

Press release

DATA-DRIVEN REGULATION

Arcep looks back at five years of “data-driven regulation”

Paris, 8 December 2020

In 2016, Arcep drew up a strategic roadmap, announcing a new data-driven style of regulation. At the heart of this new style of regulation, one conviction: that to be able to fulfil its responsibilities in the “age of the crowd”, Arcep needs to listen to users, associations, players in the field, and to empower them to influence the sector, thanks to relevant, precise and customised information.

When making the latest updates to the “Mon réseau mobile” (My mobile network) website, with the [annual mobile quality of service audit](#) and the [publication of the first coverage maps that incorporate the required 98% reliability threshold](#) (versus the previous 95%), Arcep wanted to take a look back at the past five years of data-driven regulation.

Arcep’s “Mon réseau mobile”, “Carte fibre” and “Ma connexion internet” websites: empowering consumers to make informed choices

The initial focus of data-driven regulation were telecom network coverage and quality issues, areas in which Arcep had noted a lack of information available to users in a study conducted in 2016. So it became necessary to give users the means to stay informed about network quality, so that it might become a criterion when choosing their providers. This action also helps strengthen the investment monetisation cycle, which stimulates competition, which is no longer based solely on price.

Map-based sites, “[Mon réseau mobile](#)” (My mobile network), “[Carte Fibre](#)” (Fibre access maps) and “[Ma connexion internet](#)” thus came to complete the regulator’s traditional toolkit, and to provide users, consumer associations and civil society with information that aligns with their needs.

Making map-based tools available online also created the ability to satisfy the needs of an ever growing number of users: the “Carte fibre” website, which is the national source of reference for all of the players’ fibre network rollouts, has been viewed by **4,100,000 visitors in three years**. “Mon réseau mobile” has logged **2,000,000 visitors**, and “Ma connexion internet” received **150,000 visitors** in the first four days after it launched in April 2020.

Attentive to users’ feedback, Arcep has sought to create a dialogue with them to upgrade its tools and adapt them to these users’ needs. Actions to this end have included:

- A growing number of measures: Arcep has expanded the scope of its mobile QoS audits, performing more than a million tests every year, on popular applications and under the most common circumstances (transport corridors, rural areas, popular tourist destinations, web page downloads, video streaming, etc.).
- Taking a co-construction approach to improve the beta version of “Ma connexion internet” and benefit from feedback from more than a hundred users: local authorities, prefectures, operators, businesses (help with moving, connectivity for teleworking).
- Opening up to third-party data: to complete the data collected by the regulator, Arcep has opened “Mon réseau mobile” up to data produced by local authorities and by national rail company, SNCF.

Having local authorities, users and associations, but also telecom sector stakeholders’ adopt these tools proves how worthwhile it is to continue down this path, and to continue to enhance these tools. In particular, Arcep welcomes the emergence of third-party measuring and testing tools, sometimes at local authorities’ initiative, enabled by making its data available as open datasets, and the publication of the “Regulator’s toolkit”.

Empowering users to become actors in the regulatory process

Because people in France today have high expectations with respect to connectivity, Arcep wanted to have a direct line to the situation in the field, and so evolved from a process of merely collecting consumers' complaints to an approach where users are actors in the regulatory process. There are several facets to this new approach:

- Making user reports a form of citizen action, with the goal of detecting weak signals, to be able to provide systemic responses that improve how the sector operates. This is the goal of the "J'alerte l'Arcep" platform that allows anyone to report a problem or malfunction encountered with their operator. The platform has made it possible to collect more than 90,000 alerts from users in three years.
- Cooperation with consumer associations, to make consumer satisfaction, which has continued to improve over the past several years¹, a new driving force for the regulator's action.
- Cooperation with a university's pro-net neutrality project: Arcep supported the development of **Wehe**, a crowdsourcing application that enables users to detect any blocking or throttling of their internet traffic, designed to raise consumer awareness of net neutrality and give them the ability to report any potential transgressions to the regulator.

Supporting a vast ecosystem of internet QoS testing and measuring

Measuring and publishing internet quality of service indicators are a challenge for a great many regulators the world over. Where others have launched their own crowdsourcing tool, in France Arcep engaged in an innovative co-construction approach to tackling internet QoS issues, pooling the measuring and testing tools designed by ISPs and academia to enable them to satisfy consumers' need for information on internet quality as fully as possible. Relying on this ecosystem, in October Arcep adopted a [Decision](#) to implement an API that ISPs would install on their boxes, creating the ability to characterise fixed network users' testing environment. It will be accessible to any testing or measuring tool that complies with the [quality of service](#) published by Arcep.

Foster more concrete dialogue with local authorities

Local authorities have a major role to play in improving connectivity. They are driving forces in fixed superfast broadband deployment, through public-initiative networks (PIN) and schemes in AMII/AMEL areas, i.e. those parts of the country where the Government has issued a call for investment letters of intent, and those covered by calls for expressions of local interest, respectively. They are also closely associated with government programmes (New Deal for Mobile and fixed 4G) designed to improve mobile coverage. Arcep is committed to empowering these players and supporting the network rollout momentum. Data-driven regulation introduces tools that make it easier to obtain a diagnosis of those parts of the country where coverage is lacking. They can also help in drafting public policies for eradicating the digital divide.

Arcep made a "Regulator's toolkit" available to third parties wanting to carry out measurement campaigns similar to Arcep's, with a view to incorporating their findings into the information available on "Mon réseau mobile". Data from measurement campaigns conducted by four local authorities, and by French national rail company, SNCF, have been incorporated thus far.

Strong progress in 4G coverage and fibre deployment

Today, data-driven regulation tools make it possible to quantify the effects of Arcep's pro-investment regulation and the sector's unprecedented mobilisation to outfit the country with high quality networks. In the mobile market, the 4G coverage provided by the country's four main operators increased from **45% of the territory in January 2018 to 76% in mid-2020**. In the fixed market, fibre coverage rose from **4 to 22 million lines** installed nationwide.

Arcep's mapping expertise also enabled it to chair a working group with consumer associations, operators and crowdsourcing tools, to establish a framework for the publication of the first **5G coverage maps** with a set of technical recommendations.

¹ Source: Médiamétrie, <https://www.arcep.fr/actualites/les-communiqués-de-presse/detail/n/regulation-par-la-data-031120.html>

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The development of data-driven regulation creates new requirements, notably in terms of technical skills (data analysis, storage and management of large volumes of data). To rise to this challenge, Arcep created a unit dedicated to the task. It provides the Authority's own specialised teams with precise and resilience-building technical expertise, and interfaces with Arcep's interlocutors in this area (DINUM, players involved in testing and measuring, other regulators).

At the national level, Arcep has helped consolidate a shared vision of data-driven regulation through the publication of a joint memo authored by eight regulatory authorities from across the spectrum. In Europe, too, Arcep has worked to forge a common vision for fully harnessing the power of data (BEREC measuring tool, quality of service technical indicators, etc.). Data-driven regulation is also recognised internationally as an approach that is in tune with the rapid pace of technological progress. The network of French-speaking telecoms regulators, FRATEL, recently launched a website dedicated to measuring mobile network performance, and is conducting a feasibility study on a tool that would be open to its members, to represent data collected in 2020. Finally, the OECD expressed its interest in developing data-driven regulation in its latest Digital Economy Outlook report (Nov. 2020), and is studying how it influences the regulation of "emerging technologies".

Associated documents:

- [Press conference presentation](#)
- [Progression of 4G coverage since 2015](#)
- [Progression of fibre deployment since 2015](#)

Arcep at a glance

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Print Media Distribution (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority (IAA), is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile telecoms and postal networks in France.

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