Senator Tillis Questions for the Record – Big Data, Big Questions: Implications for Competition and Consumers

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1. The term “data” can have multiple meanings, which can sometimes generate confusion in policy discussions. For example you refer to the publicly available web as an important data set. How would you define “data” and “big data”, as used in your written testimony?
   1. How would you define consumer and user data, specifically what would be included and excluded from these definitions? For example, the section of data portability refers to the ability of users to export “their data”.
   2. Would this include user uploaded videos, images, and text?
   3. Would such content be considered part of the “user” data, even if it includes content that originates from other sources?
   4. Does it include data in which intellectual property rights, including copyright, trade secret, trademark, or design rights, may subsist?
2. Ad-revenue used to support online piracy is a longstanding problem. Criminals profit by receiving advertising dollars in exchange for giving users free access to stolen movies, music, books, software, and other materials—stealing money from hardworking creators, including many small businesses and individual artists. A recent report found that over *a billion dollars a year* in advertising goes to supporting online pirated content.[[1]](#footnote-1) Both the US and EU have been working on voluntary “follow the money” initiatives for several years with various actors, including Google, to stop funding theft. Yet the same report found that Google’s advertising technologies provided 51 percent of ads to pirate apps.[[2]](#footnote-2) This is particularly alarming given that other digital advertisers “almost never appear on piracy apps.”[[3]](#footnote-3)
   1. Why was Google identified as the top major brand involved in placing advertising on applications? What measures are you taking to change this?
   2. Does Google receive money from placing advertising on websites that contain pirated content?
   3. What steps does Google take, both in the United States and worldwide, to prohibit advertising on piracy websites and applications?
   4. Do you agree that supporting commercial-scale pirate websites and apps through advertising dollars is wrong?
   5. Does Google, or its agents or subsidiaries, block payment for ad impressions on pirated content?
   6. Does Google, or its agents or subsidiaries, conduct independent audits to ensure that any policies are being implemented effectively? How frequently are policies reviewed?
   7. Does Google collect data over its own ad placements that would allow it to prevent placement on websites or apps that pose a high risk for distributing illegal content, including pirated content?
   8. Google Ads is a tool offered to businesses and brands to place their ads in front of consumers. A brand chooses the type of audience it wants to reach and Google places the ad on the websites most likely to reach the target demographic. What steps are taken to ensure that ads are not placed on pirate websites?
   9. What steps are taken to ensure that pirate publishers are prohibited from selling ad space through Google’s advertising subsidiaries?
   10. What steps is Google taking to enhance transparency of its activities on its advertising networks?
3. You stated in your testimony that Google does not sell data that it collects online.
   1. Does Google share data collected in one business unit with other business units?
   2. Does it share data collected with any legal entities outside of Google?
   3. Does it share any of this data in connection with a legal business transaction?
4. Ms. Slaiman advocates for “a digital regulator to comprehensively the policy questions surrounding digital platforms.”
   1. Do you agree that this is necessary?
   2. Given the many issues beyond privacy and competition that address and implicate digital policy—including cybersecurity, national security, consumer rights, free speech, and intellectual property concerns—what existing agency would be the best situated, in your view, to carry out this role?
   3. Is it important to you that the regulator should be politically accountable?

1. Digital Citizens Alliance and White Bullet, *Breaking (B)ads: How Advertiser-Supported Piracy Helps Fuel A Booming Multi-Billion Dollar Illegal Market* (July 2021), https://www.digitalcitizensalliance.org/clientuploads/directory/Reports/Breaking-Bads-Report.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Id.,* pg. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Id.*, pg. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)