

Series editors' preface

In 2021, when one of us proposed to invoke human rights to protect the non-use of the Internet, or at least a degree thereof,¹ such a proposition was probably received as a bit mischievous. Yet, just a few years later, as society has become more and more dependent on the Internet, already a considerable body of earnest scholarship,² political debate, legislative effort and jurisprudence has addressed the right not to use the Internet, however conceptualised and termed. This multidisciplinary edited volume fits squarely in these debates as it offers a pioneering, timely and rich analysis of this right. The present book might equally be a voice in a much-needed debate on the boundaries of (new, emerging) technologies – such as artificial intelligence – in society and individual lives. We are hence pleased to include it in our book series.

During the gestation of this book, also acting as its co-editors, we have enjoyed many thought-provoking discussions with many authors and we have reflected on their chapters. Although diverse opinions emerged in this book, we now perceive the non-use of the Internet as a human right in the making, to be accommodated with other rights, interests, needs, desires, etc., possibly with the help of the principle of proportionality.³ It is conventional wisdom that once a need for a new human right is established, it requires careful crafting.⁴ Thus, we believe that legislators, policymakers, magistrates and judges – at national, supranational and international levels – will find this book useful in better understanding the subject matter and informing their policies and decisions in this context. Given its significant influence on the regulation of technology worldwide, Europe could promote its values, and shape policies and practices also in this area.⁵ Exportable examples thus far include the employee's right to disconnect after working hours, granted in some Member States of the European Union,⁶ or a constitutional *droit à l'intégrité numérique* in the Swiss canton of Geneva.⁷ Similarly, we wish for this book to inspire fellow researchers, journalists, civil society organisations, etc. in their investigations, commentaries or advice.

We furthermore expect that the right not to use the Internet – or, perhaps, the right not to use a technology – will soon cause even more interest, both in academic

and professional circles. Hence, we invite prospective authors and/or editors to submit their proposals for subsequent volumes in our book series on 'Current Debates in European Integration'.

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Notes

- 1 Dariusz Kloza, 'It's All About Choice: The Right Not to Use the Internet' (2021) *Völkerrechtsblog* <https://voelkerrechtsblog.org/its-all-about-choice>.
- 2 Possibly informed by disconnection studies and movements such as digital detox or deep work. Cf., e.g., Mariek M. P. Vanden Abeele and others, 'Why, How, When, and for Whom Does Digital Disconnection Work? A Process-Based Framework of Digital Disconnection' (2024) 34 *Communication Theory* 3; Dariusz Kloza, 'A Behavioural Alternative to the Protection of Privacy' in Dan Jerker B. Svantesson and Dariusz Kloza (eds.), *Trans-Atlantic Data Privacy Relations as a Challenge for Democracy* (Intersentia 2017) <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5121331>; Joao Batalheiro Ferreira, 'Exhausted and Not Doing Enough? The Productivity Paradox of Contemporary Academia' (2022) 8 *She Ji* 181 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sheji.2022.05.001>.
- 3 Jacco Bomhoff, 'Proportionality' in Jan M. Smits and others (eds.), *Elgar Encyclopedia of Comparative Law* (Edward Elgar 2023) www.elgaronline.com/view/book/9781839105609/b-9781839105609.proportionality.xml
- 4 Andreas von Arnould, Kerstin von der Decken and Mart Susi (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of New Human Rights* (Cambridge University Press 2020).
- 5 Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World* (Oxford University Press 2020); Lee A. Bygrave, 'The "Strasbourg Effect" on Data Protection in Light of the "Brussels Effect": Logic, Mechanics and Prospects' (2021) 40 *Computer Law & Security Review* 105460.
- 6 E.g., Belgium – cf. Articles 29–33, *Loi du 3 octobre 2022 portant des dispositions diverses relatives au travail* / *Wet van 3 oktober 2022 houdende diverse arbeidsbepalingen*.
- 7 Article 21A, *Constitution de la République et canton de Genève*.
- 8 This preface contains solely my personal views and not those of any organisation I may be affiliated with.