

Opening Remarks of ITS Chair Stephen Schmidt for “ITS webinar: Digital Policies – an East-West Perspective” (22 November 2021)

Welcome!

Thank you to everyone joining us, today, from across the world for today’s International Telecommunications Society (ITS) webinar, “**Digital Policies – an East-West Perspective**”.

Thank you, in particular, to those joining us from very challenging time zones – in Asia where it is bedtime and on west side of North America, where it is still bedtime, as well, for many!

Today’s webinar is the **10th ITS webinar** since the onset of the pandemic, which have covered diverse and timely topics such as: remote work, deep fakes, smart cities, and recently, digital platforms.

This is the *second in a series of three ITS webinars*, this fall, on digital platforms:

- On 21 October, we held a webinar on *Fake News*; and
- On 9 December, we will hold a further webinar on *OTT content*.

Today’s webinar highlights that the world is on the cusp of a new era of regulation. As digital platforms, such as Facebook and Google, gain increasing influence in our lives, policymakers across all countries are struggling to balance the benefits of digital platform innovations against growing concerns over competition, online harm, privacy, and more.

It is therefore an ideal time to draw lessons from the global experience and ITS is uniquely positioned to enable and foster this dialogue. Our experts will compare approaches to digital platform regulation in Korea, Japan, the EU and North America, and confront such questions as:

- What barriers limit access to digital platforms?
- How can digital policies unleash innovation?
- How to balance market and social imperatives?

For organizing this webinar, I would like to thank:

- **My ITS Board colleague, Dr. Georg Serentschy**, who is the lead organizer of today’s event and will serve as the moderator.
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- **Our academic host, Chalmers University, and my board colleague, Dr. Erik Bohlin.**
- **Our corporate host, TELUS Communications.**
- **Our four distinguished speakers:**

- **Alexandre de Streel**, Professor of European Law at Namur University (Belgium)
 - **Seongcheol KIM**, Professor of Media and Communication at Korea University (and an ITS board member)
 - **Kuniko OGAWA**, Director of the Second Telecommunications Consumer Policy Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), Japan
 - **Michael Ryan**, Principal at MHRyan Law (and an ITS Corporate member)
- **A special thanks to the many, many students in attendance, across the world.** Your participation in the ITS, whether attending webinars or by presenting your research at our conferences, is core to the ITS mission. **You are a very welcome here! You are the next generation of scholarship, insight and impact in communications. We are very grateful that you have chosen to invest your time and attention with us.**

I hope that everyone enjoys today!

Stephen Schmidt
ITS Chair