Big Tech Scorecard: Data-Driven Investor Engagement with Tech Companies

Thursday, May 5th
Speakers

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Director
Ranking Digital Rights

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NEI Investments

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Company & Investor Engagement Manager
Ranking Digital Rights
Light Years Away: Lessons from the 2022 RDR Big Tech Scorecard

May 5, 2022

Jessica Dheere, Director
Jan Rydzak, Company & Investor Engagement Manager

Ranking Digital Rights
Who are we?

Ranking Digital Rights evaluates the world’s most powerful digital platforms and telcos on their disclosed policies and practices affecting freedom of expression and privacy.
Who are we?

We link companies’ poor transparency to real-life harm.

The Case of the Creepy Algorithm That ‘Predicted’ Teen Pregnancy

A government leader in Argentina hailed the AI, which was fed invasive data about girls. The feminist pushback could inform the future of health tech.

On Russia's VK, Anti-War Messages Defy Vladimir Putin's Ukraine Censors

BY DANYA HAJJAJI ON 3/18/22 AT 12:28 PM EDT

Facebook Doesn’t Know What It Does With Your Data, Or Where It Goes: Leaked Document
How do we help hold companies to account?

- Our Big Tech Scorecard (BTS) ranks 14 of the most powerful digital platforms every April
- Our Telco Giants Scorecard (TGS) ranks 12 of the largest telecommunications companies every November
- 58 indicators (~300 standards)
  - Governance
  - Freedom of Expression & Information
  - Privacy

https://rankingdigitalrights.org/index2022
What’s new in the 2020 Big Tech Scorecard?

❖ More **Highlights** contextualizing each company’s results

❖ Improved **Data Explorer** can now compare companies by service

❖ New metadata such as **stock structure**

❖ New views (**Lenses**)  

❖ New services: **LinkedIn**  

![2022 Company & Service Scores](image)
What’s new in the 2020 Big Tech Scorecard?

Performance Over Time

Here we show the total scores of companies year-over-year since their inclusion in the ranking. Note that between 2019 and 2020 we expanded our methodology to include standards around targeted advertising and algorithmic systems. The expansion resulted in overall decline in total score for many of the companies in 2020.

* Most companies’ scores dropped between 2019 and 2020 with the inclusion of our new indicators on targeted advertising and algorithmic systems. To learn more, please visit our Methodology development archive.
Big Tech Keeps Failing Us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Popularity</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yahoo</td>
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<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>VK</td>
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<td>Alibaba</td>
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<td>Samsung</td>
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<td>Amazon</td>
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<td>Tencent</td>
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Together, the 14 Big Tech companies have improved by **2.2%**

**Largest improvements**: board governance (8 companies), training and whistleblower protections, and security

**Google** is the only company to decline—for the second year in a row
The Amazon paradox

Amazon improved on more indicators than any other company but still ended up at the bottom. Why?

- No information about **censorship demands**—a clear anomaly among U.S. platforms
- Scant transparency on how it enforces its **own policies**
- Poor disclosures about **Alexa** resemble those of Alibaba more than U.S. competitors
The Amazon paradox

Amazon Knows What You Buy. And It’s Building a Big Ad Business From It.

Researchers find Amazon uses Alexa voice data to target you with ads
Amazon and third parties use data from smart speakers to sell you stuff, says report
By Jennifer Pattison Tuohy | @jp2e | Apr 28, 2022, 4:40pm EDT

Amazon says it’s permanently banned 600 Chinese brands for review fraud
These Chinese companies knew what they were doing, a spokesperson says
By Sean Hollister | @StarFire2258 | Sep 17, 2021, 7:11pm EDT
Ad nauseam? Findings on targeted ads

Targeted advertising

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We can’t govern the internet without governing online advertising. Here’s how to do it.

By Nathalie Maréchal

We’ve been saying it for a while, but it bears repeating: the social ills that we associate with digital platforms—hate speech, disinformation, election interference, and more—are fundamentally connected to the surveillance advertising business model that fuels companies like Alphabet, Meta, and Twitter. We are thrilled to see that more
Engaging with companies

- Findings identify policy shortcomings and catalyze internal calls for change
- Company participation in the research process is at its highest point to date
- Nearly all 14 Big Tech platforms provided feedback on their preliminary results
- The exceptions: Alibaba, Baidu, Tencent—and Google
How does RDR work with investors?

1. Provide insight from research findings
2. Work with IAHR
3. Embed human rights into standard-setting processes
4. Syndicate our data
5. Collaborate on shareholder resolutions that focus on digital rights
Resolutions supported this year

**Meta:**
Human rights impact assessment of targeted advertising system

**Alphabet:**
Human rights impact assessment of FLoC
Dual-class share structures harm human rights

- Explosion of multi-class tech IPOs creates risk of severe human rights impacts
- Laws that embrace these structures are mushrooming globally
- We believe multi-class share structures should be eliminated, with interim steps to curb their harms
- We are rallying support around letters to exert pressure on SEC and Congress
Where do we go from here?

- Ban dual-class shares
- Focus on ad tech
- Include the world

Poor governance trickles down
Thank you!
@rankingrights
Questions?
• Join our collective investor engagement with ICT companies addressing users’ rights to privacy and freedom of expression
• Sign up to our Investor Statement on Corporate Accountability for Digital Rights
• Join our monthly ICT and human rights working group calls
• Refer to investor tools - ICT Salient Issue Briefings
• Vote your proxies this 2022 season
• Please contact Anita Dorett at adorett@iccr.org or Meagan Barrera at mbarrera@iccr.org for further information
Thank You!
Investor Alliance for Human Rights

A collective action platform connecting institutional investors with tools and strategies to promote corporate respect for human rights.


For more information, contact: adorett@iccr.org