



## PRESS RELEASE

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# EDPS starts work on a New Digital Ethics

Today, the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) announced that the work on a new Digital Ethics is ready to begin. The EDPS has launched a broader **discussion**, both in the EU and globally, on how to ensure the integrity of our values while embracing the benefits of new technologies. Speaking at the annual Conference of Computers, Privacy and Data Protection ([CPDP](#)), he said that yesterday he established an **Ethics Advisory Group** which will enable the realisation of the **benefits of technology** for society and the economy in ways that reinforce the rights and freedoms of individuals.

**Giovanni Buttarelli, EDPS, said:** *"Most of us agree that we are each **more than the sum of our data** and yet we are more defined by our quantified selves than ever. Our privacy has almost become a **commodity**, used to sell ideas and products back to us or to influence our behaviour. I am, therefore, delighted to announce that the EDPS, with the support of an Ethics Advisory Group, has started his work to re-consider the **ethical dimension** of the relationships between human rights, technology, markets and business models and their implications for the rights to privacy and data protection in the digital environment. With the help of this group, we intend to identify a **new ethical approach** in the coming years so that individuals are no longer reduced to mere [data subjects](#) in the **digital environment**."*

The group of six eminent persons, each an expert in their respective field, will consider digital ethics from a variety of academic and practical perspectives.

The EDPS encourages the involvement of other thought leaders as part of the project so that a wide **variety of perspectives** are represented, ensuring **balance** and **diversity**. Therefore, the Advisory Group will involve **other experts**, for example through interviews and workshops with distinguished representatives of the scientific community around the world as well as data protection experts. In the interests of **transparency**, periodic summaries of work will be made public.

In addition to providing the **secretariat, infrastructure** and **terms of reference**, the EDPS will contribute **ideas** to the work of the group, for instance how experience, common sense and morality can be factored into automated decision-making processes. Otherwise the group members, who will **not be remunerated**, are expected to work **autonomously, free from any interference or conflict of interest**.

The group is expected to deliver its findings, recommendations and views in the form of **reports** (interim, discussion and final) which will be presented **at public meetings** and workshops with the help of well-respected moderators. A comprehensive draft is expected to be submitted by January 2017 for public consultation allowing the large public, civil society groups and industry to contribute to those discussions.

## **Composition of the Ethics Advisory Group**

**J. Peter Burgess** is trained in engineering, literary studies, political science and philosophy. He is the newly appointed chair of the Geopolitics of Risk at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, and affiliated to the University of Copenhagen, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and the University of Chicago.

**Luciano Floridi** is Professor of Philosophy and Ethics of Information and Director of Research of the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford. The ethics of information has been in the focus of his work for a long time, and is the subject of his numerous publications. For 25 years he has developed views on the relation between IT, ethics, and policies.

**Jaron Lanier** is a computer scientist writer on technology appreciation and criticism, and composer. He was awarded the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 2014, and his book "Who Owns the Future?" won Harvard's Goldsmith Book Prize in 2014. A founder or principal of several start-ups, he writes and speaks on high-technology business, the social impact of technological practices, the philosophy of consciousness and information, Internet politics, the future of humanism and other topics.

**Aurélie Pols** is an economist/econometrist and statistician by education and has been involved in the analysis of data from the very beginning of this activity. She is an important actor in the field of "digital data". She runs her own consulting business in Spain after selling her own first start-up company a few years ago.

**Antoinette Rouvroy** is a Belgian academic with a PhD in Legal sciences from Florence. She has worked as an academic in York, Montreal and, currently, Namur. Her academic origin is in law, which served as her starting point for the analysis of the philosophical, legal and ethical issues of decision-making processes in a developing information society.

**Jeroen Van den Hoven** is Professor of Ethics and Technology at Delft University of Technology. He has written extensively on ethical aspects of information technology. He is Acting Dean of The Faculty of Technology Policy and Management in Delft and Founding Editor in Chief of the Journal *Ethics and Information Technology*, since 1999.

The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) is an independent supervisory authority devoted to protecting personal data and privacy and promoting good practice in the EU institutions and bodies. He does so by:

- monitoring the EU administration's processing of personal data;
- advising on policies and legislation that affect privacy;
- cooperating with similar authorities to ensure consistent data protection.

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More information about the [Ethics Advisory Group](#). Questions can be directed to: [press@edps.europa.eu](mailto:press@edps.europa.eu)

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