Note: This is a generic summary of a TPN roundtable discussion held under the Chatham House Rule, which sets an expectation of non-attributability for any comments made.

Introduction

Markham Erickson leads Google’s Government Affairs and Public Policy Centers of Excellence which is a global team of functional and subject-matter policy experts focused on the application of law and policy to technology and the Internet. Pilar del Castillo’s presence and Markham’s visit to Brussels afforded the opportunity for a timely roundtable discussion across a wide range of topics relating to European, US and transatlantic priorities and prospects for ongoing digital transformation.

Europe has taken a lead in drafting hard laws to frame the risks and opportunities as globally we seek to deploy AI to human benefit. A comprehensive EU regulatory framework is in an advanced stage of development across a broad range of digital topics too – from cyber resilience and security to data privacy and storage to cloud architectures and behaviours, above and beyond the more recent focus on AI.

With the current widespread focus on AI much of the discussion sought to assess ongoing implementation dynamics and to place the EU Act against the backdrop of global technology developments, the series of intersecting international initiatives seeking to align global approaches, and short-term needs for successful implementation such as rapid capacity upgrades for example with regulatory resources and other AI infrastructural needs.
As well as capacity development the discussion noted the primacy of building trust security and confidence as key motivations for regulation. Other important factors affecting likely regulatory effectiveness across the digital regulatory landscape were also referred to, such as the need to balance encouraging innovation with risk management; avoiding excessive compliance burdens and costs falling on SME’s; facing down short sighted restrictive approaches to technical initiatives like the EU-wide cybersecurity certification scheme (EUCS) as being self-defeating; and that a key aim for transatlantic and international collaboration should continue to be interoperability.