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To the attention of ARCOM (Declaration for 2022)

By Email to: plateformes@arcom.fr

Re: Questionnaire on the fight against manipulation of information (year 2022)

06/10/2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Yahoo EMEA Limited (“Yahoo”), a Company incorporated in the Republic of Ireland with registered Company number 426324 and primary place of business at 5-7 Point Square, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1, is the provider of services to our users in the EU and hereby responds to this questionnaire received on August 3, 2023.

When looking at your “*Bilan annuel des moyens et mesures mis en oeuvre par les opérateurs de plateforme en ligne en 2021*”, you indicated in summary that « *Douze opérateurs de plateforme en ligne soumis au devoir de coopération prévu par le titre III de la loi du 22 décembre 2018 se sont livrés à l'exercice de déclaration à l'Arcom pour l'exercice 2021 : Dailymotion, Google, LinkedIn, Meta, Microsoft, Pinterest, Snap, TikTok, Twitter, Webedia, La fondation Wikimédia et Yahoo* » ; and you specified that « *Yahoo (est) a priori soumis pour la dernière année à ces obligations* » (in English : « *Yahoo (is) a priori subject to these obligations for the last year* ») so we were quite surprised to receive this questionnaire for the year 2022.

By sending us this questionnaire for the year 2022, you are considering that Yahoo is an ‘online platform’ subject to the provisions of title III of the French Law dated 22 December 2018 on the fight against the manipulation of information. However, as mentioned before to ARCOM, the Yahoo Media properties available in the French language (Yahoo Homepage, Yahoo News, Yahoo Style, Yahoo Sport, and Yahoo Finance - thereafter the “Service”) consist of Yahoo original content and third-party content licensed from reputable publisher partners selected in accordance with our editorial policies. There is no user generated content (“UGC”) on the Service. As a consequence, no third party - including Yahoo users and publishers - can post content on the Service, as they can, for example, on a social media service. Our Service is therefore not an open service where users/content providers can post and display their own content or the content of their choice.

As indicated in our previous responses to the Questionnaire over the years, and as reiterated in the specific responses to this Questionnaire as well, certain questions are, for the reasons explained above, not applicable to Yahoo's operations.

Further, pursuant to the Digital Service Act ("DSA") and the country-of-origin principle, the relevant services provided by Yahoo EMEA Limited will be supervised, if applicable, by the Coimisiún na Meán in Ireland when the DSA obligations enter into effect in February 2024.

Best regards,

Yahoo EMEA Limited

Questionnaire to Yahoo under Title III of the law of December 22, 2018 relating to the fight against the manipulation of information

SERVICE OVERVIEW

Please indicate:

- the name of the service(s),
- the name, Company name and address of the operating company,
- the number of unique visitors per month for each service in France (monthly average in 2021 and 2022):

Our response:

- Service Name: Yahoo Media properties available in French language: Yahoo Homepage, Yahoo News, Yahoo Style, Yahoo Sport, and Yahoo Finance (thereafter the “Service”)
 - Name, Company name and address of the operating company: Yahoo EMEA Limited, 5-7 Point Square, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1, Ireland
 - Number of unique visitors per month to the service in France and worldwide, calculated on the basis of the year preceding the year of exercise (monthly average):
 1. In 2021 (same figures as those provided last year):
 - Unique visitors in France (FR users identified based on their IP address) to the Service = ** million monthly average unique users (UU not deduplicated) - internal source
 - Unique visitors worldwide (all IP users) to the Service = ** million monthly average unique users (UU not deduplicated) - internal source
 2. In 2022:
 - Unique visitors in France (FR users identified based on their IP address) to the Service = ** million monthly average unique users (UU not deduplicated) - internal source
 - Unique visitors worldwide (all IP users) to the Service = ** million monthly average unique users (UU not deduplicated) - internal source
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YAHOO ANTI-MANIPULATION QUESTIONS

1. Recall the definition(s) of false information (or of any similar concept adopted) and of the phenomena of manipulation of information retained by Yahoo to apply its moderation policy in this area.

Our response:

Our response has not changed since last year. We did not provide our own definition of false information, we only referred to the law.

2. What measures does Yahoo implement to combat the manipulation of information in connection with:

- **the war in Ukraine,**
- **climate change,**
- **other specific situations (to be specified)?**

Our response:

Unlike other providers responding to this Questionnaire, Yahoo does not provide social media services and the Service contains no user generated content. As explained in prior years' responses and also explained above, our Service comprises original editorial content created by our editorial teams (which are checked before publication), and editorial content from selected and reputable third party press publishers (which is also editorially checked by the third party press publishers before being published on Yahoo's site). As a consequence, we do not have a fact checking system (from third parties or internally).

The quality of news available via our Service is managed contractually. We include editorial guidelines in our contracts with third party press publishers, which specify that *"each article must adhere to the highest standards of journalism and quality, including fact checking, copyediting and other standards of accuracy"*.

In order to inform our users about the risks from Fake News online, we proactively added in April 2022 a new "Fact Checking" feature on Yahoo Homepage with specific fact checking content provided by third party press publishers, specializing in debunking Fake News, such as "AFP", "20 minutes" and "Les Observateurs" (France 24). They regularly check "Fake News" content in order to correct public misperceptions and increase knowledge of important issues. This category (or Topic page) is currently accessible from the Yahoo Homepage: <https://fr.yahoo.com/> - when clicking on the "Fact Check" tab (<https://fr.yahoo.com/topics/fact-checking/>).

In-Depth Review of Ad Placement

3. What steps does Yahoo take to:

- **prevent commercial communications from being affixed alongside false information?**

- **fight against the misuse of advertising systems for the publication of false information in the form of commercial communications?**
- **inform advertisers of the violations committed and allow them to appeal?**

Our response:

As explained before, the Service contains no user generated content. Rather, it is comprised of original editorial content created by our editorial teams, as well as editorial content from selected and reputable third party press publishers.

Yahoo does not offer a product that allows a content provider or advertiser to promote its content outside of a clearly labeled advertising slot, and our Advertising Policies prohibit political issue advertising during the 6 months ahead of a French election.

A feedback tool is available on most ads on Yahoo-owned and operated sites so users can send feedback on ads displayed.

Regarding political ads, if the ad is rejected, the advertiser will be notified and will have a chance to appeal through the corresponding Yahoo sales account manager.

4. Does Yahoo cooperate with third parties to prevent the risk of manipulation of information regarding commercial communications?

Our response:

Yahoo is part of a number of industry groups such as the “TAG” (Trustworthy Accountability Group) and the TAG threat sharing exchange group (which consists of other websites operators, as well as social media platforms and law enforcement). The purpose of the group is information sharing to help companies like Yahoo quickly block threats related to malware, scam ads, and disinformation advertising campaigns on our websites.

Political Ads

5. Are political advertisements or the promotion of content relating to a debate of general interest currently prohibited on Yahoo in France outside of election periods?

NB: in the event of a positive answer, questions 8 to 10 are null and void.

Our response:

Our Advertising Policies prohibit political issue advertising during the 6 months ahead of a French election. Outside of this period, Yahoo accepts political ads that comply with our ad policies.

You can access our Political Advertising Process here:

<https://adspecs.yahooinc.com/pages/policies-guidelines/yahoo-ad-policy/ad-policy-change-political>

“At Yahoo, we are strong believers in user choice, transparency, and building trust in everything we do. We are committed to being a valued and trusted source of information and understand the importance of truthful political advertising for our users. We outline below the policies, technologies and operating approaches we rely on to support the integrity of political advertising on our platforms.

Yahoo accepts political ads that comply with our ad policies. We define political ads as ads related to a candidate for an elected office or an issue that will appear on an upcoming ballot. They may also include ads intended to raise awareness on certain political or social issues.

Our ad policies prohibit false or misleading claims of any kind. For political ads, Yahoo supports truthful advertising that helps users make informed decisions about candidates and issues. We know, however, that false or misleading claims can, at times, be subtle and difficult for our reviewers to detect. And even when our reviewers suspect falsity, determining the facts may not be straightforward. Despite those challenges, our goal, as reflected in our policy, programs, and technologies, is to avoid running political ads that include false or misleading claims.

We rely on the following 4-pronged approach to support the integrity of political advertising on our platforms.

Policies

- *Our policies require that all advertisers and partners who wish to run political ads must be pre-approved by the Yahoo Ad Policy team to help ensure they are who they say they are.*
- *We continuously review and update our ad policies to ensure alignment with our core principles and promote compliance.*

Technology

- *Ads that are running on our platforms are scanned by our proprietary technology for technical compliance and political content. Ads identified as political during the scan are flagged for manual review.*

Operational framework

- *Dedicated teams across operations, product, and legal use our technologies to help ensure appropriate compliance with our policies and enable learning for continuous improvement and innovation.*
- *During manual review of ads for ad policy compliance, reviewers look for things like required disclosures about who paid for the ad and whether the ad includes offensive language or images. If a reviewer spots a potentially false claim, it is flagged for escalated review.*
- *Ads that are escalated by either technology or human reviewers are reviewed by ad quality, ad policy, and legal teams, as needed.*

Digital-based crowd-sourced feedback

- *Our ad feedback tools, which appear on most ads on Yahoo-owned and operated sites, allow users to tell us whether they think an ad is offensive, misleading, or a scam. Users can also explain the specific reasons they dislike an ad. Feedback on political ads receives enhanced scrutiny.”*

According to our Advertising Policies accessible here:

<https://emea.adspecs.yahoo.com/pages/policies-guidelines/yahoo-ad-policy/advertising-categories/political-ads>:

- *“All issue advertising must clearly identify who paid for the communication on the ad banner, video, or link prior to click-thru or viewing of content.*
- *All potential political issue advertising opportunities must be approved by the Yahoo Ad Policy team.*
- *Advertising for organizations and individuals who wish to raise awareness on certain political and social issues is acceptable. Determination of suitability of any given issue or advertisement is at the sole discretion of Yahoo”.*

6. How is the user of Yahoo informed of the reasons for which he is targeted by political advertising or informational content relating to a debate of general interest that has been the subject of promotion?

Our response:

Yahoo’s Privacy Policy provides information about how we use personal data to target advertising here: <https://legal.yahoo.com/ie/fr/yahoo/privacy/advertising/index.html>

“La publicité constitue une composante fondamentale des services que nous fournissons. Grâce à nos activités publicitaires et aux publicités que nous et nos partenaires vous proposons, nous sommes en mesure de vous fournir gratuitement bon nombre de nos produits et services. Sur cette page, nous allons vous présenter le fonctionnement des publicités numériques chez Yahoo, les différents acteurs impliqués et notre utilisation de vos données à des fins de personnalisation de vos publicités.

Les étapes ci-dessous décrivent le cycle de nos interactions avec un utilisateur, de notre premier échange avec lui à l’évaluation et à l’élaboration de rapports sur une publicité personnalisée que nous lui diffusons sur nos Produits ou par le biais de nos Services.”

See this specific provision: “Étape 4 : diffuser des publicités personnalisées” :

“Une fois que nous avons créé une audience d’utilisateurs avec une catégorie de centre d’intérêt particulière, les annonceurs peuvent faire l’acquisition de l’inventaire publicitaire afin de placer des publicités qui seront proposées à l’audience en question. Cette acquisition s’effectue sur une plateforme de vente publicitaire (voir ci-dessous le paragraphe « Une enchère publicitaire »). Les audiences intéressent les annonceurs à plus d’un titre, notamment en raison de leur taille, de leur particularité et de la précision des centres d’intérêt.

Une enchère publicitaire

En général, les enchères publicitaires en ligne fonctionnent comme les enchères réalisées dans le monde réel. Ces enchères publicitaires en ligne sont connues sous le nom d'« enchères en temps réel » ou « RTB » et ont lieu en temps réel au sein de plateformes de ventes publicitaires (ou « ad exchanges »). Les plateformes de ventes publicitaires sont des places de marché numériques où des sociétés font l'acquisition et procèdent à la vente de l'inventaire publicitaire.

Les vendeurs sont des éditeurs qui proposent du contenu aux utilisateurs par le biais de leurs sites Web, applications et téléviseurs connectés. Ces éditeurs sont présents au sein de la plateforme de ventes publicitaires pour vendre l'espace publicitaire, connu sous le nom d'inventaire publicitaire, disponible sur leurs sites Web, applications et téléviseurs connectés.

Les acheteurs sont des annonceurs et des agences de publicité qui souhaitent faire l'acquisition de l'inventaire publicitaire afin d'y placer des publicités et de proposer ces publicités aux utilisateurs.

Nous intervenons sur les plateformes de ventes publicitaires en tant qu'acheteurs et vendeurs, et participons également en qualité d'acheteurs et de vendeurs aux plateformes de ventes publicitaires gérées par nos partenaires.

Dans le cadre des enchères, les acheteurs et les vendeurs partagent entre eux des quantités limitées d'informations concernant les utilisateurs, ce qui permet aux acheteurs de bien comprendre ce qu'ils achètent. Les informations échangées comprennent des données démographiques associées aux utilisateurs, le nom des sites Web ou des applications, des termes de recherche et des informations de localisation. Les acheteurs soumettent une offre d'achat pour l'inventaire publicitaire jusqu'à ce que la bourse publicitaire désigne un gagnant. Pour chaque enchère, l'acheteur ayant soumis l'offre gagnante diffuse sa publicité, connue sous le nom d'impression publicitaire, sur la page Web, dans l'application ou le téléviseur connecté de l'éditeur.

Ex: un promoteur de billets basé à Dublin collabore avec Yahoo afin de proposer des publicités concernant des billets de football aux utilisateurs locaux sur le réseau publicitaire Yahoo. Une fois que le vendeur de billets ou son agence de publicité a remporté l'enchère, Jeff voit alors s'afficher les publicités proposées par le vendeur de billets lorsqu'il consulte son application mobile Yahoo Sport et qu'il accède au site de Yahoo Search, car :

- l'adresse IP actuelle de l'appareil que Jeff utilise pour consulter l'application mobile Yahoo Sport et le site de Yahoo Search est associée à la ville de Dublin, et
- nous avons intégré les identifiants de Jeff (identifiant de cookie XYZ, hachage EFG et identifiant publicitaire 789) à la catégorie de centre d'intérêt « Fan de football professionnel ».

Jeff voit également s'afficher les publicités du vendeur de billets que nous présentons lorsqu'il consulte le site Web d'un journal local, car nous avons conclu un partenariat avec le journal local afin de pouvoir diffuser les publicités de nos partenaires publicitaires sur le site du journal. Autrement dit, le site Web du journal local fait partie du réseau publicitaire Yahoo."

Yahoo Privacy Policy also provides information about how we use personal data to personalize content here: <https://legal.yahoo.com/ie/fr/yahoo/privacy/index.html>

See this specific provisions: "6. Comment utilisons-nous vos informations et bases juridiques invoquées?"

Lorsque vous utilisez nos services aux consommateurs, ou les sites ou applications d'autres entreprises qui utilisent nos services de publicité numérique, nous utilisons vos informations pour les objectifs suivants : personnaliser le contenu que nous vous diffusons, notamment pour la création de profils de centres d'intérêt

Par exemple, si vous lisez régulièrement des articles sur nos services aux consommateurs concernant les sports ou les marchés financiers, nous créerons des profils qui vous identifient comme « amateur de sports » ou « consommateur d'informations sur la finance ». Lorsque vous consulterez nos services aux consommateurs, vous verrez d'autres articles sur ces centres d'intérêt. De la même manière, si vous ajoutez un symbole boursier d'une entreprise à votre portefeuille d'actions Yahoo, nous vous proposerons d'autres articles d'actualités sur cette entreprise.

Si vous refusez ou retirez votre consentement concernant notre utilisation de vos informations personnelles dans l'objectif de diffuser des contenus personnalisés, nous continuerons à diffuser des contenus, mais ils ne seront pas basés sur vos centres d'intérêt déduits. De la même manière, nous n'utiliserons pas de cookies et d'autres technologies similaires pour mesurer votre interaction avec le contenu que nous vous diffusons.”

7. Does Yahoo plan to develop an interface (API or other) allowing users and the research community to carry out personalized searches on political content and/or news content related to a debate of general interest which were broadcast on its services and if so, what would be the conditions of access?

Our response:

Yahoo does not plan to develop such an interface.

8. Does Yahoo cooperate with third parties to prevent risks of manipulation of information regarding political advertisements and/or informational content relating to a debate of public interest that has been promoted?

Our response:

By working with TAG we are cooperating with third parties to prevent scam and disinformation ad campaigns (see our response to question 4).

Service Integrity

9. What means does Yahoo deploy to counter the techniques, tactics and procedures (TTPs) understood as established within the framework of the reinforced European Code of good

practice on disinformation (see appendix)? Have other manipulation practices been observed on Yahoo's services?

Our response:

The European code concerns user generated content. The Yahoo Service is subject to prior editorial control (from Yahoo for original content, or from third party press publishers for licensed content) and are not social media services. Users cannot post content on our sites independently of Yahoo. For this reason, the European code is not applicable and Yahoo is not a signatory.

10. Does Yahoo cooperate with other operators to share information relating to "cross-platform" influence operations?

Our response:

Yahoo does not permit UGC so we believe we are not impacted by "cross-platform" influence operations. As a consequence, Yahoo does not cooperate with platforms to share such information.

11. What means are in place to allow users to assess the reliability of the sources of information encountered on Yahoo's services?

Our response:

All sources of information are clearly labeled so the user is aware at all times which news publisher produced the content. As noted above, Yahoo has editorial standards which apply to Yahoo original content and content produced by our third party press publishers' partners. As a consequence, the user is able to directly identify the source of the editorial article, which is only from reputable third party publisher sources; there is no UGC.

Empowerment of the research community

12. Does Yahoo intend to allow the world of research real-time access to non-sensitive data in an anonymous manner to study the systemic risks relating to disinformation on its services and, if so, under what conditions?

Our response:

In our experience, researchers are primarily interested in risks arising from platforms which host UGC and are within scope of the DSA. Since Yahoo does not permit any UGC, these questions do not seem applicable to our services.

13. Does Yahoo conduct (alone or with researchers) studies on the systemic risks relating to misinformation on its services?

Our response:

In our experience, researchers are primarily interested in risks arising from platforms which host UGC and in scope of the DSA. Since Yahoo does not permit any UGC, these questions do not seem applicable to our services.

Empowerment of the fact-checking community

14. Does Yahoo use external and independent fact-checking organizations on the service and, if so, how does it maintain the ethics and transparency of the rules for the organizations with which it has a contractual relationship?

Our response:

Fact-checking is part of the internal guidelines requiring editors to carry out fact checking in relation to Yahoo original content. Third party press publishers that are Yahoo partners are contractually committed to fact check the content prior to publication on Yahoo's Services.

Supplementary questionnaire – annual follow-up

15. Yahoo is invited to comment on the recommendations made by Arcom in its previous report on the fight against the manipulation of information (reminder in the appendix) and to specify whether any measures have been taken in this regard.

Our response:

Unlike other services included in the report, Yahoo's Service contains no UGC and comprises only content that is subject to prior editorial control either by Yahoo or by our partners. The process of editorial control addresses any risk of misinformation or fake news prior to publication, meaning the recommendations felt less relevant and were possibly based on ongoing misunderstandings about services of this kind.

16. Yahoo may also report any other news and any significant developments in the fight against the manipulation of information on its services since its previous annual statement.

Our response:

No further comments to add.
