

NCDS Principles Workshop Minutes

9 June 2023

Attendees: Martina Chapman (Independent Chair)
Seamus Hempenstall (D/TCAGSM - Secretariat)
Paul Kilkenny (D/TCAGSM - Secretariat)
Fiona Shevlin (D/TCAGSM - Secretariat)
Elizabeth Harvey (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment)
Corah Caples (Department of Justice)
Eugene Farrelly (Department of the Taoiseach)
Liz Carolan (Digital Action)
Anthony Kilcoyne (Digital Technologies, PDST)
Eileen Culloty (Dublin City University)
Roddy Flynn (Dublin City University)
Johnny Ryan (Irish Council for Civil Liberties)
Aoife Gallagher (Institute for Strategic Dialogue)
Ciarán O'Connor (Institute for Strategic Dialogue)
Cathal McCauley (Library Association of Ireland)
Stephanie Comey (Media Literacy Ireland)
Una Fitzpatrick (Technology Ireland, IBEC)
Paul Gordon (National Youth Council of Ireland)
Seamus Dooley (National Union of Journalists)
Eugenia Siapera (University College Dublin)
Gillian Murphy (University College Cork) – Presenter

A workshop was held for Working Group and Subgroup members to give all participants in the process an overview of the Subgroups' work and to discuss the emerging indicative principles that may form the basis of the National Counter Disinformation Strategy.

1. Opening Remarks

On commencement of the workshop, the Chair welcomed all participants and outlined the objective of the day, along with the running order for proceedings.

2. Process of Strategy Development

The Secretariat gave all participants an overview of the strategy development process, including the objectives of the public consultation. It was outlined that the purpose of the public consultation is to:

- Offer a wider group of stakeholders the opportunity to contribute;
- Sense check the draft principles;
- Ask respondents if they are involved in any counter disinformation measures; and,
- Provide respondents the opportunity to highlight anything they feel is missing.

The timeline for the consultation process was outlined with the intention to open the portal for submissions in early July.

3. Presentations to Plenary

Johnny Ryan gave a presentation on online advertising technology. He explained the real time bidding (RTB) process and laid out the data profiling, data retention and data protection concerns in this system in relation to disinformation

Gillian Murphy gave a presentation on susceptibility to disinformation. She explained that situational factors play a large part in a person's susceptibility to disinformation. She also questioned the acceptability of some interventions, as certain categories of intervention have been shown to decrease a participant's belief in true news as well as false information.

4. Summaries of Subgroup Work

Four updates on the work of the subgroups were provided. There was an update from Stephanie Comey on the policy and regulatory environment, a section common to all subgroup reports. In addition, there was an update from Eileen Culloty on existing countermeasures, one from Liz Carolan on the possible interventions analysis report and a final update from Paul Gordon on suggested ways to support journalism and protect public interest information.

5. Indicative Principles emanating from Subgroups

The Secretariat provided an overview of the draft indicative principles, derived from the Subgroup work. It is intended, following this Workshop, that agreed principles will form the basis of the consultation, with questions posed to the public/wider stakeholders in relation to them.

It is intended that these principles will form part of the final Strategy document, with any potential recommendations or actions nesting under each principle.

6. Breakout Groups

Three breakout groups, consisting of a mix of Working Group members, Subgroup members and members of the Secretariat discussed the wording of all the draft principles. Each breakout group was asked to:

- Review the proposed principles with a focus on the clarity and relevance of each principle;
- Consider specific questions posed by the Chair in relation to each principle; and,
- Suggest areas for exploration as part of the public consultation, ideally by submitting questions for consideration.

Breakout groups discussed these points for 40 minutes.

7. Principles and Consultation Questions

A rapporteur from each breakout group reported back to all participants.

Group A: Seamus Hempenstall reported that there was discussion in his group about merging principles C and D, clarifying principle E and moving trust from principle E to principle A.

Group B: Eileen Culloty reported that her group discussed using more positive language and also the question of what would constitute a healthy information environment.

Group C: Eugene Farrelly reported that his group agreed with the merging of principles C and D and discussed the rewording of the principles to avoid action-based language.

8. Next Steps

It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate updated draft principles to include any proposed amendments that were raised in the workshop. It was also stated that the Secretariat are aiming to finalise subgroup reports by mid-June.

NCDS Secretariat

13/06/2023