AuditSocials

LAW FIRM EDITION

Platform Regulation Monthly

May 2026

Monthly regulatory horizon-scanning brief for digital-platform-regulation practices — DSA, DMA, Online Safety Act and GDPR — in one source-linked digest.

Coverage: 1–30 May 2026 · Prepared for client-advisory use · Issued 21 June 2026 · Confidential

This edition reads as one connected narrative. Regulatory pressure originates with the enforcement actions in Section 1; platforms respond by revising their own rulebooks in Section 2; and Section 3 shows the operational result at scale in the EU. The executive summary and compliance calendar below frame what is most material and what is already binding.

Coverage & Scope

What this issue monitors, and its known boundaries — stated for transparency.

Platforms monitored (11): Google Ad Manager, Google Ads, Google Merchant, Google Shopping, LinkedIn, Meta, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, X, YouTube

Regulators (tier 1–2): ACCC Australia — News Centre (competition / ad-tech), CMA UK — Competition & Markets Authority feed, CNIL FR — News (data protection enforcement), DOJ Antitrust Division — main page (decisions + press), EU Commission — Digital Strategy News (DSA / DMA / AI Act), FTC Cases & Proceedings, ICO UK — News & Blogs (data protection enforcement), Irish DPC — Press Releases (EU cross-border lead authority), NY Attorney General — Press Releases (SAFE for Kids enforcer), Ofcom Online Safety Hub, Texas Attorney General — News (SCOPE Act enforcer), eSafety Media Releases + regional/vertical sources across IE, US, KR, JP, UK, SG, IN, CA, AU, FR, EU

- Layer 1 DSA data is EU-wide aggregate — no member-state breakdown.
- This edition is US-weighted (10/11 regulator signals) — standing EU material is in §3.

Executive Summary

The month in 30 seconds — read together, three datasets describe one tightening cycle.

1. **Regulators.** 2 platform-attributed action(s) (eSafety AU→X; FTC→Meta); 5 named non-platform respondent group(s). Largest figure: US$90,000,000 (Chris Terry, partially suspended).
2. **Policy.** 5 tracked policy changes (5 critical/high) across Google Ads, Meta, X — E-commerce & DTC, Finance & Crypto. Each linked to its primary source page.
3. **Enforcement.** DSA decisions -17.8% MoM to 102,396,741; 23.6M account-level actions at 93.6% automation.

Compliance Calendar

Obligations now in force — including rules that took effect earlier (e.g. April) and remain binding through May 2026. This is a 'what applies now' snapshot, not a list of changes new this month. Effective dates are source-stated; confirm before advising on a deadline.

EFFECTIVE	OBLIGATION	WHO MUST ACT	JURIS.	CONSEQUENCE
16 Apr 2026 EFF. STATED	Google Shopping Ads political content policy now requires election advertiser verification in 9 countries (AR, AU, CL, IL, MX, NZ, ZA, UK, US). Political Shopping ads are prohibited in India. Non-compliant merchants face ad disapprovals and potential account suspension.	Merchants selling political merchandise	9 countries · banned IN	Ad disapprovals + potential account suspension
14 Apr 2026 EFF. STATED	Google Ads introduces mandatory verification for financial services advertisers targeting Malaysia. Advertisers must verify through external compliance partner G2 before being allowed to run financial services ads. Non-compliant advertisers will be blocked from showing financial ads in Malaysia.	Financial-services advertisers (Malaysia)	MY	Blocked from showing financial ads
28 Apr 2026 EFF. STATED	Google Merchant is introducing a requirement for merchants in the UK, Switzerland, and EEA countries to specify pickup costs and minimum order values for in-store products enabled for pickup starting April 28, 2026. This change aims to enhance transparency in local inventory ads and free local listings, impacting how advertisers present total costs to consumers.	Merchants with local/pickup inventory	UK CH EEA	Listing non-compliance in local inventory ads
21 Apr 2026 EFF. STATED	Google Ads will resume accepting certification applications from online gambling providers targeting Australia starting April 21, 2026. This change allows advertisers in the gambling sector to apply for certification, which is necessary	Online gambling advertisers (Australia)	AU	Certification required before running gambling ads

EFFECTIVE	OBLIGATION	WHO MUST ACT	JURIS.	CONSEQUENCE
	for advertising their services on the platform.			
4 May 2026 EFF. STATED	On 4 May 2026 Google Ads opens online gambling advertising in Alberta, Canada for entities authorised by the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC). Only brand-awareness campaigns are allowed at launch — promotional content (sign-up bonuses, deposit matches) remains restricted, and campaigns must be geo-targeted to Alberta only.	Gambling advertisers / affiliates	CA (Alberta)	Blocked campaigns if geo leaks / promo creative

1 · Regulator Enforcement Actions LAYER 3 · LIVE

Where the pressure originates. The month's regulatory pressure begins here — direct actions against tracked platforms first, then the wider non-platform enforcement climate that sets context for the policy changes in Section 2.

Source: regulator_signals (public filings). Named parties + original currency read from metadata; summaries stay anonymised, names pulled separately for this legal edition.

Platform-Attributed Actions

DATE	REGULATOR	PLATFORM	ACTION	AMOUNT (ORIG.)	JURIS.
2026-05-21 OCCURRED	eSafety AU	**X**	X Corp has been ordered to pay a civil penalty of $650,000 for failing to comply with a transparency notice regarding child sexual exploitation material. This enforcement action highlights the importance of compliance with safety regulations aimed at protecting children online.	**AUD 650,000**	AU

DATE	REGULATOR	PLATFORM	ACTION	AMOUNT (ORIG.)	JURIS.
			CIVIL PENALTY · IMPOSED ESAFETY TRANSPARENCY NOTICE **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-22*		
2026-05-11 OCCURRED	FTC	**Meta**	The FTC sent letters to major technology platforms, including Meta, reminding them of their obligation to comply with the Take It Down Act by May 19. The Act requires platforms to establish a process for victims to request the removal of nonconsensual intimate images within 48 hours of a valid request. WARNING LETTER TAKE IT DOWN ACT **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*	—	US

Non-Platform Enforcement *— directional context, not platform-attributed*

NAMED RESPONDENTS (5)

- **Cox Media Group, MindSift LLC, 1010 Digital Works LLC US$930,000**

  2026-05-21 · FTC · SETTLEMENT · IMPOSED **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*

  A media advertising company and two marketing firms will pay $930,000 to settle FTC allegations of misleading customers about an AI-powered advertising service that falsely claimed to use voice data from smart devices.

- **Cliq Inc., Andrew Phillips, John Blaugrund US$6,500,000**

  2026-05-19 · FTC · CIVIL PENALTY · IMPOSED **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*

  A federal court ordered a payment processor and its executives to pay $6.5 million for violating a 2015 order aimed at preventing consumer fraud. The court found the firm unlawfully processed transactions for high-risk merchants flagged by prior FTC actions.

- **Chris Terry, Isis Terry US$90,000,000**

2026-05-13 · FTC · SETTLEMENT · PARTIALLY SUSPENDED **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*

The FTC and Nevada AG require defendants in a financial-training MLM scheme to surrender nearly $90 million in assets due to false earnings claims used to sell training programs and multi-level-marketing memberships.

- **Premium Home Service, Yosef Bernath**

  2026-05-11 · FTC · **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*

  The FTC and Illinois filed a lawsuit against a home-services firm for creating thousands of fake online business listings and posting fabricated five-star reviews to mislead consumers across multiple metropolitan markets.

- **Mortgage Connect**

  2026-05-08 · FTC · WARNING LETTER **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*

  FTC Chairman Andrew N. Ferguson issued a warning letter to a mortgage firm, urging a review of its employment contracts — particularly noncompete agreements — due to potential anticompetitive practices flagged in a related lawsuit.

UNNAMED / SECTOR-WIDE

- 2026-05-20 · FTC — The FTC has issued warning letters to 12 companies regarding their noncompliance with the TAKE IT DOWN Act, which mandates the removal of nonconsensual intimate images within 48 hours of a valid request. Companies failing to comply may face civil penalties of up to $53,088 per violation, highlighting the urgent need for platforms to implement proper removal processes to protect consumers, particularly children. **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*
- 2026-05-19 · FTC — The FTC has begun enforcing the TAKE IT DOWN Act, requiring platforms to remove nonconsensual intimate images within 48 hours of a valid request from victims. This law mandates that platforms create a process for such removal by May 19, 2026, impacting how advertisers engage with user-generated content and privacy policies. **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*
- 2026-05-13 · FTC — An online stock-photography platform will pay $35 million to settle FTC allegations of unfair and deceptive practices related to subscription cancellations and billing. The FTC found the firm failed to disclose auto-renewal terms clearly and made cancellation difficult. **US$35,000,000** **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*
- 2026-05-07 · FTC — The FTC finalized a consent order requiring a regional automotive-service chain to divest 45 quick-lube oil change shops to resolve antitrust concerns related to its acquisition of approximately 200 outlets from a competitor. **primary filing** ↗ *retrieved 2026-05-25*

⚠ Verify each named party + imposed-vs-suspended figure against its linked primary filing before client reliance.

ADVISORY IMPLICATION

Transparency reporting now carries monetary penalties (eSafety/AUD). The TAKE IT DOWN Act is an active FTC vector; advertisers running user-generated or creator content should audit non-consensual / AI-image takedown flows.

2 · Platform Policy Changes LAYER 2

How platforms responded. These changes are the platform-side counterpart to Section 1: where regulators applied pressure, platforms revised their own rulebooks — most often by adding new verification or certification gates. Recent substantive changes shaping campaigns this period (detected April–May 2026); each is tagged effective or detected and links to the official policy page it was read from.

CRITICAL Google Ads · Shopping Political Content Apr 2026 · 2026-04-16 **EFFECTIVE**

Google Shopping Ads political content policy now requires election advertiser verification in 9 countries (AR, AU, CL, IL, MX, NZ, ZA, UK, US). Political Shopping ads are prohibited in India. Non-compliant merchants face ad disapprovals and potential account suspension. **support.google.com** ↗

HIGH Google Ads · Financial Services Ads · 2026-04-03 **EFFECTIVE**

Google Ads introduces mandatory verification for financial services advertisers targeting Malaysia. Advertisers must verify through external compliance partner G2 before being allowed to run financial services ads. Non-compliant advertisers will be blocked from showing financial ads in Malaysia. **support.google.com** ↗

HIGH Meta · Restricted: Crypto · 2026-04-15 **DETECTED**

Meta expanded its cryptocurrency advertising restrictions on Apr 15, 2026 to explicitly cover physical mining hardware. Ads promoting GPU mining rigs and other physical equipment now require Meta's prior written approval — the same gated process that already applied to crypto trading software and platforms. Hardware sellers and resellers must obtain authorization before resuming campaigns. **transparency.meta.com** ↗

HIGH Google Ads · Financial Services Ads · 2026-04-06 **DETECTED**

Google Ads strengthened financial services disclosure requirements: all disclosures must now be "clearly and immediately visible" without hover or click. Strike-based enforcement language was removed across multiple sections. Credit repair service ads are now explicitly prohibited rather than subject to a strike system. **support.google.com** ↗

HIGH X · Quality Policy · 2026-05-06 **DETECTED**

The policy now restricts ads to a maximum of one emoji, with an exception for boosted posts or ads targeting Japan and Korea. This change may require advertisers to adjust their creative strategies to comply with the new emoji limitation. **business.x.com** ↗

⚠ Effective dates are platform-stated; confirm against the linked policy page before advising on a compliance deadline.

3 · DSA Enforcement Trend LAYER 1

What it looks like at scale. Sections 1–2 capture intent; this layer shows the operational result — what platforms actually did to accounts and content across the EU, and where month-over-month movement concentrated.

Source: EU DSA Transparency Database, CC BY 4.0 · wholly EU material.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS	ACCOUNT ACTIONS	CONTENT REMOVED	AUTOMATED
102,396,741	**23,627,620**	**43,370,223**	**93.6%**
-17.8% MoM	suspended + terminated	decisions	fully or partly

BIGGEST CATEGORY MOVERS	APRIL	MAY	MOM
Cyber Violence	613,043	**1,034,222**	**+69%**
Self-Harm	1,770,774	**2,649,075**	**+50%**
Violence	3,782,207	**4,898,724**	**+30%**
Consumer Information	722,049	**883,250**	**+22%**
Illegal / Harmful Speech	4,998,267	**5,778,406**	**+16%**

ADVISORY IMPLICATION

The story is account-level action (suspensions + terminations) at 93.6% automation — raising the burden under DSA Art. 17 statement-of-reasons and the internal-complaint mechanism. EU-wide aggregate; no member-state breakdown.

Deep-Dive of the Month

Bringing the three layers together. One theme connected the regulator actions, policy changes and enforcement data this month. The analysis below is the issue's single interpretive piece.

The TAKE IT DOWN Act becomes an operational FTC vector

May's clearest throughline is enforcement of removal obligations. The FTC sent TAKE IT DOWN Act notices to major platforms — Meta among them — formalising a 48-hour takedown duty for non-consensual intimate and AI-generated imagery, while Australia's eSafety penalised X AUD 650,000 over a transparency-notice failure. The platform-facing read: takedown-flow latency and statement-of-reasons quality are now examinable. Advisers to platforms or to brands running user-generated / creator content should treat documented takedown SLAs and appeal records as near-term diligence items, not roadmap. (Horizon scanning — verify each action against its linked filing before client reliance.)

Analyst note — Emine Gürcü, Product Lead. The one human-written section; everything else is auto-rendered from the linked layers.

Compiled by AuditSocials Regulatory Intelligence. Editorial: Emine Gürcü, Product Lead. Layer 3 named parties are extracted from primary regulator filings and stored separately from the anonymised public summary; Layers 2 & 3 are machine-generated + human-reviewed — verify against the linked primary source before relying.