



SEPTEMBER 2024

A GNLU CENTRE FOR LAW AND TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE

Monthly Newsletter - TechTalk



Gujarat National Law University



Welcome to the GNLU Centre for Law and Technology Newsletter!
Serving as the conduit to the dynamic intersection of science, technology, and the law, our mission is to provide updates on the latest developments, promote academic excellence, and empower legal professionals to navigate this ever-evolving landscape. Join us in bridging the gap between these crucial fields and shaping the future of legal practice in our interconnected world.

↓ Enclosed in this newsletter are the following highlights:

Updates on law and technology, showcasing the latest developments in this ever-evolving field. Our curated content might just spark your next research topic idea. Stay informed and stay inspired and keep reading!

EDITORIAL BOARD (2024-25)

ADVISORS

HEAD OF THE CENTRE

PROF. (DR.) THOMAS MATHEW
PROFESSOR OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CENTRE MEMBERS

PROF. (DR.) ANJANI SINGH TOMAR
PROFESSOR OF LAW

MS. HEENA GOSWAMI
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MS. ANSHU GUPTA
TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATE (LAW)

STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS

CHARISSE SUSANNA CH (BATCH OF 2023-2028)

HEADLINES

CALIFORNIA ENACTS LAW TO PROTECT DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVORS FROM TECHNOLOGY MISUSE IN CONNECTED CARS 03

FTC TAKES ACTION AGAINST COMPANIES FOR MISLEADING AI PRACTICES 04

FEDERAL JUDGE STRIKES DOWN NYC LAW REQUIRING FOOD DELIVERY COMPANIES TO SHARE CUSTOMER DATA 05

CALIFORNIA PASSES LAW REQUIRING SCHOOLS TO RESTRICT CELLPHONE 06

META PLATFORMS WINS DISMISSAL OF SHAREHOLDER LAWSUIT OVER APPLE'S PRIVACY CHANGES AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES 07

FORMER AMAZON SELLER CHALLENGES INDIAN ANTITRUST INVESTIGATION FINDINGS IN HIGH COURT 08

**OF
THE
MONTH**

01

CALIFORNIA ENACTS LAW TO PROTECT DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVORS FROM TECHNOLOGY MISUSE IN CONNECTED CARS

California Governor Gavin Newsom has signed a law designed to protect domestic abuse survivors from the misuse of internet-connected vehicle technologies. As cars increasingly incorporate features like location tracking and remote controls, there have been rising instances of these tools being exploited for stalking and harassment. The bill, which passed with overwhelming support in the state legislature, establishes new safety requirements for automakers.

The law mandates automakers to implement a process allowing drivers to submit legal documentation, such as restraining orders, to terminate another person's remote access within two business days. Additionally, it requires that drivers be able to easily disable location tracking from inside the vehicle. These provisions provide crucial safeguards to prevent abusers from using vehicle technology to monitor or control their victims' movements.

The legislation was partly inspired by cases where automakers did not respond to survivors' pleas for help. One woman unsuccessfully sued Tesla, claiming that despite a restraining order, her husband continued to stalk her using Tesla's technology. Although no automaker formally opposed the law, the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, which represents several manufacturers, raised concerns about technical feasibility.

This California law could set a national precedent, as automakers typically avoid making state-specific vehicle models. Newsom signed it along with other measures aimed at enhancing protections for domestic violence survivors.

[READ MORE](#)

02

FTC TAKES ACTION AGAINST COMPANIES FOR MISLEADING AI PRACTICES

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has announced enforcement actions against five companies accused of using artificial intelligence in deceptive and unfair ways. The FTC's crackdown targeted firms claiming to help consumers generate passive income by opening e-commerce storefronts, leading to the suspension of three businesses.

The agency also settled cases with DoNotPay, which offered automated legal services, and Rytr, an AI-based writing tool accused of enabling users to generate fake product reviews. FTC Chair Lina M. Khan emphasized that the misuse of AI for deceptive practices is illegal, stating, "There is no AI exemption from the laws on the books."

DoNotPay agreed to a \$193,000 settlement and will inform customers who subscribed between 2021 and 2023 about the limitations of its legal services. The company clarified that the issue involved a discontinued feature used by only a few hundred customers, out of its millions of users. Rytr, on the other hand, agreed to stop offering its review generation tool, which the FTC said allowed users to create thousands of "convincing" or "critical" posts with minimal input.

Neither company admitted to any wrongdoing in the settlements. Rytr's legal counsel did not respond to requests for comment.

The FTC's actions have sparked internal debate within the agency regarding its approach to AI regulation. While all five commissioners supported penalizing false claims about AI, the two Republican commissioners expressed concern over the Rytr case, suggesting that it overstepped the FTC's authority. These actions indicate the FTC's commitment to addressing misuse of AI technologies and ensuring compliance with existing laws to protect consumers.

[READ MORE](#)

03

FEDERAL JUDGE STRIKES DOWN NYC LAW REQUIRING FOOD DELIVERY COMPANIES TO SHARE CUSTOMER DATA

A federal judge has ruled that a New York City law requiring food delivery companies to share customer data with restaurants is unconstitutional. U.S. District Judge Analisa Torres in Manhattan sided with major delivery companies DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats, stating that the law infringed on the First Amendment by improperly regulating commercial speech.

The law, introduced in 2021, aimed to support the city's thousands of restaurants as they struggled to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. It required delivery platforms to share customer information, including names, delivery addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, and order details, with the restaurants fulfilling those orders. The city argued that the law was intended to protect restaurants from the "exploitative practices" of delivery companies.

However, the delivery companies contested the law, claiming that it violated customer privacy rights and posed a threat to data security. They also argued that it could harm their businesses by allowing restaurants to use the shared data for their own marketing purposes and potentially "poach customers away."

In her ruling, Judge Torres noted that the city failed to demonstrate a substantial interest in mandating the collection of customer data from the companies. She suggested alternative, less intrusive methods, such as allowing customers to decide whether to share their data, providing financial incentives for companies to share information, or subsidizing independent online ordering platforms for restaurants.

Representatives from DoorDash and Grubhub praised the decision, emphasizing that it upheld privacy protections and safeguarded the First Amendment rights related to data usage. Meanwhile, Nicholas Paolucci, a spokesperson for the city's law department, stated that the city is carefully reviewing the ruling and considering its next steps.

[READ MORE](#)

04

CALIFORNIA PASSES LAW REQUIRING SCHOOLS TO RESTRICT CELLPHONE

California Governor Gavin Newsom has signed the Phone-Free Schools Act, requiring school districts across the state to ban or restrict cellphone use during school hours by July 1, 2026. The law addresses increasing concerns over the negative impact of smartphones on children’s mental health and academic performance. It follows similar actions in more than a dozen states, including Louisiana, Indiana, and Florida, which have enacted restrictions over the past year.

The initiative comes amid growing evidence linking excessive smartphone use to issues like anxiety and depression among youth. A recent Pew Research Center study reported that 72% of high school teachers and 33% of middle school teachers view cellphone distractions as a “major problem.” Prominent figures like Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt have called for stricter limitations on smartphone use, particularly in educational settings.

While many California schools already have cellphone restrictions, the new law ensures that all campuses implement consistent policies. Supporters, including the California Teachers Association, argue that cellphones are a major distraction in classrooms. However, opponents like the California School Boards Association believe the law is redundant and limits local decision-making.

Governor Newsom emphasized that the law aims to help students focus on academics and social development. He also signed a separate bill requiring social media companies to adjust settings to protect minors from addiction. Despite these measures, the tech industry and some parents have pushed back, citing privacy concerns and the importance of cellphones in emergencies. The policy landscape varies across states, with some opting for strict bans while others provide more flexibility for schools to regulate phone use.

[READ MORE](#)

05

META PLATFORMS WINS DISMISSAL OF SHAREHOLDER LAWSUIT OVER APPLE'S PRIVACY CHANGES AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

Meta Platforms has successfully won the dismissal of a lawsuit accusing the company of defrauding shareholders by downplaying the impact of Apple's privacy changes on Facebook and Instagram's advertising appeal. The lawsuit, filed by a group of Israeli insurers and pension funds, alleged that Meta's stock price plummeted by 53%—resulting in over \$500 billion in lost market value—after the company revealed the effects of Apple's new iOS privacy settings in 2022.

U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers in Oakland, California, ruled that Meta's eventual disclosure of a \$10 billion "headwind" due to Apple's iOS changes did not prove that the company's earlier statements were false or misleading. Judge Rogers also dismissed claims that Meta concealed improper use of company resources by its former Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg, on personal matters, such as her wedding and her book, "Lean In." She concluded that the claims were based entirely on unsubstantiated media reports.

The lawsuit further argued that Meta's transition to Reels, a short-form video feature modeled after TikTok, negatively impacted its financial performance by offering fewer ads per hour compared to older formats. However, the judge found no evidence that the shift to Reels harmed Meta's revenue.

Judge Rogers dismissed the case with prejudice, preventing it from being filed again. Other named defendants included Meta's Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg, Chief Financial Officer Susan Li, and her predecessor David Wehner.

The plaintiffs' attorneys did not immediately respond to requests for comment, while Meta has yet to issue a statement on the decision. The case is Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 60 Pension Trust v. Meta Platforms Inc et al, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, No. 22-01470

[READ MORE](#)

FORMER AMAZON SELLER CHALLENGES INDIAN ANTITRUST INVESTIGATION FINDINGS IN HIGH COURT

Appario, a former top Amazon seller in India, has filed a legal challenge against an antitrust investigation conducted by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) that implicated Amazon and several sellers for violating local competition laws. The CCI's investigation found that Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart, along with select smartphone brands and sellers, engaged in anti-competitive practices by favoring certain sellers and prioritizing specific listings on their platforms.

The lawsuit, filed in the Karnataka High Court, seeks to quash the CCI's investigation report that named Appario, arguing that the findings should be "set aside." The legal move marks the first formal challenge to the CCI's probe, which began in 2020 and has raised significant concerns for Amazon in the Indian market—a key growth region for the e-commerce giant. Appario also contended that a CCI order demanding it submit financial statements after the investigation was completed should be annulled.

The controversy dates back to a 2021 Reuters investigation based on internal Amazon documents, which revealed that Amazon gave preferential treatment to a select group of sellers, including Appario, to circumvent Indian laws. Appario was labeled a "special" merchant internally and received benefits such as discounted fees and access to Amazon's global retail tools, including inventory management services. Despite denying any wrongdoing, Amazon announced in October 2022 that Appario would cease listing products on its platform within a year.

Neither Appario, Amazon, nor the CCI have responded to requests for comment. This legal battle poses a significant hurdle for Amazon as it navigates regulatory scrutiny in India, one of its largest markets. The case could set a precedent for how competition laws are enforced against foreign e-commerce firms in the country.

[READ MORE](#)

SPOTLIGHTING RESEARCH TOPICS: EMPOWERING RESEARCH PAPER ASPIRATIONS

We understand that embarking on a journey to create impactful research papers can be both exciting and daunting. As you navigate through your academic pursuits, we're here to help illuminate your path and fuel your scholarly ambitions. This section presents a curated selection of broad research paper topics designed to spark your intellectual curiosity and inspire your next paper based on the latest developments of this month. Each topic represents an opportunity for exploration, discovery, and the potential to contribute to the ever-evolving landscape of law and technology. We believe that a well-chosen research topic is the cornerstone of a successful publication, and our aim is to empower you to make informed choices.

- *Technology-facilitated domestic violence*
- *Misleading AI practices and consumer rights*
- *Data privacy and local regulations*
- *Balancing technology use and academic performance*
- *Impact of platform policies on business performance*
- *Antitrust investigations and e-commerce*
- *Market power and competition in e-commerce*

MESSAGE FROM THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

The news articles discussed or included in this newsletter represent the views of the respective news websites. We do not endorse or assume responsibility for the content or opinions expressed in these articles. Our purpose is to bring recent developments to your knowledge, providing a diverse range of information for your consideration. Your input matters to us, and we'd love to hear your thoughts. If you have any suggestions, ideas, or feedback on how we can improve the newsletter or if there's something specific you'd like to see in future editions, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your insights help us grow and ensure we're delivering the content you want.

Stay curious, stay informed!



GNLU CENTRE FOR LAW AND TECHNOLOGY
GUJARAT NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY
ATTALIKA AVENUE, KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR, KOBA,
GANDHINAGAR - 382426 (GUJARAT), INDIA



gclt@gnlu.ac.in | tmathew@gnlu.ac.in

Blog: **GNLU Issues in Science, Law and Ethics**

Journal: **GNLU Journal of Law and Technology**

Website: www.gnlu.ac.in/Centre-for-Law-and-Technology/Home

Explore Past Edition

TechTalk