Platform Competition, Regulation, and Antitrust: Navigating Innovation, Market Power, and Dark Patterns

Webinar Agenda

6th Jan, 2026, Wednesday; 04:00 – 05:30 pm IST

1. Background and Context

1.1. As digital platforms increasingly function as central gateways for commerce, communication, and essential services, their data-intensive business models leverage AI-driven personalisation, behavioural profiling, and user-interface design to deliver efficiency and convenience. At the same time, these innovations present unique compliance challenges as regulatory frameworks evolve globally..

1.2. Contemporary platform markets are characterised by strong network effects, data-enabled economies of scale, and concentrated control over user attention and information flows. This environment allows dominant platforms to deploy practices such as AI-enabled price discrimination, granular targeting and personalised ranking systems, each with the potential to distort competitive neutrality and heighten exploitative or exclusionary impacts. The growing regulatory focus on dark patterns and consent architecture adds complexity for platforms seeking to balance user experience, personalization, and compliance expectations. Practices around consent and interface design, if not carefully managed, can cross over into areas that raise competition law concerns. These developments firmly place data privacy and competition compliance at the centre of strategic priorities for platforms and regulators.

1.3. The evolving intersection of AI, market power, and platform design highlights the need for adaptive enforcement approaches capable of responding to algorithmic and data-driven harms. With regulators worldwide reassessing established doctrines, the Indian scenario is also witnessing growing emphasis on transparency, accountability, and the competitive implications of algorithmic tools. The CCI's recent Market Study on Algorithmic Competition, reflects awareness toward this shift in understanding both structural and behavioural effects stemming from digital ecosystems.

1.4. Against this backdrop, the webinar organised by CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition (CIRC), in collaboration with King Stubb & Kasiva (KSK), aims to provide a timely platform to examine these emerging challenges. The session will focus on the competitive risks associated with AI-enabled price discrimination, dark patterns, and data-

privacy-linked market distortions in digital platforms.

1.5. The discussion will explore evolving enforcement trends and regulatory approaches relevant to ensuring contestability, fairness, and accountability in data-driven markets. By bringing together expert perspectives on behavioural design, AI-driven market conduct, and privacy-competition linkages, the webinar seeks to foster dialogue on how platforms and regulators can collaboratively navigate the complexities of algorithmic competition, including issues around consent design and user autonomy, while supporting innovation and fair competition.

2. Objectives

2.1. The webinar will explore how digital platforms can navigate evolving competition law challenges in India's data-driven economy. With AI-enabled pricing, behavioral profiling, and interface design practices such as dark patterns under increasing regulatory focus, platforms face complex questions around compliance, user trust, and market fairness. The session aims to foster dialogue between industry leaders, regulators, and practitioners on balancing innovation with accountability, drawing insights from global trends and the CCI's Market Study on Algorithmic Competition.

3. Expected Outcome

3.1. The session is expected to clarify how privacy concerns, dark patterns, and risks of algorithmic conduct shape competition and consumer experience in digital markets. It will also outline practical takeaways for ensuring fairer, more transparent, and accountable platform practices.

4. Discussion Themes

4.1. ***AI-enabled pricing and behavioural profiling***: How AI-enabled pricing, behavioural profiling, and user segmentation can lead to personalised or discriminatory pricing and affect competitive neutrality.

4.2. ***Dark patterns and consent architecture****:* Explore how design choices such as dark patterns and consent architecture, while aimed at improving engagement, can lead to regulatory scrutiny under competition law and how platforms can navigate these challenges..

4.3. ***Data Power and Compliance***: How concentrated data advantages and consent design intersect with competition law compliance.

5. Session Flow

04:00 – 04:06	Introduction and welcome remarks by CIRC and KSK respectively (3 minutes each)
04:06 – 04:15	Presentation and setting the context
04:15 – 04:20	Moderators remarks
04:20 – 05:05	Panel Discussion
05:05 – 05:20	Q&A Session
05:20 – 05:30	Closing Remarks