Press release

FUTURE NETWORKS

"Choose your tech: viewing electronic communications networks through the lens of digital practices" – Arcep publishes the fourth briefing note in its "Future networks" forward-looking cycle of inquiry

26 September 2025

Demand for ultrafast connectivity, the growing adoption of new digital practices and innovations… but also the role that screens play and societal risks, environmental sustainability, disinformation and challenges to democracy: concerns surrounding the development of digital technology, whether experienced as something one has chosen or been subjected to, require us to question our practices, to achieve the best possible design for future networks. As part of its **"Future networks" forward-looking cycle of inquiry**, Arcep is publishing a new briefing note, this time on the topic of "Choose your tech: viewing electronic communications networks through the lens of digital practices. It will be presented during a webinar that will be open to the public.

The rapid digitalisation of French society…

Over the past several years, the innovations ushered in by information and communication technologies (ICT) have led to very rapid growth patterns, both amongst individuals (rate of digital device ownership, digitisation of services, etc.) and on a global scale (increase in online traffic and ongoing scaling up and out of infrastructures). The "Gigabit Society," defined by the European Union's connectivity goals, is generating new practices and creating increased demand for connectivity, which have spurred the popularity of fibre access in France (at the end of December 2024, 75% of all internet subscriptions were to a fibre plan) and the steady growth of mobile data traffic (by around 20% YoY for the past three years).

…has gone hand in hand with a changing relationship to digital technology and challenging new practices…

As digital technology has played an increasingly large role in our society, there have been signs of people's changing relationship with that technology: its benefits are now being increasingly set against certain inherent risks and its impact on society. This challenge has been further galvanised by people's sense that these technological developments and innovations are being foisted upon them. Multiple stakeholders who were queried as part of this work (sociologists, local authorities, etc.) pointed to the launch of 5G in France in 2019 as a watershed event, when citizens spoke out to question, if not oppose, what had previously been considered merely a technological advance and not a topic of political debate. In the same vein, questions are being raised today over the new possibilities opened up by future mobile technologies, such as 6G, and giving rise to debates over the (existing and new) practices they could enable.

…which requires collective thinking to take users' needs and expectations more fully into account

The digital ecosystem and public authorities are tending to engage in a growing number of consultations with civil society, whether before or after technology deployments. This process must be encouraged, at both the international and local level, to include end users more and take a more thorough account of their concerns. Arcep also intends to play a role in this process, notably by committing to informing public debate and alerting the population and decision-makers to new issues as they arise, to continue safeguarding the conditions for making digital an instrument for good.

Arcep will be hosting a webinar to present the briefing note, on Friday, 26 September

Produced in concert with the Scientific Committee for Arcep's **"Future networks" forward-looking cycle of inquiry**, the "Choose your tech" briefing note will be the subject of a presentation, followed by a panel discussion, during a webinar on 26 September.

- Opening remarks by Mireille Clapot, Arcep Executive Board member
- Presentation of the briefing note by Arcep teams
- Panel discussion with:
    - **Christian Licoppe**, Director of the Social Sciences and Management Department at Polytechnique and member of Arcep's "Future networks" Scientific Committee
    - **Sylvie Le Gac Cesbron**, Sociologist, Project leader on social dialogue at Orange
    - **Céline Colucci**, General delegate for Les Interconnectés, first association in France of local authorities dedicated to ICT issues and challenges
    - **Pierre Paquot**, Co-founder and President of TeleCoop, the first cooperative telco
- Q&A session

Associated documents

- Briefing note: "Choose your tech": viewing electronic communications through the lens of digital practices (English version)
- The slides presentation (in French)

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Arcep's "Future networks" cycle of inquiry and its Scientific Committee

What formats might future networks adopt? How will they affect Arcep's job as their regulator? What new players or business models might we see in the sectors regulated by the Authority?

To fuel this forward-looking work, and obtain a 360° view of these developments over the next five to ten years, Arcep asked highly qualified individuals from academia, start-ups and industry veterans, bringing a wide range of expertise, to join the Authority as part of a Scientific Committee. To round out the deliberation process, Arcep teams also maintain an ongoing dialogue with specialised players from the ecosystem: operators, equipment suppliers, internet companies, service providers and local authorities.

This work culminates in an ongoing series of dedicated briefing notes that are freely available on the Arcep website, and designed to inform public debate.

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Are you able to contribute to this work?
This process is meant to be a vibrant exchange of ideas, which is why Arcep invites anyone wanting to undertake these analyses to submit their contributions to reseaux-du-futur@arcep.fr

Do you want to stay informed of upcoming briefing note presentations?
Request an invitation via: com@arcep.fr

Where to access the other briefing notes?
As of publication of this note (September 2025), three other notes have also been published: "Telecoms with an IT core" (October 2024), "Electronic communications networks' resilience" (May 2025) and "AI and electronic communications networks" (June 2025). Future notes will be made available on the webpage dedicated to the "Future networks" cycle of inquiry.

A recording of the webinar will be available for catch-up viewing in the coming days.

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 electronic communications, postal and press distribution networks in France