Language Processing* or *Social listening* approach, this concept is focused on the process of stringing words together as well as the way that language is understood through cultural context. This could help to create eBooks and blog posts, with the potential to replace human writers or content marketers.[170]	
Social listening (and Social listening tools)	A process of using social media channels to track, gather and mine the information and data of certain individuals or groups, usually companies or organizations, to assess their reputation and discern how they are perceived online.[171] Also known as social media monitoring or social media measurement. Social listening tools allow the automated monitoring of online conversations around a product, service, or issue.[172]	
Social media	Social media are web or mobile-based platforms that allow for two-way interactions through user-	

[168] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/12708/search-engine-world-wide-web#:~:text=A%20search%20engine%20is%20a,match%20with%20the%20search%20query.

[169] https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/6-powerful-search-engines-social-networks/

[170] Business 2 community: https://www.business2community.com/marketing/artificial-intelligence-terms-marketers-need-know-01891972

[171] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/29592/social-media-monitoring

[172] https://www.clarabridge.com/customer-experience-dictionary/social-listening#:~:text=Social%20Listening%20is%20the%20process,as%20its%20products%20and%20services.&text=Social%20listening%20allows%20you%20to,they%20need%20from%20your%20business.

	generated content (UGC) and communication. Social media are therefore not media that originate only from one source or are broadcast from a static website.[173] They are characterized by the rapid expansion of the virtual communities and the public's access to technologies and tools that facilitate online activity. These digital mediums include blogs, professional networks, and widely known platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Twitter and Vkontakte.[174]	
Social media ads	Different forms of online advertising carried out on social networks, benefiting from high levels of user engagement and the possibility to use segmentation to address a target audience.[175] Ads that utilize all the data users share on social media to offer highly personalized and relevant content, which expands conversation opportunities and can introduce a brand to more potential customers, but can also result in echo chambers where social media users interact with and are exposed to views from like-minded individuals and organizations.[176] They may appear as sponsored posts within or next to the organic content.[177]	

[173] https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/guidelines-development-social-media-code-conduct-elections

[174] https://www.iidh.ed.cr/capel/diccionario/index.html

[175] https://www.additive.eu/en/glossary/social-media-advertising.html

[176] https://www.cyberclick.net/numericalblogen/what-exactly-are-social-ads-types-and-examples-of-advertising-on-social-media

[177] https://www.statista.com/outlook/dmo/digital-advertising/social-media-advertising/europe

Social network (social networking site, SNS)	An online platform that allows users to create a public profile and interact with other users. The use of this term usually refers to the actual network of accounts and relationships that can be analyzed through *Social network analysis*. Social networking sites sometimes or tend to allow a new user to provide a list of people with whom they share a connection, and then allow the people on the list to confirm or deny the connection. After connections are established, the new user can search the networks of connections to make more connections. Also known as social networking website or social website.[178]	
Social network analysis (SNA)	A process of quantitative and qualitative analysis of a social network. SNA measures and maps the flow of relationships and relationship changes between knowledge-possessing entities. The SNA structure is made up of node entities, such as humans, and ties, such as relationships.[179]	
Social proof	A psychological phenomenon in which people seek direction from those around them to determine how they are supposed to act or think in a given situation. In social media, social proof can be identified by the number of interactions a piece of content receives or the number of followers one has.[180]	
Supervised learning	Form of machine learning that does not function independently but requires human input. Data is	

[178] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/4956/social-networking-site-sns

[179] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/3205/social-network-analysis-sna

[180180] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

| | presented into the machine and the process is guided by a person while the computer works toward a specific outcome.[181] Through for instance tagging of content, the guided machine learning will generate an expected result.[182] | |

T

Concept	General definition	Country example
Targeting (micro and geo-targeting)	Targeting functionally allows individuals or organizations to use social media to direct political messages to certain target groups.[183] Micro-targeting consists of more refined targeting of voter groups based on complex combinations of demographics or other factors, through messages to particular groups of users during a campaign.[184] Both of these kinds of targeting depend on social media-sourced information in the campaign database, however, the granularity of the criteria used to target vary.[185] Geo-targeting within digital advertising platforms is a process in which marketers can select which cities, counties, regions, or	

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[181] Business 2 community: https://www.business2community.com/marketing/artificial-intelligence-terms-marketers-need-know-01891972

[182] https://machinelearningmastery.com/supervised-and-unsupervised-machine-learning-algorithms/

[183] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2014/140709/LDM_BRI(2014)140709_REV1_EN.pdf

[184] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2014/140709/LDM_BRI(2014)140709_REV1_EN.pdf

[185] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2014/140709/LDM_BRI(2014)140709_REV1_EN.pdf

	countries they want to target with their ads. In addition, they can also adjust the settings of a given ad to exclude searchers from outside of selected areas.[186]	
Terms of service (ToS)	The set of rules and regulations a provider attaches to a software service or Web-delivered product. They are common in the digital world and must often be agreed by the users before they utilize the service.[187] Sometimes known as Terms of Use or *Community standards*.	
Trolls	See *Internet trolls*.	

U

Concept	General definition	Country example
URL	Location of a resource on the Internet, short for Universal Resources Locator. It includes the protocol (HTTP or FTP), the domain name (or IP address), and additional path information (folder or file).[188] In short, it is the link of an Internet or network site.	
User	Any individual who is not involved with supporting or developing a computer or service, but rather uses the services. It is also another name of an account capable of logging into a computer or service. Any service or program with multiple accounts uses user accounts that give each user their personal permissions, settings,	

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186 https://socialmediaexplorer.com/digital-marketing/the-connection-between-geo-targeting-social-media/
187 https://www.techopedia.com/definition/9746/terms-of-service-tos
188 https://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/url/

Concept	General definition	Country example
	and other data not accessible to other users.[189]	
User-Generated Content (UGC)	Refers to blogs, videos, photos and more, created by users. The collection of this kind of content can by the community manager can be useful to support a campaign or initiative.[190]	

V

Concept	General definition	Country example
Viral	Describes any content or media that becomes widely shared through social networks and online. It can include videos, photos, articles and ads.[191]	
Virtual	Information that is simulated on a computer or online network.[192]	

W

Concept	General definition	Country example
Web 2.0	A stage of development of the Internet that enables and promotes user-generated content, social engagement and collaboration, including social media.[193]	

X

Y

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[189] https://www.computerhope.com/jargon/u/user.htm
[190] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms
[191] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/5577/viral
[192] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/virtual
[193] https://www.polyas.com/election-glossary/web20

Z

Concept	General definition	Country example
Zero click searches (or Zero click queries)	A query in a search engine that does not send the user to a third-party website from an organic search result.[194]	

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[194] https://www.searchmetrics.com/glossary/zero-click-searches/#:~:text=Zero%20click%20searches%20are%20queries,on%20an%20organic%20search%20result.

IV. Bibliography

Once the definitions of the concepts have been determined, the list of references will be composed.

V. Annex 1: Context

The Observatory on Social Media of the Global Network on Electoral Justice (GNEJ) aims to protect political-electoral rights and democratic principles in the digital era, by issuing recommendations in favor of institutional changes that strengthen the Rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights. It will analyze the current context of digital communication technologies in elections and electoral justice, issue periodic reports with best practices and recommendations, and offers to accompany processes and support the members of the Global Network, in this specialized field.

On the 13th July 2021, the first meeting of the Board of this Observatory was held virtually. At the meeting, a proposal for a deliverable ahead of the Fourth Plenary Assembly (October 2021) was approved: a glossary that will define concepts in the field of digital media that are useful or applicable to the electoral field, which will address the different realities of the organizations that are part of the Global Network.

The glossary will contain the terms used in social media and digital communication technologies, and their relation to online democratic processes, and will be published on the Global Exchange Platform by the end of 2021.

VI. Annex 2: Methodology

The construction of the glossary will be guided by studies in the field of technology, communication, digital media, and the digitalization of elections, as well as existing dictionaries that define said concepts. These studies and dictionaries will be used as a benchmark for the national definitions and presentation of cases included in the glossary.[195] Moreover, international organizations who work in this field have been monitored, in order to include up-to-date examples of concepts, application of terms, and national cases. A wide collection of information is necessary to find similarities and differences across numerous countries, as well as to favor the "positive" and/or "challenging" approach that the Board of the Observatory wishes to employ in all their activities.

It is important to highlight that this document does not aim to delve into a deeper analysis of individual cases, rather, it employs a Qualitative Comparative Approach (QCA)[196] as a mean to structure the collection and contrast how new digital communication technologies are used in elections. Moreover, it is important to distinguish that concepts related to e-voting[197]

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[195] In the second Board meeting, it was agreed that the list of concepts and definitions be concluded in the first stage, and that the inclusion of national cases be part of the second stage. Therefore, the column of national examples is currently empty.

[196] https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Qualitative-comparative-analysis.pdf

[197] E-voting is short for electronic voting, which is the procedure through which a voter casts their ballot through a digital system instead of using paper ballots. This form of voting emerged in the beginning of the 21st century and implies certain digitalization of the voting procedure that the Electoral Management Body

will be avoided, as this entails another approach to the use of technology in elections. Also, concepts such as gender-based political violence, will not be included in this glossary, although they may relate to or manifest in social media. This is because the glossary exclusively focuses on *social media concepts useful or applicable to elections or electoral justice*.

The glossary will be guided by the principles of **accuracy** (in the collection of information and the matching between concepts and national examples), **correlation** and **classification** (ordering definitions and examples into groups based on their shared attributes), **deduction** (formulating conclusions about the naming of a concept if the national context lacks one, but is similar enough to another case), **rigor** (diligently reviewing resources and applying the QCA equally across all information, to identify significant differences and respect them), and **triangulation** (verifying definitions of one or more countries, using a multi-faceted collection of information).

VII. Annex 3: Basic conceptual framework and international references

The **right to vote** and **to be voted for**, and thereby the exercise of the **right to participate in government**, have their normative basis in international instruments such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.[198] The free exercise of the rights of suffrage are protected by **freedom of expression**, which constitutes an indispensable aspect of any democracy and modern electoral system. "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".[199] This right to express one's ideas and opinions, exchange them with fellow citizens, and request or share information, is indispensable to public and political life. It is connected to the **freedom of assembly and association** and the **right to information**.[200]

Freedom of expression allows an informed political debate where citizens may fully engage with and/or discuss the pressing issues of today, are aware of how their votes affect government decisions and may demand public authorities, including electoral and judicial bodies, to share accurate and transparent information. With the digitalization of politics, this

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(EMB) typically is in charge of administering ahead of Election Day. See https://www.techopedia.com/definition/13616/electronic-voting-e-voting

[198] Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

[199] Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human RIghts https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

[200] These rights and freedoms are stipulated in articles 20, 21, 22 and 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 19 and 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 13 of the American Convention of Human Rights, among other regional fundamental instruments.

freedom has become the cornerstone of new digital communication technologies, and therefore, this liberty and the right to vote and be voted must be **guaranteed online** too.[201]

According to the Venice Commission "the Internet and social media have opened new opportunities for political participation and have become essential in the electoral process", "electronic challenges to democracy, including cybercrime, were nonetheless high and extremely complex, due in particular to the borderless nature of the internet and the private ownership of information".[202]

Ultimately, these new digital challenges threaten not only the pillars of freedom of expression during electoral processes, because citizens engage with erroneous information and might have a skewed perception of political parties' agendas, but also the **right to a level playing field in an electoral contest** and **free and fair elections**. According to the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, the misuse of social media to subvert electoral processes through "computational propaganda", passing laws that are justified by the previously stated challenges that in practice restrict freedom of expression or citizens' access to information, and governments abusing their position to issue propaganda that impacts election results, are among today's threats posed by the misuse of social networks.[203]

Social networks constitute one of the most significant tools for freedom of expression, since "social media platforms have become the new 'public square'".[204] They have brought citizens and historically excluded groups closer to all government branches, electoral authorities, and political actors, thus including their views and diversifying the public debate and ensuring, for instance, greater electoral engagement through a surge of first-time-voters.[205] The *Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Elections in the Digital Age* confirms "the essential role that freedom of expression and information, free, independent and diverse media and a free and accessible Internet play in ensuring free and fair elections" and highlights "the importance to democracy of a vibrant media landscape, of robust public debate about matters of public interest, and of the public having access to a diverse range of information and ideas".[206] As the Special Rapporteur said in 2014, the pillars that guarantee freedom of opinions and expression during electoral processes are: pluralism and the media, transparency, and accuracy.[207]

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[201] https://book.coe.int/en/human-rights-and-democracy/8447-freedom-of-expression-and-the-internet-updated-and-revised-2nd-edition.html

[202] https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2020)037-e

[203] https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/8/451150_0.pdf and
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/ElectionsReportDigitalAge.pdf

[204] https://rm.coe.int/cahai-2020-23-draft-feasibility-study-fin/1680a0a5a9

[205] https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/social-media-guide-for-electoral-management-bodies.pdf

[206] https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/8/451150_0.pdf

[207] Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of

However, according to the Council of Europe, "full participation in the online communicative space faces many challenges" as national regulation, private rules and technological algorithms sometimes pushes freedom of expression to its limit.[208] With increased technological tools and grey zones, the **cyberspace of political discussions** ahead of elections has been subject to various manifestations of manipulation, information operations, disinformation and fake news, violent or discriminatory content, among others.

These challenges have mobilized the international electoral community to consider different forms of regulation in this field, contrasting the expansion and limitation of fundamental rights. While "everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference", any legal restriction of freedom of expression online must safeguard "the rights or reputations of others" and "for the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals".[209]

Principles to consider

Pressures during electoral processes in the digital age are complicated and multi-faceted and involve a wide range of State and non-State actors.[210] Therefore, public authorities worldwide need a crystal-clear understanding of the social media landscape and how to relate to these new concepts and challenges. Only then will jurisdictional-electoral bodies be able to respond to electoral claims in an updated manner and adapt their judicial decisions accordingly.

In order to enhance the benefits of the use of digital communication platforms in online democratic processes, and to contrast the presented challenges, a summary of this list of Principles[211] can be considered as additional context for the glossary:

1. **The principles of freedom of expression implying a robust public debate must be translated into the digital environment, in particular during electoral periods**.
   Content policies must be in line with freedom of expression principles, ensuring an open digital public debate where the free exchange of opinions and ideas.

2. **During electoral campaigns, a competent impartial Electoral Management Body (EMB) or judicial body should be empowered to require private companies to remove clearly defined third-party content from the internet, based on electoral laws and in line with international standards**.

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opinion and expression, Frank La Rue, Human Rights Council, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/26/30 (Jul 2, 2014), available at http://undocs.org/A/HRC/26/30.
[208] https://book.coe.int/en/human-rights-and-democracy/8447-freedom-of-expression-and-the-internet-updated-and-revised-2nd-edition.html
[209] Art 19 https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx
[210] https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/ElectionsReportDigitalAge.pdf
[211] https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2020)037-e

Private companies should not be made liable to remove third party content from the internet absent a judicial oversight, nor given the power to regulate the exercise of freedom of expression. Only bodies independent from political and commercial influences should apply these rules.

3. **During electoral periods, the open internet and net neutrality need to be protected**.
   Ensure that any restrictions on access to internet content are based on a strict legal framework and judicial oversight to prevent possible abuses, preventing Internet Service Providers from unilaterally deciding the online contents.

4. **Personal data need to be effectively protected, particularly during the crucial period of elections**.
   People's online behavior cannot be monitored without consent as it contradicts the principle of free and fair elections. Privacy policies need to be established by political actors and shared with electoral authorities, and failure to comply with them would lead to sanctions.

5. **Electoral integrity must be preserved through periodically reviewed rules and regulations on political advertising and on the responsibility of internet intermediaries**.
   Ensure transparency of paid political ads on social media and the internet, in terms of access to the media, spending and accountability.

6. **Electoral integrity should be guaranteed by adapting the specific international regulations to the new technological context and by developing institutional capacities to fight cyberthreats**.
   Technological developments are so rapid that these approaches need constant updating, to properly address threats to electoral integrity and deliberative democracy with effective international cooperation with service providers, addressing issues such as cloud computing and jurisdiction.

7. **The international cooperation framework and public-private cooperation should be strengthened**.
   The transnational nature of cyber threats to democracy demands active collaboration of governments, companies, and individuals in order to exchange information to investigate and sanction illegal conducts.

8. **The adoption of self-regulatory mechanisms should be promoted**.
   Technology actors have human rights responsibilities towards their users and should therefore adopt digital ethics codes and self-regulatory mechanisms, to create co-responsibility of online behavior. For instance, by labelling political ads and fact-checking.

This brief introduction to the basic conceptual framework and international references serves as a universal overview of social media, new digital communication technologies and related rights. Moving onto the selected countries and how their public authorities relate to these references, the following section specifies the application of legal social media concepts in the electoral field.