Digital Omnibus: is the EU's tech simplification a Risk or Opportunity for Open Source?

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A brief introduction.

- The Digital Omnibus (proposed in November 2025) is a series of regulatory proposals across various packages (GDPR, ePrivacy Directive, NIS2 and the EU Data Act) with the aim of harmonising and simplifying requirements
- The explicit goals of the Digital Omnibus are to **reduce the administrative load** on organisations whilst **incentivising innovation**
- The goals for this talk are to:
  - Discuss the potential risks and opportunities for open source;
  - Encourage the open source policy community to engage with the consultation period for this proposal (open until the **11 March 2026**)

Key changes proposed

- A simplified approach to cookies, in hopes of addressing "consent fatigue"

- Improving access to data, including access for AI

- Alignment and standardisation of key definitions and concepts across regulations

- An integrated incident reporting system for incidents and breaches, harmonising the requirements from GDPR, NIS2, DORA and (presumably) future CRA requirements

Opportunities

- Less legal complexity and more clarity could create more bandwidth and capacity for innovation.
- Open source projects, particularly those of a not-for-profit nature, would benefit from more streamlined requirements:
  - e.g. reduced administrative load → reduced costs → increased funding for development
- Single entry point for incident/breach reporting would be the single most impactful operational change, letting security and compliance teams focus on incident management not navigating multiple reporting requirements

Risks

- Changing key definitions, particularly the definition of personal data, opens up a Pandora's box of risks:
  - Diluting hard earned protections;
  - Strong protections in EU regulations have been an advantage, particularly as the need for digital sovereignty is becoming increasingly clear - as is the need for open source to deliver it;
  - Adding extra nuance to key definitions adds complexity and uncertainty, not clarity.
- Open source and trust go hand in hand, with this trust being earned through transparency. Adding complexity to basics may lead to less unwillingness for openness.

Conclusions.

- The EU regulatory landscape is becoming more and more complex, as are our digital ecosystems, which puts a disproportionate strain on open source projects.

- Simplification is welcomed, but this should not come at the cost of personal data protections.

- We must make the effort to engage with the regulatory process and highlight any other risks that lawmakers might have not considered.

Thank you for your time!

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